I

ORDER AND HISTORY

Israel and Revelation

Voegelin

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VOLUME ONE

Israel and Revelation

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Gnostic age are still social and political powers on the world scene, and will remain formidable powers for a long time to come. The "disappearance" must be understood as the fact that in the course of the wars and revolutions of our time their authority has seeped out of them. Their conceptions of man, society, and history are too obviously incongruent with the reality that is within the range of our empirical knowledge. Hence, while they still are powers, they wield power only over those who do not turn their back to them and look for greener pastures. We have gained a new freedom in science, and it is a joy to use it.

The reflections on the ideological incubus have led us from the possibility to the necessity of the study on *Order and History*. It is man's obligation to understand his condition; part of this condition is the social order in which he lives; and this order has today become world-wide. This world-wide order is furthermore neither recent nor simple, but contains as socially effective forces the sediments of the millennial struggle for the truth of order. This is a question, not of theory but of empirical fact. One could draw for proof on such obvious facts as the relevance for our own affairs of a China or India that is struggling with the necessary adjustments of a basically cosmological order to political and technological conditions that are of Western making. I prefer, however, to draw the reader's attention to the analysis of the metastatic problem in the present volume on "Israel and Revelation" (Chap. 13, § 2.2), and he will see immediately that the prophetic conception of a change in the constitution of being lies at the root of our contemporary beliefs in the perfection of society, either through progress or through a communist revolution. Not only are the apparent antagonists revealed as brothers under the skin, as the late Gnostic descendants of the prophetic faith in a transfiguration of the world; it obviously is also of importance to understand the nature of the experience that will express itself in beliefs of this type, as well as the circumstances under which it has arisen in the past and from which it derives its strength in the present. Metastatic faith is one of the great sources of disorder, if not the principal one, in the contemporary world; and it is a matter of life and death for all of us to understand the phenomenon and to find remedies against it before it destroys us. If today the state of science permits the critical analysis of such phenomena, it is clearly a scholar's duty to undertake it for his own sake as a man and to make the results accessible

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remaining in the area of essential ignorance, can be symbolized analogically by using more than one experience of partial order in existence. The rhythms of plant and animal life, the sequence of the seasons, the revolutions of sun, moon, and constellations may serve as models for analogical symbolization of social order. The order of society may serve as a model for symbolizing celestial order. All these orders may serve as models for symbolizing the order in the realm of divine forces. And the symbolizations of divine order in their turn may be used for analogical interpretation of existential orders within the world.

In this network of mutual elucidation inevitably concurrent and conflicting symbols will occur. Such concurrences and conflicts are borne, over long periods, with equanimity by the men who produce them; contradictions do not engender distrust in the truth of the symbols. If anything is characteristic of the early history of symbolization, it is the pluralism in expressing truth, the generous recognition and tolerance extended to rival symbolizations of the same truth. The self-interpretation of an early empire as the one and only true representative of cosmic order on earth is not in the least shaken by the existence of neighboring empires who indulge in the same type of interpretation. The representation of a supreme divinity under a special form and name in one Mesopotamian city-state is not shaken by a different representation in the neighboring city-state. And the merger of various representations when an empire unifies several formerly independent city-states, the change from one representation to another when the dynasties change, the transfer of cosmogonic myths from one god to another, and so forth, show that the variety of symbolizations is accompanied by a vivid consciousness of the sameness of truth at which man aims by means of his various symbols. This early tolerance reaches far into the Greco-Roman period and has found its great expression in the attack of Celsus on Christianity as the disturber of the peace among the gods.

The early tolerance reflects the awareness that the order of being can be represented analogically in more than one way. Every concrete symbol is true in so far as it envisages the truth, but none is completely true in so far as the truth about being is essentially beyond human reach. In this twilight of truth grows the rich flora—luxuriant, bewildering, frightening, and charming—of the tales about gods and demons and their ordering and disordering influences on the life of man and society. There is a magnificent freedom of variation on, and elaboration of, fundamental themes, each new growth and supergrowth adding a facet to the great

Thus, a change in being actually has occurred, with consequences for the order of existence. Nevertheless, the leap upward in being is not a leap out of existence. The emphatic partnership with God does not abolish partnership in the community of being at large, which includes being in mundane existence. Man and society, if they want to retain their foothold in being that makes the leap into emphatic partnership possible, must remain adjusted to the order of mundane existence. Hence, there is no age of the church that would succeed an age of society on the level of more compact attunement to being. Instead there develop the tensions, frictions, and balances between the two levels of attunement, a dualistic structure of existence which expresses itself in pairs of symbols, of *theologia civilis* and *theologia supranaturalis,* of temporal and spiritual powers, of secular state and church.

Intolerance of unseemly symbolization does not resolve this new problem, and the love of being which inspires intolerance must compromise with the conditions of existence. This attitude of compromise can be discerned in the work of the old Plato, when his intolerance of unseemly symbolization, strong in his early and middle years, undergoes a remarkable transformation. To be sure, the insight of conversion, the principle that God is the measure of man, far from being compromised, is asserted even more forcefully, but its communication has become more cautious, withdrawing deeper behind the veils of the myth. There is an awareness that the new truth about being is not a substitute for, but an addition to the old truth. The *Laws* envisage a polis that is constructed as a cosmic analogue, perhaps betraying influences of Oriental political culture; and of the new truth there will be infiltrated only as much as the existential vessel can hold without breaking. Moreover, there is a new awareness that an attack on the unseemly symbolization of order may destroy order itself with the faith in its analogies, that it is better to see the truth obscurely than not at all, that imperfect attunement to the order of being is preferable to disorder. The intolerance inspired by the love of being is balanced by a new tolerance, inspired by the love of existence and a respect for the tortuous ways on which man moves historically closer to the true order of being. In the *Epinomis* Plato speaks the last word of his wisdom—that every myth has its truth.

developed to express a concrete order can be abstracted from the society of their origin and attributed to mankind at large.

The problem of mankind has not been raised in order to be resolved on this occasion of its first appearance. It will be with us throughout the course of the study. For the present, the awareness of its existence is sufficient as a basis for the following empirical observation which has a direct bearing on the organization of materials in Part I.

It is a matter of empirical knowledge that the cosmological myth arises in a certain number of civilizations without apparent mutual influences. The question, to be sure, has been raised whether the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, neighbors in time and space, did not influence one another, or have a common origin that would explain the parallel features in their political culture. Whatever the outcome of a hitherto inconclusive debate will be, the question itself will appear less pressing, if one considers that the same type of symbols occurs in the China of the Chou dynasty, as well as in the Andean civilizations, where Babylonian or Egyptian influences are improbable. The state of empirical knowledge makes it advisable, therefore, to treat the cosmological myth as a typical phenomenon in the history of mankind rather than as a symbolic form peculiar to the order of Babylon, or Egypt, or China. Still less is it advisable to indulge in speculations about "cultural diffusion" of the cosmological myth from a hypothetical center of its first creation.

The cosmological myth, as far as we know, is generally the first symbolic form created by societies when they rise above the level of tribal organization. Nevertheless, the several instances of its appearance are sufficiently variegated to allow the distinction of unmistakably Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Chinese styles of the myth. Moreover, it is highly probable, though not conclusively demonstrable, that the differences of style have something to do with the potentiality of the various civilizations for the unfolding of experiences which ultimately result in the leap in being. In the area of the ancient Near East, the Mesopotamian empires proved most barren in this respect, while the sequence of Egyptian empires showed a remarkable but abortive development. The break-through was achieved only among the peoples of the Syriac civilization, through Israel. Hence, the varieties within the general type of cosmological myth must not be neglected.

In order to do justice to the various aspects of the problem, the

hold the eternal life which apparently he also could have bestowed on him? Does the myth perhaps suggest a true wisdom that will not yearn for a prolongation of existence beyond the allotted span? The possibility cannot be dismissed that there is a Homeric twilight about these gods. There is perhaps a glimmer of acceptance in the myth, of a will to be man and not to be a god. To be sure, it would be going too far to suggest that no mistake occurred when Adapa rejected the food of life, that Ea wanted him to reject it as the food that would bring death to his manhood. Still, there is something odd about this warning against the food and water of death, for the mythical substances are not poisons administered at a Renaissance banquet. And since their consequence is not a heart attack but mortality, what damage could they do to the mortal Adapa? Perhaps this mystery can be solved through recourse to a similar oddity in the myth of Genesis. When man is expelled from Eden he is thereby prevented from tasting of the tree of life. But why is the expulsion so important? What difference does it make whether the approach to the tree of life is cut off by a physical barrier or by an injunction not to touch its fruit? Does it make only the difference between a hedonistic, vegetative life and hard work? In Genesis there is an answer: The "death" that was set as punishment on the transgression is not mortality, the passing of existence, but the spiritual fall from being. The Adapa myth, now, does not raise the problem of a fall from being, but this curious warning against the food of death which ends in a rejection of the food of life perhaps hides under its compact, opaque symbolism the problem that becomes articulate in Genesis.

From such obscurity we emerge into light again with the consequences of Adapa's rejection of the food and water of life. Anu dismisses him graciously to the long-lasting, glorious dominion of Eridu. The hero who rejects eternal life is the ruler who creates and maintains order among men. Was Anu's offer perhaps a temptation? Again, this would be going too far, for this facet of the experience is not differentiated, as it is in the serpent of Genesis. But the result is the same: the dominion of man is the analogical compensation for eternal order.

§ 2. The Symbolization of Political Order

The symbolization of political order through analogy with cosmic order in the Mesopotamian civilization did not flow from a speculative

creation of order, the foundation of Babylon under the lordship of Marduk in the heavens, and the creation of the earthly realm of Babylon under the lordship of Hammurabi.[7] Moreover, there begins to emerge something like a "system" of symbols which coherently express the existence of an empire with regard to time, space, and substance.

A political organization exists in time, and as a recognizable unit originates in time. In the cosmological style of symbolization, however, there is no flow of historical time articulated by an originating event. The foundation of a government is rather conceived as an event in the cosmic order of the gods, of which the earthly event is the analogous expression. What today we would call the category of historical time is symbolized by origination in a cosmic decree.[8] There are cosmogonic poems preserved from the period of the First Babylonian Dynasty which describe the creation of the "heavenly earth" as preceding the creation of the "earthly earth." The politico-religious centers of Nippur, Uruk, Eridu, and Babylon are first created on the heavenly earth, and then the corresponding earthly centers are built. Thus the origin of the dominant political units is referred back to the beginning of the world.

While in time the political process is a reflection of the cosmogonic process, the spatial organization of the empire reflects the spatial organization of the cosmos. The spatial order of the universe is determined by the revolutions of the main celestial bodies from east to west, creating the system of the four cardinal points, of the four corners of the world, and of the four corresponding regions. The earthly empire corresponds to the heavenly order in so far as the whole of the earth is divided, in the Babylonian conception, into the four domains of Akkad (south), Elam (east), Subartu and Gurtium (north), and Amurru (west). Conversely, an elaborate heavenly geography finds in the sky the originals of earthly configuration. The heavenly Tigris and Euphrates are identified with definite constellations, and so are the great cities. Even the sun and moon are divided into regions corresponding to the earthly quarters, "the right

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1904); Hugo Winkler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis in Umschrift und Uebersetzung* (Leipzig, 1904); Chilperic Edwards, *The Hammurabi Code and the Sinaitic Legislation* (3d ed., London, 1921); Jacobsen in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 193; Theophile J. Meek in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 164. All of these translations were used.

[7] The echo of this parallelism is still to be found in the conception of a "heavenly Jerusalem" that descends on the earth in Galatians 4:26 and Revelation 21.

[8] Cf. the Preamble of the "Sumerian King List": "When kingship was lowered from heaven, kingship was first in Eridu" (translation by A. Leo Oppenheim in Pritchard [ed.], *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 265). Cf. also the "Etana Legend" (translation by A. E. Speiser, *ibid.*, 114 ff.)

in an inscription of Ashurbanipal: "I am Assurbanipal, offspring (creature) of Assur and Bêlit, the oldest prince of the royal harem, whose name Assur and Sin, the lord of the tiara, have named for the kingship from distant days, whom they formed in his mother's womb, for the rulership of Assyria; whom Shamash, Adad and Ishtar, by their unalterable decree, have ordered to exercise sovereignty." [12]

Cosmological symbolization is neither a theory nor an allegory. It is the mythical expression of the participation, experienced as real, of the order of society in the divine being that also orders the cosmos. To be sure, the cosmos and the political cosmion remain separate existences, but one stream of creative and ordering being flows through them so massively that, as we have seen, the god is the owner of a temple, while its priest and ruler is only its tenant farmer; the earth-wide rule of Marduk is established in heaven, while the rise to power of the earthly king is only the implementation of the divine appointment; and the geographical order on the earth is the image of the original in the heavens. The participation is so intimate, indeed, that in spite of the separateness of existences, empire and cosmos are parts of one embracing order. It is with justification, then, that one can speak of the Babylonian idea of a cosmos ordered as a state, and that cosmos and empire are in substance one entity.

Such unity, comprehending the separate existences as parts, necessitates the creation of a symbol that will express the point of physical connection between the two separate parts, the point at which the stream of being flows from the cosmos into the empire. A style of symbolization, once a nucleus is formed and accepted, by its inner logic requires the creation of further symbols. The symbol just indicated as a requirement wherever political order is symbolized cosmologically may be called by the Greek name *omphalos,* meaning the navel of the world, at which transcendent forces of being flow into social order. In Hellas this omphalos was the stone at Delphi that marked the center of the universe. In Babylonian civilization the symbol occurred, as we have seen, in the preamble to the Code of Hammurabi. There Babylon became surpassing in the world when it was established "in the midst of the world" as an everlasting kingdom; and the name Bab-ilani meant indeed Gate of the Gods. The idea could be observed in formation in the inscription of Lugalzaggisi with its distinction of the *kalama,* the land of Sumer, and

[12] *Ibid.,* II, sec. 765.

the periphery. The conception of diminishing degrees of quality with greater distance from the center is attributed by Herodotus to the Persians: "They honor most of all those who dwell nearest them, next those who are next farthest removed, and so going ever onwards they assign honor by this rule; those who dwell farthest off they hold least honorable of all; for they deem themselves to be in all regards by far the best of all men, the rest to have but a proportionate claim to merit, till those who dwell farthest away have least merit of all." Herodotus further tells that the Medes had organized their empire in such a way that they themselves had the overlordship over all the peoples in their dominion but governed directly only the immediately bordering groups, while the bordering groups in their turn governed the outer ranks of ethnic groups. The organization of the empire thus reflected the degree of excellence determined by the distance from the center.[14]

Finally, in order to stress the typical appearance of the omphalos in cosmological civilizations, there should be recalled the Chinese symbol of a *chung kuo,* of a central domain and seat of the king. The *chung kuo* was surrounded by the feudal states of lesser dignity, which in their turn were surrounded by the barbarian tribes. In the early Chou period the *chung kuo* denoted the royal domain proper, while under the Ch'in and Han dynasties its meaning was transferred to the unified empire which now was surrounded by the rest of mankind as a barbarian outer zone.

The mythical expressions of time, space, and substance of dominion, together with the omphalos, form a central set of symbols. This nucleus is surrounded by a wealth of auxiliary symbols, held together among themselves and united with the principal four by their common origin in the Sumero-Babylonian astronomic system. Only one or two of them can be treated here, and they will be selected under the aspect of their importance in later history.

Of such general importance are the symbols of the zodiac and the number twelve. They are best treated together because they merge in the symbol of the *dodekaoros* so that, especially after the fifth century B.C., it is difficult to say whether the *dodekaoros* has exerted its influence in the formation of certain ideas of order or whether it was the number twelve independently. The zodiac is the broad band in the heavens through which sun, moon, and planets take their course, bounded by two circles

[14] Herodotus I, 134; translation by A. D. Godley in *Loeb Classical Library.*

earthly regions, and the earthly climates in their turn to determine the characters of the nations. Astrological geography had expanded into an astrological psychology and ethnography.

The work of Ptolemy remained the standard system of ethnography through the Middle Ages and even gained in importance, measured by the numerous reprints, when the breakdown of rational culture in the late Middle Ages was followed by the astrological outburst of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the sixteenth century, however, the accumulation of geographical and ethnographic knowledge in the wake of the discoveries compelled a reconsideration of Ptolemy's division of climates and characterization of national types. Moreover, the increasing influence of Greek political theory suggested the abandoning of the Babylonian zodiacal apparatus. Bodin, in his *Methodus*, undertook the revision in the light of the new knowledge. The division of climates, as well as the characterization of types, while betraying their origin in Ptolemy, were reorganized under the marked influence of Plato and Aristotle. The world was divided into four quarters, to which national and constitutional types corresponded, with France holding a superior position in the center as the omphalos of the new order. And the astrological link in the chain of causality was dropped, so that only the climatic zones were left as the causes which showed their effects in the national characters—a system which closely resembled the meteorological ethnography to be found in the Hippocratic treatise on *Airs, Waters and Places*. In this revised form, as a theory of climatic influences on national characters, and of national characters on political institutions, the system of astrological geography and ethnography has survived through famous intermediaries, as for instance Montesquieu, into the present.[16]

The various symbols hitherto discussed reveal the importance of the sun in the Babylonian system. The zodiac is determined by the ecliptic of the sun, and the number twelve is the number of the full moons in

[16] The literature on the symbol of the zodiac is rather voluminous. As an access to it is suggested Jeremias, *Handbuch*, 113 ff., as well as the sections on "Tierkreis," 201, and "Dodekaoros," 242 ff., in his work; furthermore Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, especially II, *s.v.* "Tierkreisbild"; and the bibliographic references in these works. The Gilgamesh epic is available in English translation in Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago, 1946).

the solar year. A few remarks must be added on the political ramifications of the sun symbol.

The preamble of the Code of Hammurabi, as well as the Assyrian inscriptions, have shown the function of the sun-god as the heavenly original of earthly rule. The king was understood as the earthly analogue of the sun-god and, consequently, was styled the sun of Babylon or the sun of all peoples. The character of rulership as the analogue of heavenly order was emphasized in the decoration of the royal insignia with celestial emblems. In particular, the imperial robe was conceived as the analogue of the starry heavens and ornamented accordingly, while the heavens, in turn, were conceived as the imperial robe of the sun-god. The symbolism of the imperial robe, embroidered with the sun, the moon, the planets, and the zodiacal constellations, was continued from antiquity into the Middle Ages, since the emperor retained the character of a cosmocrator.[17] The sun as the symbol of political order spread from Mesopotamia and Egypt into the West. In the fourth century it appeared in the work of Plato in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. After the conquest of Alexander the sun that shines equally over all men became the symbol of just social order in Heliopolitan projects of the best society, as well as in the slave revolts. After the capture of Palmyra Aurelian introduced the Helios and Bel of the city as the *Sol Invictus* to Rome.[18] The solar summodeism was continued by Constantine and, though he eliminated the image of Helios from the coin of the realm, the porphyry column with the representation of the sun-god received sacrifices at Constantinople. In the fourth century, adjusting itself to the trend, the Church shifted the birthday of Christ, the "Sun of Justice," to December 25, since in pagan belief this was the birthday of the sun, the day when it began to rise again. Moreover, the day of the Lord (*dies dominicus*) has retained the name of Sunday since the constitutions of Constantine.[19]

The conception of royal rule as the analogue of the rule of Marduk, the sun-god, motivates a complicated set of symbols to which the present study can refer only briefly. The sun, the moon, and the planets are revolving celestial bodies, and the revolution of the sun in particular

[17] Robert Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt; Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Urgeschichte des antiken Weltbildes*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1910).

[18] Franz Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain* (4th ed., Paris, 1929), 106.

[19] For the sources of this paragraph in general see Jeremias, *Handbuch*, *s.v.* "Sonne."

determines the cycle of seasonal fertility and death. The periodicity of the celestial movements lends itself to analogical representations in the political sphere through annual festivals of death and revival, of renovation of status and a new beginning. Moreover, the regularity of annual decline and revival suggests a periodicity in the order of the cosmos on the larger scale, of a periodic victory of order over chaos and relapse into chaos, that is, the idea of cosmic aeons.

In Mesopotamian state practice the cosmic revolutions found their expression in the New Year ceremonies, when the sun-king had to go through important rites as the symbol of the sun setting out for a new period. These festivals, however, were not New Year celebrations in the modern sense, but were loaded with the representation of periodicity on the three levels of a renewal of the fertility of the soil, of the renewal of the sun period on which the fertility depended, and of the aeonic victory of order over chaos of which the solar revolution itself was the symbol. In all three respects the New Year's festival was the expression of a new beginning, of a righting of all wrongs, of a cosmic redemption from chaotic evils. And in all of these respects the sun-king assumed the character of a Soter, of a savior, of the herald of a new age, of a representative sufferer for the community who carried the burden of its sins and redeemed them, and incidentally redeemed himself in order to resume his unsullied kingship. The experience of perfection and salvation was still deeply embedded in the experience of a cosmic rhythm of society; on the level of cosmological culture, one may say, the cycle of redemption corresponded functionally to the eschatology of transcendent perfection on the level of soteriological culture.[20]

Experiences and symbols are exposed to the pressure of reflective analysis, so that even in polytheistic and cosmological cultures the lines of rationalization become visible that will lead, by way of political summodeism and theogonic speculation, toward an understanding of the radical transcendence of divine being, and concomitantly to an understanding of the nature of mundane reality.

Such a line had just become visible when the experience of celestial revolutions and fertility cycles suggested aeonic cycles of chaos and

[20] On the soteriological function of kingship see *ibid.*, Chap. 13, on "Die Erloesererwartung als Ziel der Weltzeitalterlehre." An elaborate reconstruction and interpretation of the Babylonian New Year Festival is to be found in Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, Chap. 22.

order in the cosmos. Under the conditions of polytheistic symbolization the recognition of these ranks of order, of movements within movements, of periods within periods, had to express itself in the creation of hierarchies of gods. Behind the rank of celestial gods that met the eye there were divine forces at work who decreed the rulership of Marduk, the sun-god; and behind the gods who appointed the ruler of the present aeon there were other gods who had created them. Behind the power of Marduk and the other celestial gods lay the power of Anu, the lord of heaven, and his generation of gods; and they in their turn originated from a primordial Magna Mater, Tiamat, and Apsu, the begetter of gods. While the polytheistic symbolization is preserved, it becomes clear nevertheless that theogonic constructions of this type may lead to the recognition of divine power in world-transcendent reality and result in monotheistic speculation. No such ultimate break occurred in Mesopotamian civilization, and political symbolization consequently remained on the level of complexity that we find in the Babylonian New Year's festival. The higher degrees of rationalization appeared, in continuity with Mesopotamian and Persian history, only in the Hellenistic period, under the influence of Greek speculation, and in the Roman imperial theology. However, other cosmological civilizations (China, for instance) developed within their own orbit and with their own means the conception of a world monarchy as the earthly analogue of the one god who rules the cosmos; and the state documents of the Mongol Empire, in the thirteenth century A.D., formulated with full rational clarity the principle of "One god in heaven, one emperor on earth."

Better than in the Babylonian sources themselves can stages in the struggle for rationalization be discerned in the traditions of Israel. The level of celestial symbolization has survived in the previously mentioned zodiacal symbolism of the twelve tribes of Israel, as well as in the dream of Joseph (Gen. 37:9–10) in which sun, moon, and the eleven stars bow to Joseph as their political head. And as late as Revelation 12:1 St. John sees the "great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"—the woman that is bringing forth the child who slays the dragon and redeems the world. Genesis 6, as we have seen, retains the idea of a cosmic aeon of semidivine giants who must perish in the flood before the world of man can arise. And the Magna Mater has survived in Proverbs 8 in the figure of Sophia, the companion of the Lord before the creation of

the world. Moreover, the Book of Job has preserved traces of transition from polytheism to the recognition of the one, invisible creator. The celestial temptation is still strong, but better knowledge is willing to resist it (31:26–28):

> If I looked on the shining sun,
> or on the moon that moved in splendor,
> And let my heart go out to them,
> wafting a kiss to them,
> That would be a crime for punishment,
> for I should have denied the God on high.

It is hard to abandon the gods who so convincingly reign in the sky with their splendid presence, and there is something elusive about the new God (9:11):

> He passes me—I cannot see him;
> He sweeps on—I behold him not.

It is difficult to find this God, to lay one's grievance before him and to argue with him (23:2–4 and 8–9):

> But my complaint is bitter still;
> under his heavy hand I lie and moan.
> Oh that I knew where to find him,
> how to reach his very throne,
> and there lay my case before him,
> arguing it out in the full!
>
> But I go forward, and he is not there;
> backward and yet I cannot behold him;
> I seek him on my left, in vain;
> when I turn to the right I cannot see him.

In search of his God, as the last verses show, Job moves to the four quarters like a Babylonian king or Chinese emperor, but the search in space no longer reveals a divine presence because the earth is no longer the analogue of the divine sky. A world that is empty of gods begins to cast its shadow over the mood of man (23:15–17):

> I am cowed before him;
> the thought of him dismays me.
> For God makes my heart faint,
> the Almighty cows me;
> I am appalled at his dark mystery,
> and its black shadow has bewildered me.

The dismay caused by the invisible divinity was still a problem in early Christianity, and the temptation to return to the visible splendor of the gods must have been great. In Galatians 4:8–11 St. Paul has to admonish a relapsing community:

> In those days when you were ignorant of God, you were in servitude to gods who really are no gods at all; but now that you know God—or rather, are known by God—how is it you are turning back again to the weakness and poverty of the elemental spirits? Why do you want to be enslaved all over again by them? You observe days and months and festal seasons and years! Why, you make me afraid I may have spent my labor on you for nothing!

It is sometimes not sufficiently realized to what extent Israel and Christianity were engaged in the same struggle, not against each other, but against Babylonian religious culture. The obstacle in the path of rationalization seems to have been the difficulty of experiencing in the fullness of its meaning the gulf between creative, world-transcendent divine being and being in created, mundane existence; again and again we find the attempts of softening the immediacy of relation between man and the transcendent God by the introduction or reintroduction of mediating existences. Against these tendencies was directed the assurance of St. Paul in Romans 8:38–39:

> For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, no powers of the Height or of the Depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to part us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the practice of politics the rationalization of the forces of being, as yet undifferentiated into "religious" and "political" forces, is the condition of empire-building. The world of politics is essentially polytheistic in the sense that every center of power, however small and insignificant it may be, has a tendency to posit itself as an absolute entity in the world, regardless of the simultaneous existence of other centers which deem themselves equally absolute. Hence, an empire-builder faces the ineluctable task of inventing a hierarchy of forces which permits the welding of formerly independent units into one political cosmion. On the principal instrument of such rationalization, political summodeism, we have touched already. The Mesopotamian city-states had their local deities constituting the politico-religious unit; and with the succession

of empires the respective victorious gods—Enlil of Nippur, Marduk of Babylon, Ashur of Assyria—succeeded each other as the *summus deus* of the empire. The other deities, however, were not abolished, but only assigned a lower status. The internal coherence and fighting strength of an empire, furthermore, depended on the degree to which the rationalization of symbols could be translated into techniques of governmental centralization. A decisive difference between the Babylonian and Assyrian administrations, for instance, lay in the fact that in the Babylonian Empire the New Year's festival was celebrated by the local governors at the local religious capitals, while the more centralized Assyrian organization required the local governors to perform the ceremony in the capital of the empire in the years after it had been performed by the king. The commander-in-chief and governor of the important province of Harran, for instance, had to perform the ceremony in the year after the king and could not hold office unless he was the eponymous official, the *limmu*, of the year following the king. The rise of hereditary governorships, as it had occurred in Babylonia, was made impossible by the Assyrian practice; and the superior military strength of Assyria was probably due to the centralization thus achieved. While the Babylonian Empire was rather a congeries of city-states, the Assyrian Empire came nearer to the type of an organized national state.

§ 3. The Symbolization of Cosmic Order

Cosmological symbolization in a strict sense may be defined as the symbolization of political order by means of cosmic analogies. The life of man and society is experienced as ordered by the same forces of being which order the cosmos, and cosmic analogies both express this knowledge and integrate social into cosmic order. The rhythms of the seasons and of fertility in plant and animal life, as well as the celestial revolutions on which these rhythms depend, must be understood as the order that furnishes the analogies. The knowledge of cosmic order in this sense, especially as regards astronomy, was highly developed in Sumero-Babylonian civilization.

The preceding sections, however, have revealed a much more complex structure of the problem. Mesopotamian political culture went far beyond cosmological symbolization in the strict sense and even reversed the direction of symbolization. To be sure, political order was understood cosmologically, but cosmic order was also understood politically. Not only was the empire an analogue of the cosmos, but political events took place in the celestial sphere. The establishment or change of imperial rule was preceded by political upheavals among the gods who would depose an Enlil of Nippur and transfer his jurisdiction to a Marduk of Babylon. Moreover, the relations between heaven and earth were so intimate that the separateness of their existences was all but blurred. The empire was part of the cosmos, but the cosmos was an empire of which the dominion of man was a subdivision. There was *one* order embracing the world and society that could be understood either cosmologically or politically.

The mutuality of analogical illumination, and especially the conception of the world as a political order, is peculiar to Mesopotamia; it is not characteristic of all cosmological civilizations. In Chinese civilization, for instance, the rule of a dynasty depends on its possession of a specific virtue, the *teh*. Like all things under the heavens, the *teh* is exhaustible; and when it has weakened to the point of causing suffering to the people and revolutionary unrest, a new possessor of the *teh* with his family will succeed in overthrowing the declining dynasty. This rise and fall of dynasties, then, is integrated into the order of the cosmos in so far as a heavenly decree, the *ming*, ordains the rule of a family that possesses the *teh* and also ordains its overthrow when it has lost the *teh*. The attunement of society to the cosmos depends on the son of heaven and his dynastic *teh*, while the power of heaven, the *t'ien*, will provide for the rise and fall of dynasties. Hence political events, though partaking of the nature of cosmic forces, remain strictly in the sphere of a human struggle for power; heaven preserves its majesty of undisturbed order, while society is engaged in its struggle for attunement. In Chinese civilization political order is symbolized as due to the operation of impersonal cosmic forces.

Further light will be shed on the peculiarity of the Mesopotamian symbolic form by a brief glance at the late Mycenaean civilization as reflected in the Homeric epics. In Homer, as in Mesopotamia, the society of men is duplicated by a society of gods; to the order of aristocratic warriors under a king corresponds the aristocratic order of Olympian gods under a powerful but limited monarch. The relation between the two orders is even more intimate than in Mesopotamia, for the gods direct the destinies of men not only from afar by their decrees, but descend

the kingship of Marduk. Since the creation of the cosmos is at the same time a political enterprise, the *Enuma elish* is also a political epic. The three factors of cosmogony, theogony, and politics are inseparably blended into one. Hence, the nature of the epic can be determined in a first approach only by weighing these factors quantitatively. The whole poem consists of seven tablets: the first contains the cosmogony and theogony proper, Tablet V describes the creative work of Marduk, and the other five deal with the emergence of Marduk as the savior of the gods, his great battle against Tiamat, and his glorification. Thus the epic as a whole is preponderantly political; it symbolizes cosmic order as political order.

The interpretation of the poem is complicated by the same fusion of component factors that causes the difficulty in determining its nature. However, it is possible to distinguish three stages in the cosmogony. In the first stage only the watery elements are present: Tiamat (the sea), Apsu (the sweet water), and Mummu (probably cloud banks and mist). In the second stage silt is deposited at the border of sea and sweet water, represented by the pair Lahmu and Lahamu, and land is banking up; with the land begin to form the horizons of heaven and earth, represented by the pair Anshar and Kishar; with the rings of the double horizon grow into existence heaven and earth, represented by Anu and Ea (Mummud); and from Ea, finally, is born the god who in the Babylonian version bears the name of Marduk, but in the Sumerian original must have been Enlil, the god of the storm who by its blowing holds heaven and earth apart. The third stage brings the reorganization of power relations between the gods, the elevation of Marduk to kingship, and his completion of the cosmic structure. From the cosmogonic account emerges the cosmos with the structure experienced by man. The cosmogony, however, is not a "creation" but a growth of the cosmos through procreation of gods and struggles between their generations. The gods themselves are bodily the structural parts of the cosmos. And this peculiarity leads to the further problem of aeons of cosmic order.

The cosmos of the *Enuma elish* is a completed order at the end of the story. If the cosmos is understood as the finished product resulting from the growth, there are no aeons of cosmic order because there is no order before its completion. And historians have, indeed, interpreted the first stage of the watery elements as the chaos that brings forth the cosmos. This interpretation, however, puts too much emphasis on the

second to the third stage of order. The new order is threatened by a revolt of the older gods who are thirsting for revenge. The revolt is well prepared and this time the magic of Ea is of no avail. In their despair the gods turn to the brilliant young Marduk. He is willing to undertake the defense, but only on the condition that he will be recognized as the supreme god in place of Anu. The gods meet in assembly and the kingship of the universe is conferred on Marduk, who then defeats Tiamat in battle and reorders the universe:

> He created stations for the great gods;
> The stars their likenesses, the signs of the zodiac, he set up.
> He determined the year, defined the divisions;
> For each of the twelve months he set up three constellations.
>
> In the very center thereof he fixed the zenith,
> The moon he caused to shine forth; the night he entrusted to her.
> He appointed her, the ornament of the night, to make known the days.

The cosmos then is completed by the creation of man out of one of the dismembered enemies. On mankind is incumbent the service of the gods so that they will be free from work. Grateful for this last feat of creation the gods then assemble and resolve to build a sanctuary for Marduk, their last labor before men take over the work:

> So shall Babylon be, whose construction you have desired;
> Let its brickwork be fashioned, and call it a sanctuary.

The epic concludes with the enumeration of the fifty names of Marduk. About the meaning of the Marduk story there can hardly be a doubt: it is the establishment of a Mesopotamian kingship with its center in Babylon. If the first crisis could be understood as the transition from primitive communities to the organized villages which grew into the city-states, the second crisis is the establishment of a Mesopotamian empire.

From the analysis it should have become clear that the three component strands are, indeed, inextricably interwoven. Any attempt to pull out one of them and to interpret the epic either as a cosmogony, or a theogony, or a myth of Mesopotamian history would destroy the meaning of the epic, which rests in its compactness. This compactness is the Mesopotamian peculiarity that we discussed in the opening pages of the present section. The world is not created by the gods, but the gods are massively the world itself. And even mankind participates in this massivity, for it is the dismembered body of one of the gods who in this form goes on to exist. The cosmos is, furthermore, the result of a historical struggle that now has settled down into a fixed and final order, an organized state of the world in the political sense of which mankind is a part. And, finally, the omphalos of this world-state is Babylon itself, where the *Enuma elish* was annually recited at the New Year's festival. Considering such compactness the durability of the symbolism should perhaps not be surprising. It outlasted Babylon through its survival in the Hellenistic idea of the cosmos as a polis.

of the power of the Good and the Truth. Spreading the news of its expansion, consequently, was more than a reporting of political events, it was a participation in the ordering work of truth. And the account published was not true merely because of its factual correctness, but as a revelation of God and his work.

The Zoroastrian cosmic dualism, by its immanent logic, superseded the culture of polytheism; and in so far as the dualistic speculation was effective, the Achaemenian symbolism displayed the rational structure just described. The Persian imperial theology, however, was not a logically coherent system but had retained older symbolic elements. The Behistun Inscription, which makes the expansion of the realm an issue between Truth and Lie, says in a later section: "Ahuramazda, and the other gods that be, bring aid unto me." An inscription of Xerxes says: "A great god is Ahuramazda, the greatest of gods"; and inscriptions of Artaxerxes I and II name Mithras and Anahita as the more important among these other gods. As will be seen from these dates, the polytheistic element, while noticeable by the time of Darius, was even gaining in strength in the later reigns. The Persian triad of Ahuramazda, Mithras, and Anahita corresponded to the Babylonian triad of Sin, Marduk, and Ishtar (Moon, Sun, Venus), and probably was formed under Mesopotamian influence in the Indo-Iranian period preceding the separation of Hindu and Persian civilization.[6]

The co-existence of polytheistic and Mazdaist elements made it possible to attempt a pluralistic construction of the empire when the Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations had been incorporated through conquest. The Mazdaist rationalism of their own imperial theology did not prevent the Achaemenians from organizing the empire polytheistically with regard to Babylon and Egypt. The kings from Cyrus to Xerxes used "king of Babylon" as part of their style and Cyrus submitted to the Babylonian ceremony of being called to the throne by Marduk. Cambyses and Darius I, when they ascended the throne of the Pharaohs, took Egyptian hieratic names, stressing their relationship to Amon. This mixture of symbols facilitated the integration of foreign civilizations into the empire. Only when the frequent revolts in Babylon and Egypt, as well as in the Ionian cities, proved the system to be a failure did the

[6] See on the question O. Schrader's article, "Aryan Religion," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, II, 36.

monistic symbolism for expressing the differentiating experience of a world-transcendent divine being. Within the logic of conversion it is inadmissible to symbolize the mystery of iniquity by a second divinity. The experience, on the other hand, that can be adequately expressed by a dualism of good and evil forces must be sufficiently compact to comprehend in an undifferentiated state the experience of the world-immanent tension between good and evil. A dualistic theology, while it may carry monotheistic overtones, is by principle a speculative extrapolation of a world-immanent conflict of substantially the same type that in China has produced the yin-yang symbolism. Because of this world-immanent component the experience that expresses itself adequately in a dualism of divinities or principles can, in variegated historical circumstances, absorb the conflicts of the age and become the originating experience of political theologies which identify their own cause with cosmic truth and the enemy with cosmic evil.

Christianity, therefore, is wrong, and the hypothetical judgments based on the assumption are irrelevant. There is no empirical sense in surmising that a "normal" Egyptian development would have produced a victory of the "Osirian Church" and a dissolution of a "moribund civilization." The Egyptian Middle and New Kingdoms were not in "a petrified state of life-in-death," but were flourishing epochs, especially the brilliant Empire of the New Kingdom. The Greco-Roman pattern of growth, disintegration, and dissolution does not apply. An entirely different picture suggests itself: If one considers that the essential traits of Egyptian culture were developed in the Old Kingdom by the end of the Third Dynasty, the birth of Egypt will appear as an illuminating flash, a revelation followed by a lifelong struggle for its realization. The history of Egypt has a peculiarly static character because a form created at the beginning is ramified, endangered, regained, and varied, without loss of essential identity and vitality for more than two thousand years.[6]

The disagreement of Frankfort and Toynbee is a serious one, affecting the interpretation of Egyptian political history, as well as ideas, as a whole. Moreover, it is more than a difference of opinion between two scholars, for on both sides the position is supported by a respectable array of authorities. Toynbee's conception of an Egyptiac internal proletariat that produces the Osirian Church certainly is his own, but it draws for its empirical support on the work of Eduard Meyer and of Breasted. Frankfort's criticism, in its pointed sharpness, again is his own, but he finds support from others. John A. Wilson, for instance, agrees with Frankfort that Toynbee's theory of the phases of a civilizational course are inapplicable to Egypt; and with regard to the "Osirian Church" he specifically insists: "The Osirian religion was mortuary and could not be the genesis of a 'new society,' and it was originally created by and for Toynbee's 'dominant minority.' " Wilson finds it necessary, though, to warn: "These criticisms do scant justice to Toynbee's enormously refreshing influence in assailing formerly fixed ideas." [7] For his idea of a flashlike, sudden birth of Egyptian civilization, Frankfort, furthermore, can refer to the concurrent opinions of other Egyptologists, in particular those of Flinders Petrie.[8] And his assumption is borne out in

[6] Henri Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East* (London, 1951); the criticism of Toynbee and Spengler is to be found in Chap. 1, "The Study of Ancient Civilizations."

[7] Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, 32.

[8] Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization*, 25.

detail for the history of political ideas by the recent study on the Old Kingdom by Hermann Junker.[9]

A disagreement of this kind cannot be resolved by adding to the empirical argument on either side. Since it is caused by the use of insufficiently analyzed concepts, it must be overcome by penetrating to the theoretical issue that lies at its root. If several variables of reality are included in one concept, the blend will not fit concrete situations when one or the other variable goes its own historical way. As such variables, not sufficiently distinguished by either Toynbee or Frankfort, the following three must be considered:

(1) The political institutions, their creation, consolidation, and disintegration.

(2) The socially predominant experience of order and its symbolization (cosmological, anthropological, soteriological).

(3) The welding together of institutions and experiences of order, from which results what Frankfort calls the "style" or "form" of a civilization.

In the light of the preceding distinctions Toynbee is right when he diagnoses a Time of Troubles in the institutional sense in the First Intermediate Period. The breakdown of the Old Kingdom at the end of Dynasty VI is a typical endogenous disintegration of a political institution, caused by an inefficient central administration which permits local power centers to grow, lets offices become hereditary, is too generous with financial endowments of regional notables, and unduly increases the central expenditure with consequent overburdening of the people.[10] It is a process of overstraining an institution, of letting disruptive tendencies get out of hand, which also can be observed in other instances, as in Chinese or Western civilizations, though the causes may vary in detail. If Toynbee's concept of the Time of Troubles were restricted to the phenomenon of the first great institutional disintegration of an established political culture, it would apply to the First Intermediate Period. It becomes, however, inapplicable because it includes the creation of a

[9] Hermann Junker, *Pyramidenzeit* (Einsiedeln-Zurich-Koeln, 1949).

[10] As far as the formation and revolutionary action of an internal proletariat are concerned, Toynbee's conception of an Egyptian Time of Troubles has found weighty support from Joachim Spiegel, *Soziale und Weltanschauliche Reformbewegungen im Alten Aegypten* (Heidelberg, 1950)—provided that Spiegel's interpretation of the so-called "Admonitions of Ipu-wer" proves to be substantially correct.

church by the lower classes, a creation which occurs in the Hellenic Time of Troubles but not in the Egyptian. Hence, Frankfort is right when he rejects the speculation on the "Osirian Church" and its miscarriage. The cosmological culture of Egypt never was broken effectively by anthropological or soteriological developments.

These clarifications, however, do not exhaust the problem. While Toynbee's speculation on an "Osirian Church" must be rejected, his admirable flair for historical climates lets him discern that the First Intermediate Period was more than an institutional breakdown, in so far as the breakdown affected the experiences of order, adumbrating a break with cosmological symbols. Osirian religiousness indeed expanded through the lower classes and the validity of the Pharaonic cosmological symbols was seriously drawn into doubt. An experiential climate was spreading in which a soteriological religion conceivably could have found fertile ground, if such a religion had existed. But no prophet or savior arose, and the mortuary religion of Osiris, as Wilson has pointed out, could hardly have become a community-forming church. Though Egyptian culture acquired during this period a new dimension of skepticism, the Pharaonic institution emerged from the ordeal with unbroken vitality. Hence, Toynbee is right when he senses an experiential climate, pregnant with new religious possibilities, but is wrong when he speculates on the actual presence of such a religion; Frankfort is right when he insists that no religious revolution occurred, but he stretches his point when he treats the changes of experiential structure as insignificant in comparison with the millennial lasting of Egyptian "form."

The abstract analysis will gain concreteness if we consider a source that will illustrate the nature and degree of the tension in Egyptian history. The purpose will be served by the "Song of the Harper," originally a tomb inscription, probably for a king shortly before the establishment of the Middle Kingdom: [11]

> How weary is this righteous prince;
> the goodly fortune has come to pass!
> Generations pass away since the time of the god,

[11] For the question of the date see James H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York, 1912), 182, or the same author's *The Dawn of Conscience*, 163; and the introductory note by John A. Wilson in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 467. The text is taken from *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, with the variants indicated in the footnotes p. 467.

result of such doubts is a hedonistic skepticism which counsels to satisfy the pleasures of life as long as it lasts. It is a hedonism without joy, reflecting surfeit with a life that has become senseless. And death has become a "goodly fortune" that releases the prince from the weariness of his existence.

The experience of lasting and passing without sense strongly predominates. The author of the song sees himself, in his present, at the end of a wearisome chain of existences. Generations have lasted and passed since the "time of the god" (presumably the founder of the unified Egypt), and all that has been achieved is that he, and the gods who succeeded him, as well as their beatified notables, lie now in their pyramids. That is the key word for the attack on the pyramids, those symbols of everlastingness, themselves. The names of the sages of the past, of Ii-em-hotep and Hor-dedef, are chosen with deliberation. For Ii-em-hotep, the architect of Djoser (Dynasty III, *ca.* 2700 B.C.), was the creator of stone masonry on a large scale and builder of the terraced pyramid of Sakkarah, the oldest still surviving, while Hor-dedef was the son of Cheops (*ca.* 2600 B.C.), the builder of the greatest of the pyramids. The wisdom of these sages was still known at the time of the song (*ca.* 2000 B.C.), but their tombs were broken. The neglect of the pyramids, which stood there worn with age for everybody to see, as well as the plundering and destruction of minor tombs, must have made a deep impression. When the symbols of eternity were themselves passing away, the attempt to build eternity materially into this world must have appeared convincingly futile. In brief, Egyptian culture had an inner past—sometimes forgotten by the modern historian who looks back on "ancient" Egypt. The Pyramid Age was rather "ancient" even for an Egyptian of the Middle Kingdom, and the man who wrote the "Song of the Harper" looked at the pyramid of Cheops over approximately the same distance in time that lies between us and the cathedral of Chartres. There certainly was enough of an object lesson to awaken a sense of the gulf that separates the achievement of man from the eternity of being. Moreover, the lesson once learned was not lost, for the song was still copied under the imperial dynasties of the New Kingdom. Thus, the experiential stratum of skepticism with regard to the meaning of the Pharaonic foundation was permanently incorporated into the Egyptian form.[12]

[12] For the continuity between the skepticism of the Time of Troubles and the Enlightenment of the New Kingdom, in particular of the movement of Akhenaton, cf. Joachim Spiegel, *Soziale und Weltanschauliche Reformbewegungen im Alten Aegypten* (Heidelberg, 1950).

The "Song of the Harper" does not flower into an opening of the soul toward transcendent divinity, but flattens into hedonism and skepticism. This peculiar phenomenon, the corrosion of the Pharonic symbolism to a breaking point never quite reached, will illuminate the problem of civilizational form raised by Frankfort.

"Form," as previously suggested, results from the interpenetration of institutions and experiences of order. The institutions, to be sure, may break down under economic stresses, or through changes in the distribution of power, but when the afflicted society recaptures its strength for self-organization, the new institutions will belong to the same formal type as the old ones, unless there has also occurred a revolutionary change in the experience of order. As long as the experiences of order retain their compact structure, in spite of corrosion pointing toward new differentiation, the form will be preserved. A civilization can be profoundly shaken by institutional upheavals and still present an appearance of millennial formal stability. The problem of form need not be left at the stage of acknowledgment that some civilizations, such as the Greco-Roman, conform to the "progressive" type developed by Toynbee, while others, such as the Egyptian, have a "static" form which remains constant from beginning to end. The problem of "form" can be clarified theoretically, and its phenomena be made intelligible, through the use of the principles which govern the compactness and differentiation of the experiences of order. The three principles, as they have emerged in the course of this study, can be formulated in the following manner:

(1) The nature of man is constant.
(2) The range of human experience is always present in the fullness of its dimensions.
(3) The structure of the range varies from compactness to differentiation.

Moreover, the differentiation of the experiences of order does not run its course within a concrete society, or within the societies of only one civilization, but extends through a plurality of societies in time and space, in a world-historic process in which the various civilizations participate to their allotted measure. Hence, the "form" of a society is at the same time the mode of its participation in the adumbrated world-historic process that extends indefinitely into the future. Beyond the

primitive level, the earliest civilizations known, like the Egyptian, are indeed exposed to the same institutional vicissitudes as the later ones, but since the compact experience of order does not break under the stress of institutional disasters, the actual changes of institutional order occur, with a peculiar quality of subduedness, within a cosmological form that remains stable. Hence, while the formal differences between civilizations are correctly observed by Frankfort, the language of "static" and "dynamic" types must be replaced by descriptions that will determine its form for each case of a concrete society by relating it to the supra-civilizational process in which the compact experiences of order differentiate.

The method suggested has empirical advantages that become obvious as soon as a further civilizational course is introduced for purposes of comparison. A few reflections on Chinese civilization will prove helpful, as they have proved already in the analysis of Mesopotamian symbols.

In the Chinese case, the Chou kingdom disintegrated in the period of the Contending States, and this Time of Troubles in its turn gave way to the imperial unification of China under the Ch'in and Han dynasties. The institutional course thus closely resembles the Egyptian sequence of Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, and the following imperial reorganizations. Throughout this course, and further through Chinese history down to A.D. 1912, the cosmological symbolism remains unbroken. In both the Chinese and Egyptian cases, therefore, a "static" cosmological form prevails in a history of approximately three thousand years, with the Chinese Son of Heaven corresponding to the Pharaoh as the mediator between cosmic-divine order and society. The parallel goes even so far that in the Chinese Time of Troubles, in certain variants of Taoism, experiences and attitudes appear which resemble those of the "Song of the Harper."

However, in Chinese civilization there also occurred, in Confucianism, an experiential break with the cosmological order. And though the break did not go so deep as the contemporary one in Greek philosophy, it had institutional consequences of a magnitude without parallel in Egypt. For the disillusionment with the cosmic order of society, as well as with its preservation through the Son of Heaven, led to the discovery of the autonomous personality as a source of order. The order of society, which hitherto had depended on the Son of Heaven alone, now depended, in rivalry with him, on the sage who participated in the order of the cosmos.

In the realm of symbols the new experience of the autonomous person and his will to order became manifest in the transfer of imperial qualifications to the sage. The *tao* and the *teh,* whose possession entailed the ordering efficacy of the prince, the *ch'un,* now became efficacious forces in the soul of the princely man, the *ch'un-tse*. Confucius thus approached the sage and the prince to the point of blending them in a symbol closely related to Plato's philosopher-king. Moreover, the social effectiveness of the princely man was governed by the same cosmic fatality as that of the ruler. For the king had the *teh* (force) to mediate the cosmic *tao* (order) to society through the *ming*, the decree of heaven; and in the same manner it depended on the heavenly *ming* whether the wisdom of the sage was heard and accepted, so that he would become an effective ordering force in the community.[13] Thus the sage was no longer the member of a society which only as a whole received its order through mediation of the ruler. He himself had access to the *tao* that ordered world and society, and thereby he became a potential ruler and a rival to the Son of Heaven in mediating the *tao*—an idea which, as far as we know, never occurred to an Egyptian.

This transfer of royal symbols to the sage, however, illuminates the limitations of Confucianism as a new ordering force in society. To be sure, the autonomy of the personality, independent of the authority of society, had been gained through the immediate relation between man and cosmic *tao*. Nevertheless, the authority of the sage was of the same cosmological type as the authority of the Son of Heaven. The differentiation of experience did not advance, as with Plato, to the development of a new theology in opposition to the beliefs prevalent in the community; it did not become radically transcendental. Confucianism did not lead to a break in the cosmological form of the empire because it was not a philosophy in the sense established by Plato. And since there was no radical incompatibility in the experiences of order, the empire could even utilize Confucian scholarship as a bureaucratic support for its cosmological form.

In conclusion, it can be said that the debate about types of civilizational courses will remain inconclusive as long as it is conducted on the level of construction of empirical types. The intelligible order of history cannot be found through classification of phenomena; it must be sought

[13] Marcel Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise* (Paris, 1934), 481 ff. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York, 1948), 44 ff.

through a theoretical analysis of institutions and experiences of order, as well as of the form that results from their interpenetration. The ultimate constants of history cannot be determined by forming type concepts of phenomenal regularities, for historical regularities are no more than manifestations of the constants of human nature in their range of compactness and differentiation. Moreover, the erection into historical constants of the phenomenal regularities, which indeed can be observed in the civilizational courses, is especially reprehensible because the civilizations are not self-contained units repeating a pattern of growth and decline. A civilization is the form in which a society participates, in its historically unique way, in the supracivilizational, universal drama of approximation to the right order of existence through increasingly differentiated attunement with the order of being. A civilizational form has historical singularity, never to be absorbed by phenomenal regularities, because the form is an act in the drama of mankind that unknowably is enacted into the future.

The preceding theoretical reflections should, however, in no way deprecate the search for the phenomenally typical in the course of civilizations. For inevitably we must start from the phenomenal regularities in order to arrive at the constants of human nature, as well as at the structural differentiation of the constant range of experiences; that is, at the dynamics of human nature that we call history.

§ 2. The Cosmological Form

The Egyptians experienced the order of their society as part of cosmic order. The expression of the experience in symbols belongs, therefore, to the same general type as the Mesopotamian. Nevertheless, from the interpenetration of experiences and institutions there resulted a civilizational form, unique in all of its principal aspects. The form is peculiar because of its sudden birth, which must be considered a flashlike outburst of creativity even if we generously accord a century or more to this "flash" for bringing the form into definitely recognizable existence. Furthermore, the form is peculiar because of several elements of structure which distinguish it from the Mesopotamian, and for that matter from the form of any other cosmological civilization. And, finally, it is peculiar because within it occurs a rich differentiation of experiences which point beyond the limits of cosmology and are interpreted, there-

rule of a king who mediates the divine forces of cosmic order to the people. Through the god-king Egyptian society is hearkening in openness to the right order of Atum and Horus; the possession of the Pharaoh secures existence within the world without falling a prey to the evils of the world; without a Pharaoh not only the country will fall into political disorder, but the people will fall from the justice of divine being. Understood in this sense the hymn to Atum reveals the structure of the experiences which lived in the Pharaonic order. It must be considered one of the most important documents for the study of Egyptian civilizational form and the secret of its millennial stability.

When the god chooses Egypt, he does not reveal himself directly to the people, or enter into a covenant with them, but is present with the people through his manifestation in their ruler. We must now approach the most puzzling aspect of Pharaonic symbolism, the divinity of the king. Divine kingship is a rare phenomenon. It occurs in Egypt, but, except in scattered instances, occurs neither in Mesopotamia nor in any of the major cosmological civilizations. Before an interpretation can be attempted, the phenomenon itself must be clearly understood. A divine king is not a god who has assumed human form, but a man in whom a god manifests himself. The god remains distinctly in his own sphere of existence and only extends his substance into the ruler, as it were. An intelligent contemporary, Herodotus, who could ask questions from Egyptian priests, and probably had more practice in dealing with gods than we have today, confirms the strictly human status of the Pharaoh. The Greek historian received the information that Menes had been the first human king of Egypt; before him the country had been ruled by gods, in particular by Horus; but since Menes the country had had "no king who was a god in human form." [28] That point must be kept firmly in mind, especially since the Egyptian sources refer to the Pharaohs as gods, identify a Pharaoh with this or that god, or address a god as the ruler of Egypt. When reading such phraseology we must consider that Egyptian sources are not treatises on philosophical anthropology or theology. The abbreviating identifications do not mean that the Egyptians could not distinguish between gods and men. They were fully aware that their Pharaohs died like all other human beings, while the undying manifestation of Horus or Re continued in their successors for their

[28] Herodotus II, 142.

respective human life-spans. The Pharaoh thus is not a god but the manifestation of one; by virtue of the divine presence in him, the king is the mediator of divine ordering help to man, though not for all men but for the Egyptian people only.

The analysis of the symbol is not complete, nor does it explain the extraordinary occurrence of god-kings in Egypt. A complete and adequate explanation would have to penetrate to the experience which expressed itself in the symbol, as well as to the circumstances which favored its development. Such an explanation—as distinguished from the usual description of the phenomenal surface of the Pharaonic institution—is perhaps not possible at the present state of science. Nevertheless, I shall venture a suggestion.

The experience can perhaps be approached through analysis of another Egyptian curiosity—that is, of the manifestation of gods in animals. Some excellent pages on this subject of animal manifestations were written by Frankfort. In the first place, the nature of manifestation becomes clearer in the case of divine animals than in that of divine kings. The god Horus, for instance, who is manifest in the sun and the king, is also manifest in the falcon; the god Thoth is manifest in the moon, the baboon, and the ibis; the goddess Hathor in the cow; the god Anubis in the jackal. In none of these cases does the animal manifestation limit or define the god's powers; the god remains distinct from his manifestation. Secondly, some light will fall on the meaning of the symbol through the observation that in animal manifestations of the gods the individual and the species tend to blur. It is not certain whether the god is manifest in the species, or in an individual animal, or in the individual animal as a representative of the species. Frankfort concludes that animals as such inspired religious awe because "with animals the continual succession of generations brought no change. . . . The animals never change, and in this respect especially they would appear to share—in a degree unknown to man—the fundamental nature of creation." [29] In animal nature the species outweighs the individual. Hence—as we should formulate it—in the animal species, with its unchanging constancy through the generations, man senses a higher degree of participation in being than his own; the animal species, outlasting the existence of individual man, approaches the lasting of the world and the gods.

The idea that the divine should be manifest in the species is suggestive.

[29] Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York, 1948), 8–14.

Could it be that divine kingship is a phenomenon of the same class, only exhibiting such differences of surface appearance as are necessitated by the difference between human and animal natures? For man, while knowing himself as more than an animal of a species, still knows himself as member of a group of his kind—that is, of a society endowed with durability far superior to that of individual man. Hence, in a civilization in which gods are experienced as manifest in the animal species because of their lastingness, one might expect this "style" of experience and symbolization to extend also to the lastingness of society. The structure of a society, however, differs from that of an animal species in so far as a society gains existence through institutional articulation among a multitude of men and the creation of a representative. The god, therefore, can manifest himself not in any random man as representative of the species but only in the ruler as the representative of society. In the Pharaoh, one might say, not "a man" but "the king" was a god—though one must beware of oversharpening the issue into a charisma of office, for in the institution of the "dynasty," in the birth of every Pharaoh as a son of god, there was also present the idea of the god-man who by virtue of his qualification was destined to succeed in the Pharaonic office. Still, through manifestation in the king the god was manifest in society as a whole; and conversely, by being an Egyptian the humblest peasant on his lands, or worker on his pyramid, participated in the divinity of the order that emanated from the Pharaoh; the divinity of the Pharaoh radiated over society and transformed it into a people of the god. If we realize the compactness of the experience of order that is implied in such symbols—the firm integration of man in society, the dependence of a sense of order in his own life on the unbroken stability of social order—we can better understand why the Egyptian "form" proved so tenaciously resistant to differentiating experiences and a reorientation of human existence toward transcendent divinity. And we also get an inkling of the scandal which Christianity must have been for men emerging from cosmological civilizations, if we consider that not a king was the god incarnate but an ordinary man of low social status who represented nobody but nevertheless was claimed by his followers to be the representative mediator and sufferer for mankind.

That leaves open the question why the manifestation of gods in animals and kings should be an important feature in Egyptian civilization and should play an insignificant role, or none at all, elsewhere. Again

no more than a suggestion can be ventured. It seems possible that the Egyptian peculiarity has something to do with the previously discussed suddenness of transition from primitive village communities to an imperial civilization. As a consequence of such suddenness, perhaps elements of an older, more primitive culture were preserved—as indicated by an occasional expression of cannibalistic intentions on the part of a king—which have disappeared where political evolution passed through the phase of city-states before it issued in the imperial foundations. The suggestion would have to find support through a study of East African societies and their culture traits as the social and cultural matrix from which Egypt has grown. But that will have to remain outside the scope of the present inquiry.

Through mediation of the king the order of the cosmos radiates over society. A selection of sources will illustrate the Egyptian concept of the process. We shall begin with a few passages from the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom which concern the divine status of the Pharaoh in its purity—that is, after his earthly death. The gods greet the dead king in the beyond:

> This is my son, my first born . . .
> This is my beloved with whom I have been satisfied.[30]
>
> This is my beloved, my son;
> I have given the horizons to him, that he may be powerful over them like Harachte.[31]
>
> He lives, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, beloved of Re, living for ever.[32]
>
> Thou art king with thy father Atum, thou art high with thy father Atum;
> Thou appearest with thy father Atum, distress disappears.[33]
>
> Thou hast come into being, thou hast become high, thou hast become content;
> thou hast become well in the embrace of thy father, in the embrace of Atum.
> Atum, let N. ascend to thee, enfold him in thy embrace, for he is thy bodily son forever.[34]

[30] Pyramid Texts, 12a–b.
[31] *Ibid.*, 42a–b.
[32] *Ibid.*, 6.
[33] *Ibid.*, 207c–d.
[34] *Ibid.*, 2122–13b. For this and the preceding passage see also the following paragraphs.

The new "being" of the Pharaoh, his rebirth into eternal life, is due to a second birth from a procreative act of Atum and the goddess of the lower sky; at the same time, however, the rebirth after death [35] is a birth from eternity, preceding even the creation of the world:

> The mother of N., dweller in the lower sky, became pregnant with him;
> N. was given birth by his father Atum,
> before the sky came into being, before the earth came into being,
> before men came into being, before the gods were born, before death came into being.[36]

This personage, the son of god, begotten from his father in eternity and returning after death into his embrace to be king with him—this being "whose spirit belongs to heaven, whose body belongs to earth" [37]—is during his human life-span the ruler of Egypt. His rule, which channels the divine-cosmic forces of order into society, begins with his coronation. The meaning of the act, that is, the birth of the god who will bring order out of chaos, is expressed in the coronation rituals of the Old Kingdom in formulas which closely resemble those of the mortuary texts. The resemblance, however, is not a mere parallelism, for, as we shall see presently, the acts of royal and cosmic ordering, of the second birth and the assumption of kingship, are experienced as consubstantial "from eternity." The interpretation of the texts is, therefore, not easy, for the flavor of such compactness will get lost by transposing the various strands of meaning into differentiating concepts. We shall begin with a passage from a coronation ritual of Buto in Lower Egypt.

When the king approaches the "Crown, Great-in-Magic," the priest pronounces:

> He is pure for thee; he is in awe for thee.
> Mayest thou be satisfied with him; mayest thou be satisfied with his purity;
> mayest thou be satisfied with his word, which he speaks to thee:
> "How beautiful is thy face, when it is peaceful, new, young,
> for a god, father of the gods, has begotten thee." [38]

As in a dream-play the figures of the drama blend and change into each other. The words in quotation marks are addressed by the king to the crown. The crown which the king is going to wear is now the son of god,

[35] Compare Revelation 20:6, 14.
[36] Pyramid Texts, 1466a–d.
[37] *Ibid.*, 474a.
[38] *Ibid.*, 194d–95c.

ing creator and the ordering king, the divine father and his son begotten from eternity, the crown and its wearer, the royal ruler and the reborn young god thus merge and are all co-present in the Pharaoh. The order of society emanating from the Pharaoh is consubstantial with the order of the world created by the god, because in the Pharaoh is present the creative divinity itself. The Pharaonic order is the continuous renewal and re-enactment of the cosmic order from eternity.

The order was seriously interrupted by the First and Second Intermediate periods, and it was also exposed to minor upheavals within the established regimes. The sources of the Middle and New Kingdoms have no longer the self-assured tone of the Pyramid Texts, but reveal in their discursive assertiveness and their exhortatory character the struggle that lies behind them. The following admonition, assuming the form of a father's instruction to his children for right living, is an inscription of the chief treasurer of Amenemhet III (Nimaatre, *ca.* 1840–1790 B.C.) of Dynasty XII:

> Worship King Ni-maat-Re, living forever, within your bodies
> And associate with his majesty in your hearts.
> He is Perception which is in men's hearts,
> And his eyes search out every body.
> He is Re, by whose beams one sees,
> He is one who illumines the Two Lands more than the sun disc.
> He is one who makes the land greener than does a high Nile,
> For he has filled the Two Lands with strength and life.[47]

Even more succinctly speaks an inscription from the tomb of Rekhmire, the vizier of Thutmose III (*ca.* 1490–1436 B.C.):

> What is the king of Upper and Lower Egypt?
> He is a god by whose dealings one lives,
> the father and mother of all men,
> alone by himself without an equal.[48]

The Pharaoh is the father of all men, as Atum or Re is his father; and men are, through his mediation, sons of the god at a second remove, participating in his life-spending force. The images of physical begetting and physical absorption into body and heart vividly express the oneness of divine order in world and society. Most striking is an inscription from Queen Hatshepsut (*ca.* 1520–1480), who, considering her difficult

[47] Translated by Wilson in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 431. For the historical situation of the admonition see Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, 142 ff.

[48] Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 43.

of Rekhmire, the vizier of Thutmose III. The dignitary gives a proud and detailed account of his investiture:

> I was a noble, the second to the king . . . . It was the first occasion of my being summoned. All my brothers were in the outer office. I went forth . . . clad in fine linen . . . . I reached the doorway of the palace gate. The courtiers bent their backs, and I found the masters of ceremonies clearing a way before me.

After the setting of the scene, he describes the first effect of Maat on his person:

> My abilities were not as they had been: my yesterday's nature had altered itself, since I had come forth in the accoutrements [of the vizier] to be the Prophet of Maat.

The Pharaoh expresses his pleasure at seeing a person with whom his heart feels in sympathy, and lays down the rule of transmission:

> Would that thou mightest act in conformance with what I may say! Then Maat will rest in her place.

The account concludes with the consequences of conformance, as manifest in the official conduct of the vizier:

> I acted in conformance with that which he had ordained . . . . I raised *maat* [justice] to the height of heaven; I made its beauty circulate to the width of the earth . . . . When I judged the petitioner, I was not partial. I did not turn my brow for the sake of reward. I was not angry at a petitioner, nor did I rebuff him, but I tolerated him in his moment of outburst. I rescued the timid from the violent. . . .[56]

The *maat* of the cosmos thus circulates from the god, through the Pharaoh and his administrators, into the existence of the humblest, most timid petitioner in court.

§ 3. The Dynamics of Experience

The preceding section dealt with the form of Egyptian political culture; the present section will deal with its corrosion by differentiating experiences.

Form and corrosion can be clearly distinguished as problems, but they are difficult, if not impossible, to separate in the process of history.

[56] Translated by Wilson in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 213.

water, air, or fire. Obviously, Egyptians and Ionians engaged in the same kind of intellectual endeavor. In both instances man was in quest of the origin of the world that surrounded him in time and space, and he found the answer in an element whose constant creative presence suggested its primordial creativeness.

Beyond this point, however, the two endeavors are neither similar nor parallel. They are not similar, for the answers, in spite of their common substance, differ widely by their intellectual form. In Egypt the answer is a cosmogonic myth, a story of the creation, or rather of the ordering of the world, by a god; in Hellas it is a speculation on the principle, the arche, of being. Moreover, the differences of form do not run parallel, for in the background of Ionian speculation there still can be sensed the cosmogonic thought from which it derives. Ionian speculation and cosmogonic myth are related historically in so far as the one derives from the other through differentiation of experience and symbols. The cosmogonic myth is an older, more comprehensive form of expressing the order of being, and out of this myth Ionian speculation differentiates the idea of a being and becoming that is closed to the gods, and because of this closure demands interpretation in terms of its immanent forces. This act of differentiation, in which a world with an immanent order of being is created by the philosopher, is distinctly a Hellenic achievement; nothing of the kind occurs in Egypt.

The limitation of the Egyptian myth thus is clear. Nevertheless, today it is no longer permissible to regard the myth as having no other purpose in the history of mankind than to provide a stepping stone for more rational forms of symbolization; and by the same token, it no longer makes sense to search for the meaning of the myth in its partial anticipation of future accomplishments. We must recognize that the myth has a life and a virtue of its own. While Egyptian thought does not advance from myth to speculation, it is devoid neither of truth nor of intellectual movement. And the very comparison that reveals the limitations of the myth also points toward the source of its strength. For the fact that the speculation on being has differentiated out of the larger complex of cosmogonies suggests that the myth is much richer in content than any of the partial symbolizations derived from it. This richer content may conveniently be subdivided in two classes: The myth, first, contains the various experiential blocs which separate in the course of differentiation; and it, second, contains an experience that welds the

blocs into a living whole. That binding factor in the Egyptian cosmogonies is the experience of consubstantiality.[57]

From the interaction of these various parts of the myth results its peculiar flavor of compactness. The previously mentioned "elements," for instance, are not yet distinguished as substances, as the stuff of which the world in the immanent sense is made, but are seen as the creative forces in their most impressive cosmic manifestations—in the sun, the earth, the wind. Moreover, the gods are recognized as manifest in the same cosmic phenomena. And the manner in which the gods are present again defies distinction by a Greek or modern vocabulary. One can hardly speak of their immanence in the world, for "immanence" presupposes an understanding of "transcendence" that is not yet achieved, though certainly from an experience of divine manifestation can develop an ultimate understanding of divine transcendence. The myth in its compact form thus contains both the experiential bloc that was developed by the Ionians and their successors into a metaphysics of world-immanent being and the other bloc, disregarded in such speculation, that developed into the faith in a world-transcendent being.

In a compactness that can not be translated but only dissected by our modern vocabulary, the myth holds together the blocs which in later history not only will be distinguished, but also are liable to fall apart. If we follow the two lines of differentiation as they emerge from the myth, if we consider that they will be pursued to the extremes of a radically other-worldly faith and of an agnostic metaphysics, and if we contemplate the inevitably resultant disorder in the soul of man and society, the relative merits of compactness and differentiation will appear in a new light. Differentiation, one would have to say, is not an unqualified good; it is fraught with the dangers of radically dissociating the experiential blocs held together by the myth, as well as of losing the experience of consubstantiality in the process. The virtue of the cosmogonic myth, on the contrary, lies in its compactness: It originates in an integral understanding of the order of being, provides the symbols which adequately express a balanced manifold of experiences, and is a living force, preserving the balanced order in the soul of the believers.

The burden of these virtues is carried by the experience of consubstantiality. It is, within the economy of the myth, not a mechanical clasp for the various experiential blocs but a principle that establishes the order among the realms of being. The community of being, to be sure, is experienced as a community of substance; but it is divine substance that becomes manifest in the world, not cosmic substance that becomes manifest in the gods. The partners in the community of being are linked in a dynamic order in so far as divine substance pervades the world, society, and man, and not human or social substance the world and the gods. The order of consubstantiality thus is hierarchical; the flow of substance goes from the divine into the mundane, social, and human existences.

[57] On the problem of consubstantiality, especially in connection with the "monotheistic" trends to be discussed presently in the text, see Wilson in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 65 ff.

In the light of this analysis it will now be possible to characterize nature and direction of the differentiations which actually occur within the Egyptian mythical form. The differentiation goes neither in the direction of Ionian speculation nor in the direction of a genuine opening of the soul toward transcendent being; it is rather a speculative exploration within the range of consubstantiality. The nature of the divine substance that is manifest in the existentially lower ranks of being becomes the object of inquiry, and the exploration leads—we are inclined to say inevitably—to a determination of the substance as "one" and as "spiritual." Considering that result, it is legitimate to speak of an Egyptian evolution toward monotheism as long as one remains aware that the pluralism of divine manifestations in the world is not really broken by an experience of transcendence.

A few passages from the Amon Hymns of Dynasty XIX will illustrate the nature and limitations of the development.[58] In the first place, the one god is unknown because he came into being at the beginning, alone, without witnesses:

> The first to come into being in the earliest times,
> Amon, who came into being at the beginning,
> so that his mysterious nature is unknown . .
> Building his own egg, a daemon mysterious of birth,
> who created his own beauty,
> the divine god who came into being by himself.
> All other gods came into being after he began himself.

[58] The Amon Hymns are ascribed to the reign of Ramses II (*ca.* 1301–1234 B.C.). The passages are quoted in Wilson's translation in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 368 ff.

The god, furthermore, remains a hidden, invisible god, whose name is unknown:

> One is Amon hiding himself from them,
> concealing himself from the other gods . . . .
> He is far from heaven, he is absent from the underworld,
> so that no gods know his true form.
> His image is not displayed in writings.
> No one bears witness to him . . . .
> He is too mysterious that his majesty might be disclosed,
> he is too great that men should ask about him,
> too powerful that he might be known.
> At the utterance of his mysterious name, wittingly or unwittingly,
> instantly one falls in a death of violence.

The god mysterious of form nevertheless is a god of many forms:

> Mysterious of form, glistening of appearance,
> the marvelous god of many forms.
> All other gods boast of him,
> to magnify themselves through his beauty,
> according as he is divine.

The participation of all other gods in the substance of the one god, however, is hierarchically restricted through a peculiar trinitarian conception of the highest divinity:

> All gods are three: Amon, Re, and Ptah,
> and there is no second to them.
> "Hidden" [*amen*] is his name as Amon, he is Re in face, and his body is Ptah.
> Their cities are on earth, abiding forever:
> Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis unto eternity.

In their aggregate the texts render a fairly clear picture of the intellectual situation. The movement toward monotheism is unmistakably marked by the elevation of one god as the highest above all others. Moreover, the attempt to define his nature as that of a being before the time and beyond the space of the world, as well as his further characterization as invisible, formless, and nameless, reveal the typical technique of the *theologia negativa* in circumscribing the nature of the transcendent god. Nevertheless, the differentiating movement does not break with polytheism; it preserves the experience of consubstantiality intact when

cannot render the compactness of thought that is due to the experience of consubstantiality. For in the imagery of the text the political events are at the same time a divine-cosmic drama; and this substantial oneness of events on the various levels of existence cannot be communicated by an analysis at all; we must let the text speak for itself:

> . . . Ptah, that is, this land named with the Great Name of Ta Tjenen . . .
> He who unified this land has appeared as King of Upper Egypt and as King of Lower Egypt.[60]

The fragments suggest the meaning of the great event. Ptah's name is Ta-Tjenen, that is, the "Risen Land." The name alludes to the cosmogonic belief that the creation started with the emergence of a mound of earth, the Primeval Hill, from the waters of chaos. The land of the original creation is Egypt itself; and by further mythical identification this Egypt is the god Ptah. The land is, furthermore, made one by the appearance of the conquering king, who by virtue of that act slips into the role of the Ptah, the Risen Land of Egypt. In fact, throughout Egyptian history the hieroglyph which designates the primeval "hillock of appearance" means also the "appearance in glory," especially of the Pharaoh when he ascends the throne. The references to the "land," finally, are probably loaded with allusions to the land reclaimed from the marshes by Menes in order to build Memphis and the temple of Ptah, as well as to the "Great Land," that is, the province of This from which the conquerors came. Creation and unification, the world and Egypt, the god and the king, the god and the land, the king and the land thus merge in a mythical drama of order rising out of chaos, in a drama that reaches through all the realms of being. The play with tightly packed meanings must always be remembered in the background of the following analysis.

With regard to the unification and the establishment of Memphis as the new center we can be brief, because no problems of differentiation arise.

The history and justification of the conquest is clad in a mythical story, interspersed with dramatic passages (Section II). The earth-god Geb adjudicates the strife between Seth, his younger son, and Horus, the son of his older son Osiris, concerning the rule over Egypt. Seth receives

[60] Translation by Frankfort in *Kingship and the Gods*, 25. This is all that is left of Section I of the inscription. In numbering the sections we also follow the convenient subdivisions made by Frankfort.

tian gods. The elements used are (1) a myth of the sun-god who rises out of chaos as the creator, and (2) a myth of the gods created by the sun-god. The first myth is best preserved in a version which ascribes the rise of Atum out of chaos to Hermopolis. The chaos consists of eight gods: the primeval waters and the sky over them, the boundless and the formless, darkness and obscurity, the hidden and the concealed one. From this primeval Ogdoad emerges Atum. According to the second myth it is Atum who in his turn creates the eight gods of heavenly and earthly order; together with Atum the eight form the Ennead. With the two myths of the Ogdoad and the Ennead as their materials, the authors of the Memphite Theology had to construe Ptah as superior to the creator-god Atum. Within the style of the myth the problem had to be resolved by placing Ptah prior to Atum in the process of creation, that is, by identifying him with the gods of the Ogdoad. He is:

> Ptah-Nun, the father who begot Atum;
> Ptah-Naunet, the mother who begot Atum;
> Ptah . . . who gave birth to the gods.

Through the identification with Ptah the original gods of the Ogdoad, however, become virtually meaningless. Instead of the chaos, there is now at the beginning a god who creates the world out of nothing.

The authors apparently were aware of the problem of a creation *ex nihilo*, for they struggled visibly, against the handicap of sensual imagery, toward an understanding of the process as spiritual. The work of creation had to begin with Atum, the head of the Ennead. The creation of the former creator-god by the new one is couched in the following terms:

> [Something] in-the-form-of-Atum became, in the heart, and became, on the tongue [of Ptah].

The crude "something in-the-form-of" would best be translated by the Greek *eidos*, or our modern *idea*. The world originates as an idea in the mind (the heart) and through the command (the tongue) of the god. But the world that comes into being in that manner is not that of Genesis 1 with its sober, systematic ontology: the inorganic universe (1–11), vegetative life (12), animal life (20–25), man (26–27); it is the Egyptian world that is "full of gods," and its creation begins with the traditional divine-cosmic forces, with Atum and his Ennead. Ptah is not yet the transcendent god, but a speculative extrapolation within

the range of the myth. The meaning of the process as "spiritual" must, furthermore, be hedged in by reflections, on the "heart" and the "tongue" of the god. The two organs which the god uses in producing the idea are organic seats of divine and royal qualities known to us from other sources. The "command" or "authoritative utterance" (Hu), and "knowledge" or "perception" (Sia), are attributes of the sun-god Re, as well as of the Pharaoh. A Pyramid Text says:

> The Great [Re] stands up in the interior of his chapel,
> and lays down to the ground his dignity for N.,
> after N. had taken command [Hu] and had laid hold of knowledge [Sia].[62]

Thus, the "spiritualization" of the god is inseparable from that of the king. One must not forget for a moment that by virtue of the experience of consubstantiality, the "theology" of this section is at the same time a "politics." The creation of the world as a divine "idea" is consubstantial with the creation of Egypt as the royal "idea" of the conqueror. And we may even say that the creation of Egypt out of nothing, as an idea in the heart and on the tongue of the royal conqueror, is the experience that loosens up the mythical materials and engenders the conscious freedom of the theological speculation proper.

The assumption of a new freedom, of a conscious adventure in theologizing, is not arbitrary but finds support in the text itself. For the account of the first creative act is followed by an epistemological "teaching" or "doctrine" that reads as if it were a footnote of the author who wishes to justify his extraordinary construction. Other gods, like Atum, may have created physically; Ptah created by heart and tongue, and that is what gave him his superiority:

> It so happens that heart and tongue prevailed over all other members of the body, considering,
> that the heart is in every body, and the tongue is in every mouth,
> of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, and whatever else lives;
> [Ptah prevails] by thinking [as heart] and commanding [as tongue] everything that he wishes.

[62] Pyramid Texts, 300a–c. See also Mercer's commentaries in Volume II of *Pyramid Texts*, to 300a-c and 251b. In the later political theology Maat is added to Hu and Sia as the third attribute of the Pharaoh; a passage from the Kubban Stela says: "Thou art the living likeness of thy father Atum of Heliopolis, for Authoritative Utterance is in thy mouth, Understanding is in thy heart, thy speech is the shrine of Truth [*maat*]"; see Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 149.

> The sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, the air-breathing of the nose
> they report to the heart. It [the heart] causes every thought to come forth,
> and the tongue announces what the heart thinks.
> Thus are done all works and all crafts, the action of the arms, the movement of the legs, and the action of all other members, according to the command which the heart thought, which came forth from the tongue, and which makes the dignity [or essence, worth] of everything.[63]

The text contains in condensed form a philosophical anthropology. The thought and will of man are formed as to their content by observing the situation. The will is then translated into planned action and the meaning of artifacts. And since, by virtue of consubstantiality, the theory applies also to the god, the essences of all things (their dignity, or worth) are incarnations of divine thought at the god's will. The passages are of an importance that can hardly be exaggerated, because they show how far the differentiation in the direction of anthropology and metaphysics can go without breaking the cosmological form. The men who could intersperse their myth of the creation with "footnotes," relating the principles which they used in constructing it, must have had a rather detached attitude toward their own product. The Memphite Theology is a rare, if not unique, document in so far as it authentically attests the degree of rational consciousness that can accompany the creation of a myth in 3000 B.C.

The climax of the speculation is the elevation of Ptah over Atum. The name Atum means "everything" and it means "nothing"; he is the "all" in its fullness before its unfolding into the order of the world.[64] In view of his rank among the gods he bears the title of the "Great One." Ptah is now erected into the creator of Atum and the Ennead, and in view of his higher rank he receives the title of the "Mighty Great One." From this "Mighty Great" creator-god, then, emanates the order of the world, evoked on all its ranks by the "word" that flows from heart and tongue of the god. He first creates the gods, after them the male and female spirits who provide "nourishment," and finally the order of man:

[63] Contracted on the basis of the translations by Wilson (Pritchard [ed.], *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 5), Frankfort (*Kingship and the Gods*, 29), and Junker (*Pyramidenzeit*, 22 ff.).

[64] Wilson in *Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 53.

with regard to experiences, there is nothing extraordinary about the appearance of particular ideas and techniques of thought in an ancient civilization. The Egyptian Logos speculation should cause no surprise, since differentiations of this kind are possible within every civilizational form. It would be surprising only if "a man had appeared, sent by God, whose name was John: who came for the purpose of witnessing, to bear testimony to the Light, so that all men might believe by means of him" (John 1:6–7). For that would not have been a matter of speculation within the form of the myth, but an experiential break with the cosmological form and an opening of the soul toward transcendence. The Logos of the Memphite Theology created a world that was consubstantial with Egypt; but the Logos of John created a world with a mankind immediate under God. The Johannine Logos would have broken the Pharaonic mediation; it could not have unified and founded Egypt, but would have destroyed its order. Breasted, we may say, has rightly seen the parallel speculations on the level of "doctrine"; but since life is not a matter of doctrine, they do not touch the form, or essence, of a civilization. As far as the experiences of order are concerned, the parallel cannot be maintained.

3. *The Response to Disorder*

The impressive construction of the Memphite Theology—One God, One World, One Egypt—reveals the creation of Pharaonic order as the attunement of a society with divine being. When the empire disintegrated institutionally at the end of Dynasty VI, the horrors of the ensuing social upheaval might well have furnished reasons for reconsidering the merits of the fallen order, as well as of the god who had been its guarantor. It was a time for forming new social ties, for organizing a new community, and for propitiating the gods to endow it with sacral meaning. From the depths of despair there might have arisen a soul purged of illusions about the world and willing to face its iniquity with the strength that flows from faith in a world-transcendent god. A new man, guided by the god who was manifest nowhere except in the loving movement of his soul, might have set himself to the task of creating a government that would rely less on the cosmic divinity of institutions and more on the order in the souls of the men who live under them.

The potentials of the situation, however, did not become actual under the stresses of the Egyptian upheaval. The Pharaonic order had come

I made the four winds that every man might breathe thereof like his fellow in his time. That is the first of the deeds.
I made the great inundation that the poor man might have rights therein like the great man. That is the second deed.
I made every man like his fellow. I did not command that they might do evil, it was their hearts that violated what I had said. That is the third of the deeds.
I made that their hearts should cease from forgetting the west, in order that divine offerings might be made to the gods of the provinces. That is the fourth of the deeds.

The text is a little tract on the nature and source of evil. Its author understands creation as the overcoming of evil through an order of "good deeds." The good order of world and society is wrested from the iniquity of chaos by the creator-god, and in its goodness released into existence. If there is evil in the world, it stems from the heart of man—a heart that violates the commands of the god. These compact sentences imply both a myth of the Golden Age and a theodicy; and they furthermore imply the hope for restoration of the good order when man suppresses the chaos that is in his heart and finds his peace in obedience to the creative commands of the god. The tract is truly extraordinary, however, because of the content of the commands: the god has created all men equal; he has created the refreshing winds of Egypt and the inundation of the Nile for the equal benefit of the poor and the rich; and he has implanted equally in the hearts of all men the concern about the "west," that is, about their death, so that by their offerings they will have equal access to the life to come. By divine order society becomes a community of equals; the inequality of rank and wealth is the evil that stems from the heart of man.

The idea of a community of equals is a far cry from the Memphite Theology. Unfortunately, it is practically impossible to determine the meaning of the text more closely. The extant literary documents, though numerous, are not sufficient to furnish a coherent picture of Egyptian intellectual history. Hence, we cannot place the text in context. Do such ideas have antecedents? Are they the work of an isolated individual? Are they representative for a social group, or a region? There are no answers to such questions. One can only point out the obvious: that the *conditio humana* is here the organizing center of thought, not the Pharaoh and his unified Egypt. The man who breathes the air and tills the soil, who lives and dies, whose heart yearns for peace and yet trespasses in strife,

who is man before God like his brother—all this betrays a new religiousness from which a community of men immediate under their God might have grown. But as far as we know there was no such growth.

It is possible, though not certain, that some light will fall on the brief Coffin Text from a more elaborate poem of the same period which relates the "Dispute of a Man, Who Contemplates Suicide, with His Soul." [68]

The man is dejected by the misery of the time and wants to cast off a life that has become senseless. But he hesitates before the irrevocable act; his soul is not in agreement with his resolve. In the dispute between the man and his soul the arguments for and against suicide are presented, until the decision is reached and the soul agrees to go with the man wherever he goes.

The soul disagrees with the man, because the act of self-destruction is impious and immoral. The command of the gods and the wisdom of the sages prohibit man to shorten the allotted span of his life. Against the argument of the soul, the man pleads exceptional circumstances that will justify a violation of the rule before the gods. Moreover, in order to comply with other accepted beliefs, he will make proper provisions for burial and sacrifices so that his soul will be satisfied in the beyond. The soul is not pleased by such prospects, and in order to weaken Man's will, it voices skepticism with regard to the efficacy of such provisions, using arguments that we already know from the Song of the Harper. But Man approaches the crisis, and the soul resorts to the desperate means of tempting him with the suggestion of moral as an alternative to physical suicide. Man is in deadly anguish, because he takes life seriously, because he cannot bear existence without meaning. Why not cast such worries aside? Why not simply not despair? Man should enjoy the pleasures of the day as they come: "Pursue the happy day and forget care!" That ends the dispute with the soul. Man is aroused by the baseness of the counsel; he is now at one with himself and presents his case for decision. In four great series of exclamations, in the form of tristichs, he reaches the climax of his decision for death.

The first series expresses his horror about the counsel of his soul. Merely entertaining such an idea is a disgrace, and if he followed the advice his name would become a stench:

[68] Translation by Wilson in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 405–407. A careful interpretation is to be found in Junker, *Pyramidenzeit*, 162–74.

Behold my name will reek through thee
More than the stench of bird-droppings
On summer days, when the sky is hot.

The resources of his soul are exhausted; no help is to be had from her; now he is all alone with himself in the horrors of the age. The second group of exclamations expresses his sense of being lost in the impasse of solitude:

To whom can I speak today?
One's fellows are evil;
The friends of today do not love.
To whom can I speak today?
Faces have disappeared:
Every man has a downcast face toward his fellow.
To whom can I speak today?
A man should arouse wrath by his evil character,
But he stirs everyone to laughter, in spite of the wickedness of his sin.
To whom can I speak today?
There are no righteous;
The land is left to those who do wrong.
To whom can I speak today?
The sin that afflicts the land,
It has no end.

In such utter loneliness, in the third group of exclamations, man turns toward death as a salvation from evil:

Death faces me today
Like the recovery of a sick man,
Like going out into the open after a confinement.
Death faces me today
Like an unclouding of the sky,
Like an illumination that leads to what one did not know.
Death faces me today
Like the longing of a man to see his home again,
After many years that he was held in captivity.

The final group of tristichs reveals what man has to hope from the beyond:

Why surely, he who is yonder
Will be a living god,
Punishing the sin of him who commits it.
Why surely, he who is yonder
Will stand in the barque of the sun,
Causing the choicest therein to be given to the temples.

Why surely, he who is yonder
Will be a sage, not hindered
From appealing to Re when he speaks.

The text speaks for itself. Only a few touches of interpretation need be added. The first part, the dispute between man and soul, is in the nature of an introduction. It looks like a literary device for surveying the arguments used at the time in the debate on the meaning of life. The individual arguments are known from other sources. Once they are disposed of, the author presents his own position, without further debate, in the tristichs of the main part. He rejects with horror the nihilism of moral self-destruction. The impasse which precedes a suicide is caused by the impossibility of spiritual and moral life in community with others.[69] That is not a matter of discomforts and dangers as they are inevitable in a time of social upheaval; it is rather a question of the moral disintegration of the people with whom one is compelled to live. The essence of the misery is formulated in the line "Every man has a downcast face toward his fellow." The community of the spirit (or, for Egypt, we should say, of the *maat*) is destroyed. The fellow man casts down his eyes so that you will not read in them the deal he has made with evil and know that he has become a conniver. The isolation of the spiritual man among contemporaries who have committed moral suicide lets death appear as the friend who opens the gate from the prison of life. One should observe the metaphors of life as a disease and a prison—they are the metaphors that we shall find again in the dialogues of Plato. The last group of tristichs gives the reasons for suicide as the moral solution. It is not a mere escape from an unbearable situation but the way to redeeming action. In the beyond, the man will be a living god who can help in repairing the evils of society by punishing criminals, restoring worship and offerings in the temples, and effectively appealing to the god.

The poem will gain in meaning if we remember the experience of consubstantiality. The age is in turmoil because the mediation of divine substance through the Pharaoh has broken down. In this situation man can strengthen divine substance by committing suicide and joining the living gods who can let their substance pervade society more effectively

[69] In the text we must concentrate on the causes of the impasse in this particular case. We cannot dwell on the brilliant psychology of impasse and suicide in general that is contained in the poem. The subtleties of Egyptian psychology have not yet received the attention which they deserve.

than a mere man. That may sound odd, but it is in keeping with the Egyptian "form" of the myth. The poet is bound experientially to the mediation of right existence through the order of society; he cannot dream of communities outside the political order immediate under God; and salvation through an effective Pharaoh is apparently not in sight. The proposed suicide is the extreme, but apparently the only effective, way for an Egyptian individual to let his substance participate in the restoration of order. If we compare the solution with the Confucian transfer of the princely *tao* and *teh* to the sage, it certainly is an extraordinary substitute for the Pharaonic ordering function.

It is possible, as we said, that this poem on suicide will cast some light on the meaning of the Coffin Text. The idea that the text contains the program of an egalitarian revolution is too improbable to be considered. It rather seems that the analysis of the impasse situation was driven in the Coffin Text one step further, to the insight that no man is without guilt, not even the author. Everybody is involved, through the passions of his heart, in the evil that preferentially he sees only in his surroundings. The Coffin Text understands men as equal, not only in their god-created capacity for good, but also in their own capacity for evil. Only in the beyond will their souls open to the peace of the god. Whether the position implies a hope, as does the poem on suicide, that the perfect community of the dead will influence the society of the living, or whether it is an expression of radical pessimism with regard to earthly affairs is a matter for conjecture. The text contains no clues.

4. *Akhenaton*

The tenacity of the Egyptian political form under the pressure of new experiences was put to its most spectacular test in the period of the New Kingdom, through the so-called Amarna Revolution. The events of the time are more immediately associated with the name of the royal reformer Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV, 1375–1358 B.C.); and no doubt, the revolution received its signature from the personality of the Pharaoh, from his reform of the cult, and in particular from the expression of his spiritualism in the hymns to Aton. He was the first religious reformer clearly distinguishable as an individual, not in the history of Egypt only but of mankind. Nevertheless, his politico-religious reform had its antecedents and causes; and an appraisal of its precise nature requires an understanding of the circumstances that would, for a few years, open the historical

clearing in which he could move, only to close in again and cut his work short with abrupt failure.

The vicissitudes of the Pharaonic order—the disintegration of the Old Kingdom, the subsequent Time of Troubles, the restoration of the Middle Kingdom, the second breakdown and the Hyksos invasion, the expulsion of the invaders, perhaps with foreign aid, and the renewed unification under the rulers from Thebes—had left their marks on both the organization of the empire and the position of the Pharaoh. A ruler of the New Kingdom was no longer a Menes, who, in the flush of his creative victory, could shuffle the gods to suit his conquest. He was more humbly an instrument of the gods, by their grace chosen to restore and preserve a millennial order not of his making, an order that had more than once been mismanaged by his predecessors. The eclipses of the political regime had diminished the prestige of the Pharaoh in relation to the lasting regime of the gods; and correspondingly the prestige of the priesthoods of the lasting gods had noticeably increased. In particular the priesthood of the Amon of Thebes had become a political power balancing the Pharaoh's. It was a solid power, deriving its strength from long historical accumulation. Three times Egypt had been founded and restored by rulers from the South; twice the political center had moved northward, strengthening the influence of the Re of Heliopolis. This time, the third time, the southern god kept his instrument under control; Thebes became the capital of the New Kingdom, and the Amon-Re of Thebes the empire god.

Nevertheless, the Pharaoh was still the ruler of Egypt. And his position had acquired even a new poignancy, precisely because he, as an individual, was the instrument of the gods. If he no longer shone in the primordial luster of the conqueror and creator, he radiated the milder light of the savior and benefactor. This messianic quality of the individual ruler becomes tangible in the sources as early as the twenty-second century B.C.

The "Instructions" of a ruler of the Faiyum of that period for his son Merikare reveals the Pharaoh's faith in an invisible god "who knows men's characters." The son is admonished,

> More acceptable is the character of one upright of
> heart, than the ox of the evildoer.
> Act for the god, that he may act similarly for thee. . .
> The god is aware of him who acts for him.

On the other hand, he is a former Amon priest, advanced to rulership by the sacerdotal college for obscure reasons, and very much indebted to his god:

> I repay his good with good greater than it, by making him greater than the other gods.
> The recompense for him who carries out benefactions is a repayment to him of even greater benefactions.
> I have built his house with the work of eternity. . . .
> I have extended the places of him who made me.
> I have provisioned his altars upon earth. . . .
> I know for a fact that Thebes is eternity,
> that Amon is everlastingness. . . .[74]

When reading this double account of brilliant victory and payment of debts, one begins to wonder how long the harmony could last. Sooner or later this son of the god, with his competent army, would find that he had paid his debt to the god, and that he could dispense with the priestly kingmakers of Thebes. That is what in fact happened two generations after Thutmose the Great, when the empire, thanks to his victories, had experienced a period of stability.[75]

The revolt of Akhenaton against the Amon of Thebes has a complex structure. It is both institutional and spiritual, both revolutionary and reactionary. The institutional aspects are easy to grasp. The Pharaoh, still by his Amon name Amenhotep IV, founded the cult of the new god Aton, equipped it lavishly with land grants, changed his residence from Thebes to a newly founded city farther north, on the site of the present Tell el-Amarna, and resorted to radical measures when he encountered resistance from the established sacerdotal colleges. They were dispossessed and the worship of their gods discontinued. The special wrath of the king was directed against Amon. The name of the god was erased by gangs of hatchet men from inscriptions wherever it was to be found; and the zealous employees even erased the name of the god in the name of the king's father Amenhotep. The king himself changed his own name to Akhenaton, probably meaning the Spirit of Aton. For Egyptian so-

[74] *Ibid.*, 446 ff.

[75] For the political history of the period see the respective sections in Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II/1; for the antecedents of the Amarna Revolution and the history of Akhenaton itself, Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt;* for the intellectual history of the period in general, Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*

ciety that was a major upheaval, in so far as a new ruling group of the followers of the king was established in power while the old ruling class associated with the priesthood of Thebes fell into disgrace and suffered severe losses of property. The people at large also must have been materially affected by the changes, because hordes of retainers, of craftsmen and merchants, connected with the Amon cult lost their sustenance. The institutional overthrow could be successful only because the king had the army, with its able commander Haremhab, on his side.

The other aspects of the revolt are more elusive because of the paucity of sources. In particular, the prehistory of the god Aton is obscure. He certainly was not created by Akhenaton, though his existence cannot be traced farther back than the reign of the king's father Amenhotep III, or at the utmost the reign of Thutmose IV. The word *aton* was of old usage; it designated the sun disk in its physical appearance, without reference to a god. The Aton as a sun-god appeared for the first time in inscriptions of the immediately preceding reigns; and under Amenhotep III he seems to have received a temple in Thebes, apparently not in conflict with Amon. The implications of the new divine appearance can perhaps be surmised in a sun-hymn from the reign of Amenhotep III (*ca.* 1413–1377 B.C.). It is a hymn to Amon-Re. But the term sun-disk, *aton*, is used in addressing the god:

> Hail to thee, sun disc of the daytime, creator of all and maker of their living!

Moreover, this sun-god is addressed in the previously discussed messianic phraseology:

> Valiant herdsman, driving his cattle,
> Their refuge and the maker of their living.

And, finally, he is a world-god, shining over all lands, not only over Egypt:

> The sole lord, who reaches the ends of all lands every day,
> Being thus one who sees them treading thereon.[76]

The hymn suggests that a resistance to the Amon of Thebes and his priesthood was building up under the preceding reign. Since by the rule of consubstantiality the character of the sun-god also applies to the

[76] "A Universalist Hymn to the Sun," in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 367 ff. Breasted, in *Dawn of Conscience*, 275–77, had drawn attention to the importance of the hymn as an antecedent to the Aton cult of Amenhotep IV.

Pharaoh, the messianic terms would indicate a sharpened consciousness of the Pharaoh as the savior-king. And the insinuation of the *aton* into the appellation of the god would indicate a search for a divinity distinct from Amon-Re. The search for the nature of divine being was advancing to the point where a new name had to be found, in order to characterize its oneness and supremacy as lying beyond the Egyptian pantheon. Moreover, the accent (for the first time in the extant sources) on the sun-god's shining over all lands and all mankind suggests the expansion of the Egyptian frontiers and the creation of a world-empire through Dynasty XVIII as the experience that set into motion the new politico-theological speculation. Only such surmises are possible; but they are sufficient to assume at least a generation of experiential and symbolic preparation for the revolt of Akhenaton.

The hymns of Akhenaton are preserved through inscriptions in the tombs of his nobles. For the complete text and an elaborate interpretation the reader should refer to the work of Breasted.[77] We shall touch only on the few points that have a bearing on the development of Egyptian political form.

In the revolt, as well as in the form which it assumed, the personality of the Pharaoh was a decisive factor. The following passages will suggest the character of his spiritualism that set him apart and motivated his revolt:

> Thou dawnest beautifully on the horizon of the sky,
> Thou living Aton, the beginning of life!
> Thou art gracious, great, glistening, and high over every land,
> Thy rays encompass the lands to the limit of all that thou hast made.
>
> All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
> The trees and the plants are flourishing,
> The birds flutter from their nests,
> Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee,
> All beasts spring up on their feet,
> All creatures that fly or alight,
> They live when thou hast risen for them.
> The ships sail up-stream and down-stream alike,
> Every high-way is open at thy appearance.
> The fish in the river dart before thy face;
> Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

[77] Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, Chap. 15, "Universal Dominion and Earliest Monotheism." The quotations from the hymns following in the text are frequently adjusted in the light of Wilson's translation in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 369–71.

This is a new voice in history, the voice of a man intimately sympathetic with nature, sensitive to the splendor of light and its life-spending force, praising the god and his creature. And the joyful response to the appearance of the god, described in the hymn, is carried on by the hymn itself as the response of the royal soul to the splendor of Aton.

> The Aton is the creator-god:
> O sole god, like whom there is no other!
> Thou didst create the world according to thy desire,
> While thou wert alone.

But he has now become expressly the creator of all mankind, including the foreign peoples:

> The countries of Syria and Nubia, the land of Egypt,
> Thou settest every man in his place,
> Thou suppliest their necessities:
> Everyone has his food and the time of his life is reckoned.
> Their tongues are divers in speech,
> And their forms as well;
> Their skins are distinguished,
> As thou distinguishest the foreign peoples.

The imperial expansion has broken the infoldedness that we could observe in the hymns of the Old Kingdom. The world has opened, and foreign peoples are within the confines of the empire. Their common humanity becomes apparent in spite of their racial, linguistic, and cultural differences. The god is now understood as a god for all men.

In spite of its universalist and egalitarian aspects, however, the hymn is neither monotheistic, nor does it proclaim a redeemer god for all men. The creation of the Aton is more radical than any of the preceding attempts to arrive at an understanding of the nature of divinity, but it still lies within the range of the polytheistic myth. Akhenaton proceeded by excluding other gods, in particular, the hated Amon. But his very zeal in eradicating the name of Amon from the inscriptions, thereby to destroy his effectiveness magically, shows that the Amon was a reality for him that had to be taken into account. Moreover, he did not prosecute the other gods with the same zeal. The Re of Heliopolis was at least tolerated; and in the hymn itself Aton was identified with the three old solar deities Re, Harakhte, and Shu. It would rather seem that there was a streak of reaction in Akhenaton's revolution in so far as he hearkened back to the divinities which had endowed with glory the Pharaohs of

the Old Kingdom. The reassertion of the royal position against the sacerdotal incubus of Thebes fortified itself by remembering the older gods.

The reactionary streak, perhaps not sufficiently observed, makes itself felt also in the personal relation between the king and his god. The Aton is a god for everybody's nature, but only for the king's soul:

> Thou art in my heart,
> And there is no other that knows thee,
> Save thy son [Akhenaton].
> For thou hast made him well-versed
> In thy plans and in thy might.

The position of the Pharaoh as the exclusive mediator between god and man was re-established with a vengeance. The personal religiousness of the people, which had been growing ever since the First Intermediate Period, was to be diverted to the Pharaoh as the god on earth. At least that is what Akhenaton attempted. The Osiris cult was severely repressed. The inscriptions from the tombs of the officials reveal the new emphasis on the monopoly of divine radiation that was held by the administration under the king. In the tomb of Tutu, a high court official under the regime, the king is described as the son of Aton, living in truth, coming forth from the rays of the sun-god, and established by him as the ruler over the circuit of Aton. The god endows the king with his own eternity and makes him to his likeness; the king is the emanation of the god. Aton is in heaven, but his rays are on earth; and the king, being the son of the rays, is the god's instrument in working his designs on earth. The god hears for the king what is in his heart, and he utters for the king what comes forth from his mouth. As the god begets himself every day without ceasing, so the king is formed out of his rays to live forth the life of Aton. The king is "living in the truth" of the god as the god's truth lives in him; and the official executes this truth, and is able to do so, in so far as the king's *ka* lives in him. The substance of the god, his *maat*, thus percolates through the realm and ultimately reaches the subjects.[78] But the subject has no access to the Aton directly. When the Aton rises in the world he embraces his beloved son Akhenaton; and the royal son, through his rule and administration, returns the world to the god as his offering. The subject can participate in the circulation of divine substance only through obedience to the Pharaoh.[79]

[78] "Tomb of Tutu," in Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II, §§ 1009–1013.
[79] "Tomb of Mai," *ibid.*, 1000.

The beauty of the hymns to Aton, the "modern" atmosphere of individualism, of intellectual excitement, of realism in art, of humanization of the court ceremonial, and of a general civilizational nervousness, have been a temptation to find in the reforms of Akhenaton more than they contain. To be sure, the king was an extraordinary individual. Nevertheless, when all is taken into account, his work reveals the impasse of the Pharaonic symbolism rather than a new beginning. He was a mystical aesthete of high rank and could animate the form, for the last time, with his spiritual fervor. But that was all, as far the political order of Egypt was concerned. He neglected the administrative and military needs of the empire, and he had nothing to give to the people. Toward the end of his regime, as far as the sources indicate the state of affairs, he was compelled to compromise. And his successor Tutankhaton became again Tutankhamon and capitulated to Thebes. The form remained unshaken to the end by foreign conquest.

PART TWO

The Historical Order of Israel

The compact experience of cosmological order proved to be tenacious. Neither the rise and fall of Mesopotamian empires nor the repeated crises of imperial Egypt could break the faith in a divine-cosmic order of which society was a part. To be sure, the contrast between the lasting of cosmic and the passing of social order did not remain unobserved, but the observation did not penetrate the soul decisively and, consequently, did not lead to new insights concerning the true order of being and existence. Political catastrophies continued to be understood as cosmic events decreed by the gods. In the Sumerian Lamentations over the destruction of Ur by the Elamites, for instance, the Elamitic attack was experienced as the storm of Enlil:

> Enlil called the storm—the people groan.
> The storm that annihilates the land he called—the people groan.
> The great storm of heaven he called—the people groan.
> The great storm howls above—the people groan.
> The storm ordered by Enlil in hate, the storm which wears away the land,
> Covered Ur like a garment, enveloped it like a linen sheet.

A cosmic shroud, as it were, was thrown by the god over the city and its streets filled with corpses.[1] In Egypt, it is true, institutional breakdowns caused the variety of responses studied in the preceding chapter. The experience of order, more deeply shaken than in Mesopotamia, moved toward the limits that became visible in the Amon Hymns in the wake of the Amarna Revolution.[2] Man, in his desire for a new freedom, seemed on the verge of opening his soul toward a transcendent God; and the new religiousness, indeed, achieved a surprising feat of monotheistic speculation. Nevertheless, even in the Amon Hymns, the attraction of the divine

[1] From the "Lamentations over the Destruction of Ur," translated by S. N. Kramer, in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 455–63.

[2] Chapter 3.3.1.

magnet was not strong enough to orient the soul toward transcendent being. The Egyptian poets could not break the bond of Pharaonic order and become the founders of a new community under God.

And yet, it was their age in which the bond was broken. The Amon Hymns were created under Dynasty XIX, *ca.* 1320–1205 B.C. And this was the dynasty under which, according to recent trends of conjecture, occurred the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. Ramses II is supposed to be the Pharaoh of the oppression, his successor Merneptah (1225–1215) the Pharaoh of the Exodus. While such precise suppositions may be doubtful, the thirteenth century B.C. in general was probably the age of Moses. At the time when the Egyptians themselves strained their cosmological symbolism to the limits without being able to break the bonds of its compactness, Moses led his people from bondage under Pharaoh to freedom under God.

In pragmatic history the event was too unimportant to be registered in the Egyptian records. The people who followed Moses consisted of a number of Hebrew clans which had been employed by the Egyptian government on public works, probably in the region east of the Delta. They fled eastward into the desert and settled, for at least a generation, in the neighborhood of Kadesh before advancing to Canaan. In the centralized welfare state from which they fled they had probably not been treated worse than the native population of the same social status. Nevertheless, Egypt had been a house of bondage to a people whose nomadic soul thirsted for the freedom of the desert. When the freedom was gained, however, it proved of dubious value to men who had become accustomed to a different way of life. On the material level, perhaps there was not much to choose between nomadic existence and public works in a welfare state. The frugality of desert life aroused nostalgic memories of the Egyptian cuisine; and for all we know, the house of bondage might have become a home to which the tribes ruefully returned. Even without such an anticlimax the Exodus still would hardly have been worth remembering. If nothing had happened but a lucky escape from the range of Egyptian power, there only would have been a few more nomadic tribes roaming the border zone between the Fertile Crescent and the desert proper, eking out a meager living with the aid of part-time agriculture. But the desert was only a station on the way, not the goal; for in the desert the tribes found their God. They entered into a covenant with him, and thereby became his people. As a new type of people, formed

by God, Israel conquered the promised land. The memory of Israel preserved the otherwise unimportant story, because the irruption of the spirit transfigured the pragmatic event into a drama of the soul and the acts of the drama into symbols of divine liberation.

The events of the Exodus, the sojourn at Kadesh, and the conquest of Canaan became symbols because they were animated by a new spirit. Through the illumination by the spirit the house of institutional bondage became a house of spiritual death. Egypt was the realm of the dead, the Sheol, in more than one sense. From death and its cult man had to wrest the life of the spirit. And this adventure was hazardous, for the Exodus from Sheol at first led nowhere but into the desert of indecision, between the equally unpalatable forms of nomad existence and life in a high-civilization. Hence, to Sheol and Exodus must be added the Desert as the symbol of the historical impasse. It was not a specific but the eternal impasse of historical existence in the "world," that is, in the cosmos in which empires rise and fall with no more meaning than a tree growing and dying, as waves in the stream of eternal recurrence. By attunement with cosmic order the fugitives from the house of bondage could not find the life that they sought. When the spirit bloweth, society in cosmological form becomes Sheol, the realm of death; but when we undertake the Exodus and wander into the world, in order to found a new society elsewhere, we discover the world as the Desert. The flight leads nowhere, until we stop in order to find our bearings beyond the world. When the world has become Desert, man is at last in the solitude in which he can hear thunderingly the voice of the spirit that with its urgent whispering has already driven and rescued him from Sheol. In the Desert God spoke to the leader and his tribes; in the Desert, by listening to the voice, by accepting its offer, and by submitting to its command, they at last reached life and became the people chosen by God.

What emerged from the alembic of the Desert was not a people like the Egyptians or Babylonians, the Canaanites or Philistines, the Hittites or Arameans, but a new genus of society, set off from the civilizations of the age by the divine choice. It was a people that moved on the historical scene while living toward a goal beyond history. This mode of existence was ambiguous and fraught with dangers of derailment, for all too easily the goal beyond history could merge with goals to be attained within

history. The derailment, indeed, did occur, right in the beginning. It found its expression in the symbol of Canaan, the land of promise. The symbol was ambiguous because, in the spiritual sense, Israel had reached the promised land when it had wandered from the cosmological Sheol to the *mamlakah*, the royal domain, the Kingdom of God. Pragmatically, however, the Exodus from bondage was continued into the conquest of Canaan by rather worldly means; further, to a Solomonic kingdom with the very institutional forms of Egypt or Babylon; and, finally, to political disaster and destruction that befell Israel like any other people in history. On its pragmatic wandering through the centuries Israel did not escape the realm of the dead. In a symbolic countermovement to the Exodus under the leadership of Moses, the last defenders of Jerusalem, carrying Jeremiah with them against his will, returned to the Sheol of Egypt to die. The promised land can be reached only by moving through history, but it cannot be conquered within history. The Kingdom of God lives in men who live in the world, but it is not of this world. The ambiguity of Canaan has ever since affected the structure not of Israelite history only but of the course of history in general.

The brief sketch of the issues raised by the appearance of Israel in history suggests a considerable amount of complications in the detail. There are difficulties of chronology; there is the relation between Hebrews, Israel, Judah, and the Jews; the relation between Israel and the surrounding Syriac society, whose importance has been revealed to us by recent archaeological discoveries; the relation between the Biblical narrative and the history that can be reconstructed from external evidence; and, finally, the relation between pragmatic and spiritual history that issued into the Christian problem of profane and sacred history. These questions should be hurdles enough for a study of the peculiar order of Israel. But they are further complicated by the state and history of our literary sources. There must be taken into account the transformations which the early traditions of Israel have undergone through the postexilic redaction; the deformations of meaning caused by rabbinical and Christian canonization and interpretations; the further subtle changes of meaning imposed on the Hebrew text of the Bible by the English translations since the sixteenth century A.D., changes which have hardened into conventions to such a degree that even contemporary translations of the Bible do not dare to deviate from them; and, finally, the cloud of debate thrown up by a century of lower and higher criticism that settles in thick layers of controversy on every problem. We have today reached a state in which competent scholars write volumes on the "Theology of the Old Testament" or the "Religion of Israel," while other, equally competent scholars raise the questions whether a theology can be found in the Old Testament at all or whether Israel had a religion.

It is dangerously easy to be swallowed up by the Sheol of history and philology. In order to avoid such a fate, we shall skirt the controversy and cut straight to the great issue that lies at its root, that is, to the creation of history by Israel. Once the great, embracing issue of history is clarified, the method that must be used in treating the secondary problems will also be clear.[3]

[3] For the state of controversy concerning Old Testament problems cf. H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study. A Generation of Discovery and Research* (Oxford, 1951).

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CHAPTER 4

Israel and History

The major theoretical issues arising in a study of Israelite order have their common origin in the status of Israel as a peculiar people. Through the divine choice Israel was enabled to take the leap toward more perfect attunement with transcendent being. The historical consequence was a break in the pattern of civilizational courses. With Israel there appears a new agent of history that is neither a civilization nor a people within a civilization like others. Hence, we can speak of an Egyptian or a Mesopotamian but not of an Israelite civilization. In the Egyptian case, people and civilization roughly coincide. In the Mesopotamian case, we can distinguish major ethnic units, such as the Sumerian, Babylonian, Elamitic, and Assyrian, within the civilization. In the Israelite case, we encounter difficulties. Following Toynbee one can speak of a Syriac civilization to which belonged such peoples as the Israelites, the Phoenicians, the Philistines, and the Arameans of Damascus. But the mere enumeration of the ethnic subdivisions makes it unnecessary to argue further that Israel's position was peculiar; for the people that produced the literature of the Old Testament without a doubt stood apart from the others. Moreover, the course of Israelite history did not coincide chronologically with the course of Syriac civilization. It began before the Syriac civilization crystallized in history, and it took an independent, rather surprising development when the Syriac area was conquered successively by Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and finally Romans.

1. Israel and the Civilizational Courses

We shall approach the peculiar status of Israel through questions of chronology. As far as absolute dates are concerned we accept the most recent opinion without further debate.[1] What interests us rather, is the

[1] A report on the archaeological evidence for Old Testament events and dates was given by W. F. Albright in Chapters 1 and 2 of H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study. A Generation of Study and Research* (Oxford, 1951). See also W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Pelican Books, 1949).

Finally, one can construct a table by assigning dates to the main phases of the Syriac civilization in Toynbee's sense of the term. According to Toynbee's interpretation the Israelite and Philistine invasions in the Syro-Palestinian area created the situation in which the growth of an autonomous civilization could begin. The Hittite and Egyptian domination was broken, the independent Canaanite settlements were restricted to the northern coastal strip, the Philistines had settled on the southern coast, the Israelites in the hill country south of Syria. From this initial situation emerged into permanent political organization the kingdom of Damascus, the Phoenician city-states, and the kingdom of Israel. The main shock that cleared the area for its indigenous growth came from the invasion of the Minoan sea-peoples; and to Minoan culture Toynbee would also attribute the main influences in fertilizing the newly developing civilization. He is willing, therefore, to place the Syriac by the side of the Hellenic as affiliated to the Minoan civilization. This assumption, as we shall see, is hardly tenable in its general form, but it has an appreciable core of truth. Minoan influences in the Canaanite area were strong, indeed, even before the Philistine invasion; and the discoveries of Ugaritic mythological poems since 1930 have acquainted us with a Canaanite-Phoenician theogony that was at least as closely related to Hellenic theogony, as we know it from Hesiod, as to the Babylonian myth, if not more so.[2] The Syriac civilization that can be circumscribed in such terms had a comparatively short period of growth. It began to crystallize *ca.* 1150 B.C. and suffered the first, decisive check to its growth as early as 926 B.C., when the Solomonic kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah. At a time when the newly rising power of Assyria would have required military co-operation for the common defence, the Syriac states were involved in suicidal conflicts among themselves. The battle of Karkar, 854 B.C., gave a momentary respite; but ultimately it did no more than show that a military alliance of the Syriac states, if it had lasted, could perhaps have stemmed the Assyrian assault. The Syriac Time of Troubles ended with the establishment of a Universal State under the Persians. From Toynbee's interpretation results the following:

[2] The Ugaritic texts are available in the English translations by Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature* (Rome, 1949) and by H. L. Ginsberg in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. For an analysis see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore, 1946).

Reflection on this bewildering complex of successively superimposed meanings should make it clear that paradigmatic and pragmatic histories are not rivals. Israelite history was not written in order to confuse pragmatic historians who wryly assign a date to Moses while suspending judgment with regard to his existence. It does not want to give pragmatic history at all, even though over long stretches the pragmatic core is so tangible and clear in detail that we are better informed about certain phases of Israelite history than about our Western Middle Ages. It begins to dawn on us that history is a complicated fabric of which two strands become visible in the two chronologies. Perhaps what appears as a conflict between them will disappear when the pattern in the Israelite fabric of meanings becomes somewhat clearer. Hence, we shall now change our line of attack. Table III will no longer be taken for granted, but will be set aside as suspect of causing the trouble through its relative simplicity, while Israelite history will be accepted, in the hope that its more complex structure, if properly understood, will resolve our problem.

We shall start from the observation previously made, that Israelite sacred history cannot be discarded as unimportant even in pragmatic history, since by virture of its possession Israel became the peculiar people, a new type of political society on the pragmatic plane. The men who lived the symbolism of Sheol, Desert, and Canaan, who understood their wanderings as the fulfilment of a divine plan, were formed by this experience into the Chosen People. Through the leap in being, that is, through the discovery of transcendent being as the source of order in man and society, Israel constituted itself the carrier of a new truth in history. If this be accepted as the essence of the problem, the paradigmatic narrative, with all its complications, gains a new dimension of meaning through its role in the constitution of Israel. For the truth which Israel carried would have died with the generation of the discoverers, unless it had been expressed in communicable symbols. The constitution of Israel as a carrier of the truth, as an identifiable and enduring social body in history, could be achieved only through the creation of a paradigmatic record which narrated (1) the events surrounding the discovery of the truth, and (2) the course of Israelite history, with repeated revisions, as a confirmation of the truth. This record is the Old Testament. Precisely when its dubiousness as a pragmatic record is recognized, the narrative reveals its function in creating a people in politics and history.

Hence, there is an intimate connection between the paradigmatic

narrative of the Old Testament and the very existence of Israel, though it is not the connection that exists between a narrative and the events which it relates. The nature of this elusive relationship will become clearer if one remembers that no problem of this nature did arise in the treatment of Mesopotamian or Egyptian history. No Table I worried us in dealing with the ideas of Near Eastern empires. As soon as this negative observation is made, the significance of the table, not for Israelite history only, but for the problem of history in general, becomes evident. There was, indeed, no occasion to use a table of this kind in Mesopotamian or Egyptian history—for the good reason that neither of these civilizations produced an Old Testament. Israel alone constituted itself by recording its own genesis as a people as an event with a special meaning in history, while the other Near Eastern societies constituted themselves as analogues of cosmic order. Israel alone had history as an inner form, while the other societies existed in the form of the cosmological myth. History, we therefore conclude, is a symbolic form of existence, of the same class as the cosmological form; and the paradigmatic narrative is, in the historical form, the equivalent of the myth in the cosmological form. Hence it will be necessary to distinguish between political societies according to their form of existence: the Egyptian society existed in cosmological, the Israelite in historical form.

Now that the mystery of Table I is cleared up, at least to some extent, we can return to Table III and inspect more closely the Spengler-Toynbee theory of history that underlies its construction. The theory is simple and well reasoned. Spengler conceives of a civilization (a "culture" in his terminology) as the flowering of a collective soul in its historical landscape. The souls bloom only once; and the civilizations produced each move through the same series of phases, their respective "histories," conceived by organic analogies of youth and age. When their vitality is exhausted they flatten out into *fellahim* periods of indefinite duration. Each civilization, thus, has a history; but the succession of civilizations is not an additional history. The theory has good common sense arguments on its side. For the civilizations of the past have, indeed, flowered and declined, and the mechanics of the process is well understood. One may consider it possible that the history of mankind will not always be cast in the civilizational mold, but as long as it is transacted by the societies that we

call civilizations, there is no reason to assume that the present and future ones will escape the fate of their predecessors.

The excellence of the arguments, however, will not assuage our unhappiness about the consequences. For the civilizations follow each other in a meaningless sequence; and when the manifold of civilizational souls is exhausted, as for Spengler it seems to be, mankind will subside into a-historical, vegetative existence. The prospect is depressing, and it becomes even bleaker when Toynbee applies his imagination to it. With the pessimistic Spengler one could at least hope that the melancholy spectacle of flowering and dying civilizations would soon come to an end; but with the more cheerful Toynbee one must fear that this sort of thing will be going on as long as the earth holds out. For, accepting figures given by Sir James Jeans for the duration of the earth, Toynbee calculates a future of 1,743 million civilizations. "Imagine 1,743 million completed histories, each of which has been as long and lively as the history of the Hellenic Society; 1,743 million reproductions of the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church and the Teutonic Voelkerwanderung; 1,743 million repetitions of the relations between our Western Society and the other societies that are alive to-day!" [4] "Our powers of imagination fail," exclaims the great historian in view of such prospects.[5]

We shudder politely, as always when invited to contemplate the infinity of time, space, or numbers under any other aspect than its transparency for the infinity of God, but firmly refuse to play the game. In order to avoid the inevitable failure of our imaginative powers, we shall presently apply our intellect to the issue. For the moment be it stated only that the Spengler-Toynbee theory has, indeed, simplified matters—with the imaginative consequences just adumbrated. Moreover, we can now lay our finger on the defect, that is, its disregard for the problem of history as an inner form. Of the many factors which codetermine the defect, the one of most immediate interest must be sought in the historical situation in which the theory was formed. Both Spengler and Toynbee are burdened with the remnants of certain humanistic traditions, more specifically in their late liberal-bourgeois form, according to which civilizations are mystical entities producing cultural phenomena such as

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 463.

[5] For a further analysis of Toynbee's ideas in the "Annex" to Vol. I see the study by Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Krise und Ueberwindung des Historismus," *Wissenschaft und Weltbild*, VI (Vienna, 1953), 13 ff.

myths and religions, arts and sciences. Neither of the two thinkers has accepted the principle that experiences of order, as well as their symbolic expressions, are not products of a civilization but its constitutive forms. They still live in the intellectual climate in which "religious founders" were busy with founding "religions," while in fact they were concerned with the ordering of human souls and, if successful, founded communities of men who lived under the order discovered as true. If, however, the Israelite discovery of history as a form of existence is disregarded, then the form is rejected in which a society exists under God. The conception of history as a sequence of civilizational cycles suffers from the Eclipse of God, as a Jewish thinker has recently called this spiritual defect.[6] Spengler and Toynbee return, indeed, to the Sheol of civilizations, from which Moses had led his people into the freedom of history.

2. *The Meaning of History*

The Israelite conception of history, being the more comprehensive one, must be preferred to the defective Spengler-Toynbee theory of civilizational cycles which underlies the construction of Table III. Such preference, however, does not abolish the difficulties inherent in the Israelite conception. For, if the idea of history as a form of existence be accepted, the term "history" becomes equivocal. "History," then, could mean either the dimension of objective time in which civilizations run their course or the inner form which constitutes a society. The equivocation could easily be removed, of course, by using the term in only one of the two meanings; but the result would be unsatisfactory. If the first meaning be eliminated, so that only "existence in time" could be predicated of cosmological societies, Egypt or Babylon would have no history. If the second meaning be eliminated, as is done by Spengler and Toynbee, there would be no word for what is history in the just-established preeminent sense of a society's moving through time, on a meaningful course, toward a divinely promised state of perfection. And it would be most inconvenient to use it in both senses, because in that case some societies would be more historical than other historical societies. If the Israelite conception be preferred, it must now be put to work to resolve the problems of its own making.

The trouble originates in the following proposition: Without Israel there would be no history, but only the eternal recurrence of societies in

[6] Martin Buber, *Gottesfinsternis* (Zurich, 1953).

cosmological form. At a first glance, to be sure, the proposition looks absurd, for it leads to the baffling equivocations, and ultimately, perhaps, to the escape, of Spengler and Toynbee. But it will lose its absurdity if it be understood in its methodical strictness as a statement about the inner form of societies. It does not mean that before a future historian there would unfold an interminable succession of Platos, Christs, Roman Empires, and so forth, as Toynbee imagines in his flight of fancy. For "eternal recurrence" is the symbol by means of which a cosmological civilization expresses (or rather, can express, if it be so minded) the experience of its own existence, its lasting and passing, in the order of the cosmos. "Eternal recurrence" is part of the cosmological form itself—it is not a category of historiography, nor will it ever have a historian. A political society which understands its order as participation in divine-cosmic order for that reason does not exist in historical form. But, if it does not have historical form, does it have history at all? Are we not back to the absurdity that Egypt and Babylon have no history? Again the absurdity will dissolve, if intellect intervenes before imagination runs away. Cosmological civilizations, though not in historical form, are not at all devoid of history. Remembering our principles of the constancy of human nature, as well as of compactness and differentiation, we may expect history to be present in them quite as much as metaphysical and theological speculation, but to be bound by the compactness of cosmological form, not yet differentiated. And this presence will be revealed as soon as, through Israel, history is differentiated as a form of existence. We began our history of order not with Israel, but with the Mesopotamian and Egyptian empires, because in retrospect the struggle for order in the medium of cosmological symbols appeared to be the first phase in the search for the true order of being that was carried one step further by Israel. In particular, the Egyptian dynamics of experience proved of absorbing interest because it revealed the movement of the soul toward an understanding, never quite achieved, of the world-transcendent God.

The equivocation of "history," thus, dissolves into the problem of compactness and differentiation. Egyptian history, or for that matter Mesopotamian or Chinese history, though transacted in cosmological form, is genuine history. Nevertheless, the knowledge is not articulated in the compact symbolism of the cosmological civilizations themselves; the presence of history is discovered only in retrospect from a position in which history as the form of existence has already been differentiated. For

the first time we encounter the problem that will occupy us repeatedly—that is, the genesis of history through retrospective interpretation. When the order of the soul and society is oriented toward the will of God, and consequently the actions of the society and its members are experienced as fulfillment or defection, a historical present is created, radiating its form over a past that was not consciously historical in its own present. Whether through the radiation of historical form the past receives negative accents as the Sheol from which man must escape, or positive accents as the *praeparatio evangelica* through which man must pass in order to emerge into the freedom of the spirit, the past has become incorporated into a stream of events that has its center of meaning in the historical present. History as the form in which a society exists has the tendency to expand its realm of meaning so as to include all mankind—as inevitably it must, if history is the revelation of the way of God with man. History tends to become world-history, as it did on this first occasion in the Old Testament, with its magnificent sweep of the historical narrative from the creation of the world to the fall of Jerusalem.

The tendency of historical form to expand its realm of meaning beyond the present into the past implies a number of problems that will be elaborated in their proper places in later sections of this study. In the present context only the three most important ones will be briefly suggested. They are (1) the ontological reality of mankind, (2) the origin of history in a historically moving present, and (3) the loss of historical substance.

(1) In the first place, history creates mankind as the community of men who, through the ages, approach the true order of being that has its origin in God; but at the same time, mankind creates this history through its real approach to existence under God. It is an intricate dialectical process whose beginnings, as we have seen, reach deep into the cosmological civilizations—and even deeper into a human past beyond the scope of the present study. The expansion of empire over foreign peoples, for instance, brought into view the humanity of the conquered subjects. In the texts from Thutmose III to Akhenaton the god who created Egypt was transformed into the god who also created the other peoples who now had come into the imperial fold. The course of pragmatic history itself, thus, provided situations in which a truth about God and man was seen—

though yet so dimly that the cosmological form of the society would not break. The realm of pragmatic conquest became transparent for the truth that the society of man is larger than the nuclear society of a cosmological empire. This observation should illuminate both the causal mechanism of differentiation and the objective reality of history. The inclusion of the past in history through retrospective interpretation is not an "arbitrary" or "subjective" construction but the genuine discovery of a process which, though its goal is unknown to the generations of the past, leads in continuity into the historical present. The historical present is differentiated in a process that is itself historical in so far as the compact symbolism gradually loosens up until the historical truth contained in it emerges in articulate form. From the articulate present, then, the inarticulate process of the past can be recognized as truly historical. The process of human history is ontologically real.

Nevertheless, there remains the ambiguity of a meaning created by men who do not know what they are creating; and this ambiguity quite frequently engenders the complacency that comes with supposedly superior knowledge, and in particular the all-too-well-known phenomenon of spiritual pride, in later generations. Such complacency and pride certainly are unfounded. For the ray of light that penetrates from a historical present into its past does not produce a "meaning of history" that could be stored away as a piece of information once for all, nor does it gather in a "legacy" or "heritage" on which the present could sit contentedly. It rather reveals a mankind striving for its order of existence within the world while attuning itself with the truth of being beyond the world, and gaining in the process not a substantially better order within the world but an increased understanding of the gulf that lies between immanent existence and the transcendent truth of being. Canaan is as far away today as it has always been in the past. Anybody who has ever sensed this increase of dramatic tension in the historical present will be cured of complacency, for the light that falls over the past deepens the darkness that surrounds the future. He will shudder before the abysmal mystery of history as the instrument of divine revelation for ultimate purposes that are unknown equally to the men of all ages.

(2) The retrospective expansion of history over the past originates in a present that has historical form. There arises, second, therefore, the whole complex of problems connected with the multiplicity of historical

ishment for the dead souls. Christianity discovered the faith that saves man from the death of sin and lets him enter, as a new man, into the life of the spirit. In every instance of a present in historical form, the Either-Or of life and death divides the stream of time into the Before-and-After of the great discovery.

The content of the event, furthermore, provides the principle for the classification of men and societies, past, present, and future, according to the measure in which they approach historical form, remain distant, or recede from it. This principle, while remaining the same in every instance, will inevitably render different results according to the empirical horizon in which it is applied. There will always be the division of time into the Before-and-After, as well as the classification of contemporaries into those who join the Exodus, and thereby become the Chosen People, and those who remain in Sheol. The expansion of historical order beyond this center, however, will depend on the nature of the past that is experienced as socially effective in the present. The model for treating the effective past in relation to the historical present was set by St. Paul in Romans. The historical present was understood by St. Paul as the life under the divine revelation through Christ, while the effective past surrounding the new society was furnished by Jews and Gentiles. All three of the communities—Christians, Jews, and Gentiles—belonged to one mankind as they all participated in divine order; but the order had been revealed to them in different degrees of clarity, increasing in chronological succession. To the Gentiles the law was revealed through the spectacle of the divine creation; to the Jews through the Covenant and the issuing of a divine, positive command; to the Christians through Christ and the law of the heart. History and its order, thus, were established by the measure in which various societies approached to the maximal clarity of divine revelation. This was a masterful creation of historical order, centering in the present of St. Paul and covering the high points of his empirical horizon. Obviously, the construction could not be ultimate but would have to be amended with changes and enlargements of the empirical horizon; but, at least, it remained "true" for the better part of two millenniums.

When we reflect on this long span of time, we are reminded again of the cataclysmic events which, on the pragmatic level of history, formed a horizon like the Pauline and now are changing it. The Israelite and Christian historical forms have arisen in the pragmatic situation created by the multicivilizational empires since Thutmose III, and we have noted

once more consider the Spengler-Toynbee theory, under the aspect that it dissolves history into a sequence of civilizational courses. The theory will appear odd, if one considers that a historian supposedly relates the past of mankind to a meaningful present. Why should a thinker be concerned about history at all, if apparently it is his purpose to show that there are no meaningful presents but only typical, recurrent situations and responses. This apparent oddity will now become intelligible as an expression of the tension between the Judaeo-Christian historical form, in which Western civilization still exists, and the loss of substance which it has suffered. The theory of civilizational cycles should not be taken at its face value; for if its authors were serious about it, they would no longer live in historical form and consequently not worry about history. The theory is of absorbing interest not only to its authors but also to their numerous readers because it reveals to our age history on the verge of being swallowed up by the civilizational cycles. The concern about civilizational decline has its roots in the anxiety stirred up by the possibility that historical form, as it was gained, might also be lost when men and society reverse the leap in being and reject existence under God. The form, to be sure, is not lost—at least not completely—as long as the concern inspires gigantic enterprises of historiography; but it certainly is badly damaged when the mechanics of civilizations occupies the foreground with massive brutality, while the originating present of history is pushed out of sight. The shift of accents is so radical that it practically makes nonsense of history, for history is the Exodus from civilizations. And the great historical forms created by Israel, the Hellenic philosophers, and Christianity did not constitute societies of the civilizational type—even though the communities thus established, which still are the carriers of history, must wind their way through the rise and fall of civilizations.

CHAPTER 5

The Emergence of Meaning

The present chapter will deal with the meaning of history in the Israelite sense. That meaning did not appear at a definite point of time to be preserved once for all, but emerged gradually and was frequently revised under the pressure of pragmatic events. As a consequence, the historical corpus of the Old Testament, reaching from Genesis through Kings, displays the rich stratification previously indicated. All the substrata, however, are overlaid by the meaning imposed by the final redaction, as well as by the arrangement of the books so that they will deliver the continuous narrative from the creation of the world to the fall of Jerusalem.

The intention of the postexilic authors to create a world-history must be accepted as the basis for any critical understanding of Israelite history. The Biblical narrative, as previously suggested, was not written in order to be disintegrated by exploring the Babylonian origin of certain mythologemes or by studying Bedouin customs that illuminate the Age of the Patriarchs, but in order to be read according to the intentions of their authors. A first approach to these intentions is given through Psalm 136.

Organized in three distinct parts the liturgical Psalm 136 gives something like a commentary on the governing principle of Israelite history. It opens with a preamble:

> Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
> Give thanks to the God of gods,
> Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

And then follow the appositions, describing the feats of Yahweh for which thanks are due. First, the creation of the world:

> To him who did great wonders alone,
> To him who made the heavens with skill,
> To him who spread out the earth upon the waters,
> To him who made the great lights,
> The sun to rule by day,
> The moon and the stars to rule by night.

Second, the rescue from Egypt:

> To him who smote the Egyptians in their first-born,
> And brought forth Israel from the midst of them,
> With a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
> To him who divided the Sea of Sedge into two parts,
> And led Israel over through the midst of it,
> And shook Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Sedge.

Third, the conquest of Canaan:

> To him who led his people through the wilderness,
> To him who smote great kings,
> And slew mighty kings,
> Sihon, the king of the Amorites,
> And Og, the king of Bashan,
> And gave their land as a possession,
> A possession to Israel, his servant.

The Psalm concludes with a summary invocation of the god who created both world and history:

> Who remembered us in our abasement,
> And rescued us from our foes,
> Who gives food to all flesh,
> Give thanks to the God of the heavens.

The drama of divine creation moves through the three great acts: the creation of the world, the rescue from Egypt, and the conquest of Canaan. Each of the three acts wrests meaning from the meaningless: the world emerges from Nothing, Israel from the Sheol of Egypt, and the promised land from the Desert. The acts thus interpret one another as works of divine creation and as the historical stages in which a realm of meaning grows: In history God continues his work of creation, and the creation of the world is the first event in history. To this conception the term "world-history" can be applied in the pregnant sense of a process that is world-creation and history at the same time. In its sweep the Old Testament narrative surveys the process from the creative solitude of God to its completion through the establishment of the servants of Yahweh in the land of promise. As in the Amon Hymns one could discern speculative structures which in later history would be differentiated, so one can discern in the compactness of the Israelite historical symbolism the outlines of the three great blocks of Thomistic speculation: God, the creation, and the return of the creation to God. That Israelite history contains this specula-

tive structure, though yet in undifferentiated form, is the secret of its dramatic perfection.

While Psalm 136 reveals the speculative sweep of the construction, further texts must be considered in order to understand the richness of motivations in detail. The problems of this nature have received careful attention by Gerhard von Rad in his studies on the Hexateuchal form. The following examples are chosen, therefore, from the materials assembled in his work, though they will have to be moved into a somewhat different light, in accordance with the purposes of the present study.[1]

The oldest of the several motives that have formed the Israelite meaning of history is probably to be found in the famous prayer formula of Deuteronomy 26:4b–9:

> A wandering Aramean was my father;
> and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number;
> and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.
>
> And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage.
> And we cried unto Yahweh, the God of our fathers;
> and Yahweh heard our voice, and 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,
> with great terror, and with signs, and with wonders.
>
> And he has brought us into this place,
> and has given us this land,
> a land flowing with milk and honey.

This obviously is not the great construction of Psalm 136. The prayer, concentrates, rather, on the concrete historical experience of Israel's salvation from the bondage of Egypt; and since it is a ritual prayer, to be offered with the first fruits of the land, it properly concludes on the motif of the Canaan that has produced them. Nevertheless, it has an importance of its own in so far as it shows how the meanings of history ramify from an experiential nucleus. In order to be brought out of Egypt, Israel first had to come into it. If God reveals himself as the savior in a concrete

[1] Gerhard von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs* (Beitraege zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, 4:26, Stuttgart, 1938).

monarchy. On that level it is, then, possible to combine the traditions of variegated origin into a coherent prehistory of the monarchy and to expand the narrative into the past, beyond the Patriarchs, into the prepatriarchal Genesis. A stream of motivations, thus, rises from the primary experiences, through the festivals, rites, and cult legends, into the speculative construction of the narrative. And since the stream rises without losing its identity of substance, the speculative form of the unfolded meaning can revert to the liturgical level, as in the great prayer of Nehemiah 9:6–37 that praises God in his works from the Creation, through the history of the Patriarchs, of Exodus, Sinai, and Canaan, of Kingdom, Exile, and Return, down to the postexilic rite of the new Covenant with Yahweh.

The construction of world-history unfolds the meaning that radiates from the motivating centers of experience. And since it is the will of God, and his way with man that is experienced in the concrete situation, world-history is meaningful in so far as it reveals the ordering will of God in every stage of the process, including the creation of the world itself. Beyond the construction of the world-history rises, therefore, a vision of the God who by his word called into existence the world and Israel. He is one God, to be sure, but he bears as many aspects as he has modes of revealing his ordering will to man—through the order of the world that embraces man and history, through the revelation of right order to the Fathers and the Chosen People, and through the aid that he brings to his people in adversity. He is the Creator, the Lord of Justice, and the Savior. These are the three fundamental aspects of divine being, as they become visible in the Israelite construction of world-history. They become something like a "theology" when they are brought into focus in the work of Deutero-Isaiah; and they remain the fundamental modes in which God is experienced in Christianity.

The experience of existence under God unfolds into the meaning of world-history; and the emergence of meaningful order from an ambiance of lesser meaning supplies the subject matter for the Biblical narrative. The term "emergence" in the present context is meant to denote the process in which any type of meaningful order is brought forth from an environment with a lesser charge of meaning. It will apply to the three main instances evoked in Psalm 136, as well to all other instances interspersed between them or following them. The Biblical narrative is built around the great cases of emergence, and gains its dramatic movement in detail as

the story of recessions from, and returns to, levels of meaning already achieved.

Genesis establishes the dramatic pattern of emergence and recession of meaningful order. It opens with the creation of the world, culminating in the creation of man; and it follows the account of the original emergence of order with the story of the great recession from the Fall to the Tower of Babel. A second level of meaning emerges with Abraham's migration from the Chaldaean city of Ur, with a way station in Haran, to Canaan. That is the first Exodus by which the imperial civilizations of the Near East in general receive their stigma as environments of lesser meaning. Canaan, indeed, is reached in that first venture, but the foothold in the land of promise is still precarious. Repeated famines drive first Abraham to a temporary settlement in Egypt and later the Jacob clans to a more permanent one. Genesis closes the account of this second recession with the return of Jacob's body to Canaan, to be buried in the field that Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite, and the oath of the sons of Israel to take the bones of Joseph with them, when they will all return to the promised land. Creation and Exodus, thus, are successive phases in the unfolding of the order of being; but the rhythm of emergence and recession was to be beaten twice in Genesis, and the order of being is not yet completed. Genesis is clearly the prelude to the main event whose story is told in Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua—that is, to the second Exodus, the wandering in the Desert, and the conquest of Canaan. Only with the main event, with the constitution of Israel as a people through the Covenant and its settlement in the promised land, the historical present is reached from which the ray of meaning falls over Genesis. At this point, at the complete emergence of meaning, the guidance offered by Psalm 136 properly stops, for it is the historical present in which the postexilic redactors still live—in spite of the course of pragmatic events which necessitated serious revisions of the original conception. Before turning to the disturbing events under the established present, however, a further aspect of the emergence of meaning must be considered.

The world-history is the history of all created being, not of Israel alone. As far as meaning emerges beyond the creation of the world in the history of mankind proper, the Biblical narrative is therefore fraught with the problem of understanding Israelite as the representative history of mankind. In Genesis 18:18 Yahweh asks himself:

> Shall I hide what I am about to do from Abraham,
> seeing that Abraham is bound to become a great and powerful nation,
> and through him all the nations of the earth will invoke blessings on one another?

In Galatians 3:7–9, St. Paul could interpret his apostolate among the nations outside Israel as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promise to Abraham; and contemporary with St. Paul, Philo Judaeus interpreted the prayer of the Jewish High Priest as the representative prayer for mankind to God. The ability or inability of the various branches of the Jewish community to cope with the problem of its own representative character has affected the course of history to our time, as will be seen presently. For the moment it must be observed that Genesis, as a survey of the past from which emerges the Israelite historical present, fulfills two important tasks. On the one hand, it separates the sacred line of the godly carriers of meaning from the rest of mankind. That is the line of Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve ancestors of the tribes of Israel. On the other hand, it must pay some attention to the mankind from which the sacred line has separated. That task is discharged in Genesis 10, in form of a survey of the nations that have descended from Noah after the Flood and peopled the earth. Not all of the nations mentioned can be identified with certainty. But at least the sons of Japhet are recognizable as the northern peoples, and among them the sons of Javan (the Ionians) as the peoples of Cyprus, Rhodes, and other islands. Under the sons of Ham the populations of Canaan are ranged by the side of the Egyptians, probably because the country was under Egyptian suzerainty. The sons of Shem, finally, comprise the Elamites, Assyrians, and Arameans by the side of Eber, the ancestor of the Hebrews. Certain details, such as the display of violent animosity in Genesis 9 against the Canaanites, suggest that the body of traditions incorporated in this geopolitical survey, was formed not very long after the Conquest.

The problem of emergence can now be further pursued into the course of events under the historical present created by Covenant and Conquest. As far as the course of paradigmatic history is concerned, the pattern established by Genesis simply runs on with its alternate recessions from, and recapturings of, the level of meaning achieved by the Conquest. The book of Judges is a model of this type of historiography, with its partly monotonous, partly amusing, repetition of the formula: "So the Israelites

did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh in that they forgot Yahweh their God, and served the Baals and Ashtarts," followed by accounts of prompt punishment through military defeat at the hands of Midianites, Amorites, or some other neighbor, by the repentance of Israel, and by the rise of a major judge who restores independence.

The formal rhythm of the ups and downs of meaning was further formalized by using twelve judges to cover the period; and this pattern of the rhythm, with dozens of judges for punctuation, might have run on indefinitely, unless the exigencies of power politics had persuaded the confederate tribes of Israel that a more effective, centralized government under a king was needed in order to endow the conquest of Canaan with some measure of stability. It was this establishment of a kingdom which inevitably produced the conflict between the Israel that was a peculiar people under the kingship of God, and the Israel that had a king like the other nations. Whether the kingship was pragmatically successful, through assimilation to the prevalent style of governmental organization, foreign politics, and cultural relations with the neighbors, as it was under Solomon and the Omride dynasty in the Northern Kingdom; or whether it was unsuccessful, and ultimately brought disaster on Israel through hopeless resistance against stronger empires, the Prophets were always right in their opposition. For Israel had reversed the Exodus and re-entered the Sheol of civilizations. Hence, the pattern of recession and repentant return still runs through Samuel and Kings but no longer with the ease of Judges, for it is increasingly overshadowed by the awareness that the Kingdom on principle is a recession, while the carriership of meaning, running parallel with it, is being transferred to the Prophets. Moreover, the literary organization of the great historical work can no longer cope successfully with the problem of crisis. To be sure, the story is continued in a formal sense beyond Judges through Samuel and Kings; but for the period of the Kingdom the prophetic books must be read by the side of the historical if one wants to gain an adequate understanding of the spiritual struggle of Israel with the issue of the Kingdom. And with the Exile the leadership of meaning plainly passes to the Prophets.

The construction of paradigmatic history in the light of a present that had been constituted by the Covenant was obviously cracking up—even in the hands of the postexilic redactors, who apparently accepted this present still as valid. The source of the difficulties will perhaps become clearer, if we step back of the redactors and assume the more detached

CHAPTER 6

The Historiographic Work

The Israelite conception of true order in the human soul, in society, and in history cannot be ascertained through consultation of treatises which explicitly deal with such subject matters. The historical narrative from the creation of the world to the fall of Jerusalem is neither a book, nor a collection of books, but a unique symbolism that has grown into its ultimate form through more than six centuries of historiographic work from the time of Solomon to *ca.* 300 B.C. Moreover, this written literary work has absorbed oral traditions which probably reach back as far as the first half of the second millennium B.C. Hence, it is possible to find a tradition from the seventeenth century, side by side with an editorial interpolation of the fifth century, in a story that has received its literary form in the ninth century B.C. One may, furthermore, find that the odd composition is not a piece of clumsy patchwork but a well-knit story that conveys a fine point of nomad ethics, or spiritual response to revelation, or diplomatic compromise with foreign divinities. And we may, finally, find that the story has an important function in a wider historical and speculative context which in its turn reveals an equally complex composition. That is a disconcerting situation, as it appears impossible to identify the object of inquiry. Do we deal with the component ideas of the seventeenth, ninth, or fifth centuries; or with the idea conveyed by the composition, which does not seem to have a date at all; or with the meaning which the piece has by virtue of its position in the larger context? Certainly no simple answer will be possible, and in many instances no satisfactory one at all. We must recognize the difficulties presented by a symbolism that has absorbed primary traditions and records of more than a thousand years, and overlaid them with interpretations, with interpretations of interpretations, with redactions and interpolations, and subtle imposition of new meanings through integration in wider contexts.

In order to cope with the difficulty, we shall deal in the present chapter with the uppermost layer of interpretation. While this procedure will not

above. The question whether a unit of symbolic form falls within the range of one of the sources of literary criticism, or cuts across several of them, is a question of fact. And our analysis will show on several occasions, especially in Chapter 12 in the study of Moses, that very important units of text, with a distinct form and meaning of their own, as a matter of fact, cut across the sources. But this is not the place to dwell on specific instances. For the Biblical narrative abounds, of course, with an infinity of meanings beyond the component sources, for the commonsense reason that it was composed for that very purpose, or as we should rather say, that it grew into its final form through the compositorial labors, over centuries, of a great number of men who selected and combined traditions in order to bring to paradigmatic perfection meanings which had not been articulated with the same degree of clarity in the component materials. If the compositorial labors had not added new strata of articulated meaning, the Biblical narrative in its final form would be the *Glasperlenspiel* of unemployed intellectuals who had better have left their sources alone. Faced with the alternatives that either the compositors of the Biblical narrative have ruined the meaning of their sources or that the literary critics have ruined the meaning of the compositorial work, we prefer the second one.

Still, the results of literary criticism are not negligible. While some units of meaning cut across the sources, there are other units, and very important ones, that coincide with them. The so-called Yahwist document, especially, is a body of text rich in meaning that seems to have furnished the historiographic nucleus for the expanding narrative. Following the characterization of the Yahwist work given by von Rad, we can summarize its achievement in the following manner: The Yahwist seems to have reached the historiographic level through expansion of the motives contained in the prayer formula of Deuteronomy 26:4b–9. He organized the materials of the Patriarchal age, through the tradition of the God of the Fathers and his promise of ultimate settlement in Canaan, in such a manner that the events became transparent for the providential guidance of Yahweh. The course of Patriarchal history, thus, was endowed with an entelechy in two respects: On the one hand, the promise of settlement found its fulfillment in the events surrounding the Conquest; on the other hand, the Covenant with Abraham found its fulfillment in the Covenant with Israel at Sinai. Moreover, the meaningful course of history from the "wandering Aramean" to the Con-

quest was expanded, still within the Yahwist document, through the prehistory from the creation of the world to Abraham.[9] This is, indeed, a great symbolic construction, falling completely within the range of one of the sources; and in so far as the J source is the oldest one, we touch here the beginnings of the symbolic work that ultimately has become the narrative in its extant form.[10]

Nevertheless, the fact that an important unit of meaning is to be found within a source delimited by literary criticism must not blind us for the other fact that we still know nothing whatsoever about the "Yahwist." Assumptions about the manner in which this unit came into being cannot be based on the literary characteristics, as we have stressed, but only on its contents; and the meaning of the contents does not require as its creator a single author. For the entelechy of the historiographic symbol does no more than articulate the experienced entelechy of Israel's existence under God. The *telos* of the people's existence was ontologically real, and whoever participated sensitively and imaginatively in Israel's order was a potential participant in the creation of the historiographic symbol. The literary characteristics indicate no more than the common language of a group of persons, perhaps numerous over a period of time, who were occupied with the traditions concerning Israel's existence under God. We have arrived at last at the basic philosophical weaknesses of literary criticism, that is, at the attempt to treat the Biblical narrative as if it were "literature" in the modern sense and the disregard for its nature as a symbolism which articulates the experience of a people's order—of the ontologically real order of Israel's existence in historical form.

The work of the Wellhausen school had resulted in a theoretical vacuum. The traditional meaning which radiated over the Biblical narrative from such symbols as the Old Testament of Christianity, the word of God, or the Five Books written by Moses under divine inspiration had evaporated under an empirical investigation of the narrative as a literary document with one or more authors. Furthermore, the dissection of the text into ever-smaller literary units had, while delivering results of questionable validity with regard to the early pragmatic history of Israel,

[9] Von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*, 58–62.

[10] Von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose, Genesis Kapitel 1–12:9* (Goettingen, 1949), 16, assumes for the J source a date of *ca.* 950 B.C., for the E source *ca.* 850–750, for the P source *ca.* 538–450.

historical view is based on a much more thorough understanding of the contents of the narrative than the source-critical conception. What characterizes the work of Engnell, and of the Uppsala school in general, is a remarkable respect for the Masoretic Text as it stands, a reluctance to operate with conjectures and emendations (especially a disinclination to use the Septuagint as an easy way out when the Hebrew text is difficult), an excellent philological equipment for dealing with the text, and a vast knowledge of comparative materials for the elucidation of symbols and cult patterns. These technical virtues are the outer bulwark of a will, not always clearly articulated, to return to the meanings intended by the narrative and its subunits, which the Wellhausen school had replaced by the meanings of the J, E, P, and D narratives. And the tradition-historical assumption obviously fits the intended meaning of the narrative very much better than the source-critical assumption. If, for instance, the Tetrateuch is conceived as a work that has received its meaning, together with its final form, through a traditionist circle, the body of text has regained the meaning which it had lost under the assumption of a mechanical combination of sources; and, at the same time, the embarrassing redactor, who combined sources which he had better have left alone, has disappeared. Moreover, the assumption of traditionist circles is sufficiently elastic to accommodate the various genera of traditions clearly to be discerned not only in the narrative but in the Old Testament in general. There may be assumed circles of scribes and learned men for the wisdom literature, of singer groups in the temple for the psalm literature, of colleges of priests for the law collections, of groups of disciples around a master for the prophetic literature, of bards or poets (the *moshlim* of Numbers 21:27) for proverbs, and finally of storytellers or traditionists in the narrower sense for the various types of patriarchal, heroic, and prophetic legends.[16] A splendid vista opens on the culture of Israel, as well as on the variegated circles of men who preserved and enlarged it. Particularly felicitous is Engnell's deliberate anachronism when he speaks of the P-circle as an "Israelite Academy of Literature, History and Antiquities, though, of course, with its root and keen interest in the cult."[17] One wonders whether the analogy is really so very anachronistic; for the concern with the past as the paradigmatic record of God's way with man, extending over a period of more than a thousand years, could

[16] Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet*, I, 41, 105.
[17] Engnell, " 'Knowledge' and 'Life' in the Creation Story," *loc. cit.*, 105.

hardly translate itself into practice without a considerable apparatus of both personnel and material installations, for preserving this enormous body of traditions not only mechanically but with the necessary intelligence and erudition.

Into his tradition-historical method Engnell has thoroughly absorbed the knowledge that tradition-history is not pragmatic history. Since this component of the method derives primarily from Pedersen's earlier rebellion against the Wellhausen school, a few excerpts from Pedersen's study on the Paschal Legend will help in understanding the issue: [18]

> The story of the crossing of the reed sea. . . , as well as the whole emigration legend, though inserted as part of an historical account, is quite obviously of a cultic character, for the whole narrative aims at glorifying the god of the people at the paschal feast through an exposition of the historical event that created the people. The object cannot have been to give a correct exposition of ordinary events but, on the contrary, to describe history on a higher plane. . . . The legend purposes to describe the mythical fight between Yahweh and his enemies and this purpose dominates the narrative to such a degree that it is impossible to show what were the events that have been transformed into this grand drama. . . . The usual separation of the sources of that part of the festival legend which relates to the departure and the crossing of the reed sea is due to a misunderstanding of the whole character of this story. The narrative is no report but a cultic glorification.

In these remarks, on occasion of a concrete subunit of the narrative, Pedersen touches on the decisive points at stake: In the first place, the Paschal Legend cuts across the sources; its unit of meaning is ruined when the text is dissected according to the principles of literary criticism. That unit of meaning, furthermore, though embedded in what purports to be a historical account, has nothing to do with pragmatic history. The attempt at a "realistic" reconstruction of events will be futile, since the order of events within the narrative is governed by the drama of Yahweh's victory over his enemies. The meaning of the narrative, finally, is described as the "cultic glorification" of the God who created his people. At this point we can link the position of Pedersen and Engnell with our own, in so far as "cultic glorification" is a special case of what

[18] For his formal criticism of the Wellhausen school cf. Johannes Pedersen, "Die Auffassung vom Alten Testament," *Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLIX (1931), 161–81, and his study on the Paschal Legend in *Israel. Its Life and Culture*, III–IV, 728–37. The following excerpts are from pp. 728–31.

no longer experienced as part of the cosmic-divine order, but became transparent for the order of transcendent-divine reality. The impact of the new experience must have been overpowering, for the community who suffered it with its leaders was thereby set off as a peculiar people from the surrounding cosmological societies, and that meant at the time, from the rest of mankind. It was perhaps this heaviness of the divine impact on a comparatively small community, traumatically aggravated by the stresses and strains of pragmatic existence, that sealed the meaning of the event ineluctably with its concrete, circumstantial features. At any rate, the universalist implications of the experience were never successfully explicated within Israelite history. The spiritual meaning of the exodus from civilization was well understood but nevertheless remained inseparable from the concrete Exodus from Egypt; the Kingdom of God could never quite separate from Canaan; the great original revelation remained so overwhelmingly concrete that its spiritual renewals had to assume the literary form of additions to the Instructions; and the word of God to mankind through Israel became the sacred scripture of a particular ethnico-religious community. The nature of Israelite compactness can be summarized, therefore, as a perpetual mortgage of the world-immanent, concrete event on the transcendent truth that on its occasion was revealed.

The compactness of the nature just described is peculiar to the whole body of symbols in which Israelite historical thought expressed itself. From this body we must now single out for consideration the few symbols that have a direct bearing on the question: What did Israelite historians do, in their own terms, when they wrote history? Of whom or of what, we must ask, did they write history? And what did they call the thing they wrote?

The subject-matter of Israelite historiography, as we have seen, is world-history in the pregnant sense of a report on the emergence of divinely willed order in world and society through the creative and covenanting acts of God. If for the moment the brief introductory account of the Creation, as well as its bearing on the further happenings, is set aside, one can say that the vastly preponderant bulk of the report is concerned with the human drama of obedience to, and defection from, the will of God. Hence, the historiographer will be, first of all, concerned with the divine instructions (*toroth*) that furnish the measure for

reference suggests the existence of literary sources dealing with the genealogies of leading Israelite families; and these sources in their turn were probably based on Temple or other public archives. How far back the written genealogies of "all Israel" extended does not appear with certainty from Chronicles; but their arrangement according to tribes in I Chronicles 2–8 suggests they were constructed on principle so as to be attached to one of the ancestors of the Jacob clans.

Beyond the tribes of the confederacy we enter the realm of legend, myth, and speculation. The great nodal point in the symbolism is the descent from Shem, "the father of all the children of Eber" (Gen. 10:21). The Hebrew word *shem* means "name." With Shem the register of names reaches the abstraction of the Name by which "all Israel" is distinguished from a symbolically anonymous mankind. From Shem, finally, the register goes back to Adam. The Hebrew word *adam* means "man." The man with the Name ultimately descends from generic Man.

The register of Chronicles illuminates the various uses to which the genealogies can be put, as well as the tension that must develop between the clan idea and the idea of mankind. The symbol of the *toldoth* applies to the whole course of Israelite history. As the phases of application can be distinguished, in chronological order: (1) The synoecism of the returned exiles; (2) the clan-heads of the Kingdom; (3) the tribes of the Confederacy; (4) the succession of the Patriarchs; (5) the second mankind from Noah to Abraham; and (6) the first mankind from Adam to Noah. The reliability of the registers in detail is not our concern; but we must note that the form of the register is applied not only to Patriarchal but even to pre-Patriarchal history, where it no longer can serve clan history, however unreliable, but obviously is the clan symbolism expanded to cover a speculation on the origins of mankind. This speculative expansion, however, has no independent function in the context of the registers of Chronicles but is subordinate to the main purpose of guaranteeing the purity of the "holy seed." For the register is rigidly constructed on the principle of separating the main line of mankind from the side lines. A series of names on the main line is enumerated until a point is reached where the heads of side lines appear; at this point the main line is interrupted, the side lines are disposed of, and then the enumeration returns to the main line. The descendants of Adam, for instance, are enumerated down to Shem, Ham, and Japheth; then the descendants of

Japheth and Ham, as well as the side lines of Shem are disposed of; and then the register returns to the enumeration of the main line from Shem to Abraham; and so forth. The procedure of recapturing the main line again and again from the mass of lesser mankind is an impressive prelude to the recapturing that is now in the offing when the men who returned from the Exile will separate as the "remnant," as the "children of captivity" (Ezra 8:35), from the "adversaries," the "people of the land" (*am-ha-aretz*, Ezra 4:1–4), that is, from the Israelites who had remained in the country when the others were carried off into captivity.

Up to this point the analysis renders the following result. The historiographic symbol of the *toldoth* had for its basis the genealogies of the clans united in the Israelite Confederacy. The genealogy, then, became the symbol for expressing the unity of groups which by their substance were no clans at all. The dominant experience in the creation of such groups was the Covenant at Mount Sinai, which constituted something like an amphictyonic league of formerly separate clans, under the name of Israel. The community originating in the Covenant was, then, submitted to genealogical work; and as a consequence the original clans, as well as others which joined them at a later time, as for instance Judah, were constructed as tribes descending from a common ancestor Jacob-Israel. The Covenant, however, was a divine revelation of true order valid for all mankind, made to a particular group at a particular time. Hence, there could be, and historically there was, differentiated from it both the idea of a mankind under one God and the idea of a nucleus of true believers. Again both ideas were submitted to genealogical work. The idea of mankind was cast in the form of a genealogy going back to Adam; the nucleus of the true believers became a "remnant" that kept a genealogical record of the "holy seed." In both instances the genealogical work was more than an innocuous formality. The idea of mankind could never be understood in its fullness, in spite of the arduous endeavors of the prophets, because through the genealogical form it remained closely linked to the idea of a genealogically separated sacred line. And the idea of a nucleus of true believers rendered, under the genealogical influence, the grotesque result of the postexilic synoecism: That a numerically small group of exiles returned to Jerusalem and excommunicated the *am-ha-aretz*, that is, the people of Israel settled in its promised land. The people of Israel had to wait for its historical revenge until from the *am-ha-aretz* there arose Jesus and Christianity.

Nevertheless, beside the genealogical contraction into the remnant there stands the genealogical expansion into mankind. We shall now turn to the speculation, in genealogical form, on the idea of mankind that is to be found in Genesis. The speculation develops a characteristic style in the construction of great registers which bridge the intervals between the major human catastrophes and regenerations. Omitting the complications of the Abel-Cain story, the first register extends from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5). After the destruction of mankind through the Flood, a second register begins with Noah (6:9–10). It is brief, comprising no more than Noah himself and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Whether the two verses were at some time the beginning of a longer register, we do not know. But we can see the reason why the register had to break off at this point, not to be resumed until Genesis 11:10, where it continues from Shem to Abraham. For between the two parts of the second register is placed the previously discussed geopolitical register of Genesis 10. The historians who were responsible for the ultimate organization of Genesis wanted their world-history to embrace mankind and to clarify the relation of the sacred line to the rest of mankind. The logical place for the insertion of the register was the generation after Noah, when the first mankind had been conveniently destroyed and the second one began to branch out; thanks to this location, the ancestry of Israel was now coeval with the rest of mankind—a point that must have been of some importance for a people surrounded by the old Mesopotamian and Egyptian high-civilizations. Nevertheless, the tension between mankind and the sacred line is well preserved. After the interlude of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9), which explains the linguistic and geographical scattering of mankind presupposed in Genesis 10, the main task is resumed and the register of the sacred line continued from the Name to Abraham. With the exodus of the first Patriarch from civilization the separation begins in earnest; and God in his turn now attacks in earnest the problem of establishing human order in conformity with his will, which he had failed to solve by the somewhat violent means of expulsion from Paradise, destruction by the Flood, and the scattering of mankind and its linguistic confusion after the affair of Babel.

Compared with the fanatical determination of the Chronicler to throw the people of Israel out of the main line, we are moving in Genesis in an atmosphere of intellectual detachment. There are subtleties embedded in its construction that require closer consideration. The registers are

formalized, in so far as they begin with the phrase: "These are the generations [*toldoth*] of . . ." (Gen. 6:9; 10:1; 11:10). The meaning of the formalization becomes most tangible in the Adam register which begins: "This is the book [*sepher*] of the generations [*toldoth*] of Adam" (Gen. 5:1). What the word "book" means in this context can only be surmised; but we shall probably not be far wrong if we follow Buber's translation as *Urkunde* and assume it to mean something like an authentic record. The insistence on trustworthiness deserves attention, for it cannot have escaped the redactors of the narrative that the *toldoth* of Adam in Genesis 5 do not agree with the accounts of the Adam generations that begin in 4:17 and 4:25. If anything is untrustworthy on the face of it, it is this collection of reverentially preserved but conflicting registers. Moreover, one must raise the question, who in the world would have had an interest in these registers and their authenticity? One cannot dwell, in search of an answer, on nomad customs and the remarkable ability of Bedouin sheiks to remember twelve generations of ancestors, covering about four centuries. For the registers list nobody's remembered ancestors, but are constructions which use the clan symbolism as an instrument of speculation on the genesis of mankind and the world. Hence, taking it for granted that ancient symbolists were not as naïve as modern fundamentalists, the quality of trustworthiness must have been meant to attach not to the detail of the registers but to the symbolic meaning which they intended to convey.

A clue to the meaning is furnished by Genesis 2:4: "These are the generations [*toldoth*] of heaven and earth." The passage opens an account of the creation but uses the same phraseology as the genealogical registers. That is an odd usage; for the noun *toldoth* contains the verb *yalad*, "to bear," "to bring forth," and thus unmistakably refers not to creation but to procreation. Hence, we must assume that the oddity was intended, precisely in order to reveal a deeper connection between creation and procreation. The assumption is confirmed by the sequel to the odd passage. For the account of creation (2:4–7) describes it as a sequence of generations, the earlier one procreating the later one with the creative assistance of Yahweh:

> These are the generations [*toldoth*] of the heavens and earth when they were created:
>
> On the day when Yahweh-Elohim made heaven and earth,
> there were as yet no field shrubs on the earth,

and no field plants had as yet sprung up,
for Yahweh-Elohim had not caused it to rain on the earth,
and there was no *adam* [man, Adam] to till the *adamah* [soil].

But from the earth rose an *ad* [pronounced "ed," mist] and watered
the whole face of the *adamah*,
and Yahweh-Elohim formed *adam* from the dust of the *adamah*,
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,
and *adam* became a living being.

No modern translation can adequately render the innuendo of the Hebrew text that the first generation of creation, that is, the heavens and earth, become procreative and co-operate with Yahweh in the work of creation. From the fertilization of *ad* and *adamah* arises, under the forming and animating action of Yahweh, the second generation of *adam*, with the double meaning of man and Adam.

The role of the passage in the symbolic construction will become even clearer when we hold by the side of it the opening passage of the Adam register:

This is the *sepher* [book] of the *toldoth* [generations] of *adam*
[man, Adam]:

On the day when God created *adam*,
he made him in the likeness of God,
male and female he created them,
and blessed them,
and called their name: *Adam!* on the day of their creation.

And *adam* lived a hundred and thirty years,
and begat in his likeness after his image,
and called his name: Seth!

With the linguistic structure of the text before him, the reader will not doubt that the *toldoth* of Adam continue the *toldoth* of heavens and earth. The authors intended the meanings of creation and procreation to merge in a co-operative process; the order of being is meant to arise from the creative initiative of God and the procreative response of the creation. Hence, what is trustworthy about the registers is not the genealogical ascent from the presently living to some remote ancestor but the generative descent from God—generative understood in the double meaning of creative-procreative. The *adam* that was created by God with the procreative response of *ad* and *adamah* continues to generate himself in the likeness of God. To the presently living the registers authenticate their

duced not a history of anything but a purposefully devised myth. Moreover, myth and history are not clearly separate parts of the narrative but blend into each other. Historical subject matter proper enters in increasing quantities in the course of the Patriarchal stories and bulks heavily in the history of the Davidic Empire and the Kingdoms, but the myth never disappears completely. And furthermore, one cannot even say that the component of the myth gradually thins out as the narrative moves closer toward its end, for toward the end it contains a magnificent and complex specimen of myth in the story of the "discovery" of the Deuteronomic Code. The historical elements, to be sure, are clearly distinguishable in the account of the discovery. We can discern the authorship of the Code, the skillful timing of its "discovery," and the contrivance of the myth. But these elements are firmly embedded in the myth of the discovery itself, as well as in the mythical form which presents the Code as a series of divine instructions communicated by speeches of Moses. Here, for once, we have a genuine myth *about* Moses, as distinguished from the symbols created *by* Moses. The Israelite narrator accepts the myth of the discovery and reports its content as if it were history; and in doing so he inevitably informs us that, as a matter of historical fact, such a myth was contrived and really enacted by the "discoverers" of the Deuteronomic Code. The narrator is not the dupe of the myth, since he belonged to the circle that created it and perhaps even participated in its creation. His attitude rather resembles that of the authors of the Memphite Theology. He can contrive a myth and at the same time believe it, for the myth embodies the truth of an experience—that the instructions of the Deuteronomic Code authentically renew the truth of order communicated by Moses. The truth of the Mosaic instructions was experienced as rediscovered for the age. And the myth of the discovery, accepted as history, was a subtle and effective method to express this truth.

The historiographic work, thus, contains genuine myths, genuine history, and the strange intertwinings of history, myth, and enactment of the myth that we find in the affair of the Deuteronomy. The three types of content are blended into a new type of story that is neither myth nor pragmatic history but the previously analysed "world-history" with its experiential nucleus in the historical present constituted by Moses and the Covenant, and its elaboration through speculations on the origins of being and the periods of world-history. The "narrative" thus has

absorbed variegated types of materials and transformed them according to its own principle of construction. It is a symbolic form *sui generis*. Hence, when now again we raise the question concerning the "subject matter" of the narrative, we are forced to the conclusion that it has no "subject matter," but a meaning which can be ascertained only by recourse to the experiential motivations of the form.

An access to the motivations of the form will be gained by the observation that the great narrative came to an end. The Israelite historians lost their interest in world-historic events when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had disappeared from the political scene. But if we consider that certainly a principal motivation of Israelite historiography was the constitution of the people by the Covenant and that the narrative elaborated paradigmatically the existence of the people under divine Instructions, it will not be so obvious that the narrative should have come to an end at all, or that if it did it should have done so at this particular point. If one takes the narrative at its face value, one would rather expect it to have been continued and brought up to date as long as there were Israelites alive and able to do such work.

In order to explain the oddity of its cessation, we must assume the primary motivation of the great narrative to have been not an interest in world-history at all but rather an interest in the foundation of the Kingdom with whose end the story ends. And this assumption is borne out by the facts of literary history, in so far as the writing of history did indeed begin in the time of Solomon and its first subject matter was the origins of the monarchy. The J and E traditions, furthermore, were formed into coherent stories and perhaps committed to writing under the Kingdom and by their historical situation were intended as the early history of the Israel that was organized as a people under a king.

If, however, the foundation of the Kingdom furnished the primary motive for historiography, at least as far as written history is concerned, a conflict seems to develop between the two major events by which the people of Israel was constituted. For the assumed primary motive of written history contradicts the contents of the historiographic work in so far as, according to the narrative itself, the focus of Israelite history was not the rise of the monarchy but the constitution of the people through the events of the Mosaic period.

In order to remove the conflict the foundation of the monarchy must

be recognized as an event of far greater importance for Israel than it would appear to have been according to the narrative. The Prophetic concern with the iniquities of royal conduct, foreign policy, and social evils has cast a shadow over the monarchy and minimized its pragmatic achievement while at the same time it was enhancing the rather dismal events of the so-called conquest of Canaan to heroic proportions. If we penetrate the paradigmatic redaction to the pragmatic core of the events leading up to the call for a king, it appears that the Israelite invasion of Canaan had been only partially successful, that the foothold gained was precarious, and that the attacks of the Philistines threatened the Israelite position with a reduction bordering on extinction. The situation must indeed have been desperate, because Israel before the monarchy consisted pragmatically of nothing but an unorganized willingness of various clans, united by the bond of the Covenant, to aid each other in case of an attack. And this willingness not only was unorganized but quite unreliable even in case of a deadly emergency. In terms of power politics one would have to say that the "conquest" of Canaan was an inconclusive penetration of the country, and by the time of Saul it was on the point of being wiped out by the better organized Philistine forces. The conquest was completed, or rather it became an effective conquest at all, only through the acceptance of kingship and the successful conclusion of the Philistine wars.

If the history of the conquest is seen in this light, the historiographic motivations will lose their contradictory appearance. For the foundation of the Kingdom was, strictly speaking, not an event within the history of Israel but the last of a series of acts through which Israel came into historical existence. This series of acts, to be sure, began with the work of Moses, with the Exodus and the Covenant, but it did not end with them or even with the penetration of Canaan. The political organization of the people on its territory, the creation of the form under which it could act and maintain itself on the historical scene, was accomplished only by the monarchy. The creation of the community substance by Moses had to be supplemented by the organization for pragmatic existence. The successful completion of Israelite existence would be the experience that motivated the writing of history because now the organized people had emerged of which a history could be written. And the historical work would have for its first topic the reigns of Saul and David and the accession of Solomon, as it did in the memoirs of an unknown author

the political organization for successful pragmatic existence through the monarchy. These were the two focuses which in the later, Christian development differentiated into sacred and profane history, into Church and State. In Israelite history the differentiation, while never quite achieved, very noticeably began; and in the course of the attempts to break the initial compactness of order occurred the curious reversals in the hierarchy of the focuses. In the situation of the "conquest," under the threat of extinction at the hands of the Philistines, the organization of the people under a monarchy was understood as the fulfillment of the task imposed by the Covenant. But as soon as the monarchy was established, and had adjusted itself to the internal and external exigencies of politics, it became obvious that the new social order did not correspond to the intentions of the Covenant at all. Hence, only with the reaction to the monarchy began the intense interest in Moses and the Instructions which ultimately caused the Kingdom to appear as a great aberration. The foundation of the monarchy, thus, became an ambivalent event in both the history and historiography of Israel. Without the monarchy, the Israel of the confederacy might have disappeared without leaving much of a trace in history; with the monarchy, it survived but betrayed the Mosaic Instructions. Without the monarchy, there never might have arisen the Prophetic opposition which clarified the meaning of Yahwism; with a successfully continued monarchy, the Yahwism of the Prophets probably could never have become a universal historic force.

The nature of Israelite compactness has previously been defined as "a perpetual mortgage of the world-immanent, concrete event on the transcendent truth that on its occasion was revealed." The mortgage had become heavier and heavier down to the foundation of the monarchy because the original promise of Canaan made every advance of the people in worldly establishment appear as a fulfillment of the order instituted by the Covenant. When the Prophets began their work, the mortgage had reached staggering proportions, as it had accumulated the civilizational orders through which the people had passed. The people had started on the level of nomad life in the desert; it then had acquired the characteristics of a settled, agricultural population in Canaan; and finally it had developed an urban and a court society under the monarchy. Since the transitions from one civilizational order to the other did not affect the whole population, Israel under the Kingdom had preserved

the nomad and agricultural viewpoints of the respective traditions.[23] But the story of Cain and Abel, for instance, is the creation of agricultural settlers who wish to explain the way of life of the nomad Kenites that has become utterly strange to them. The ethics of nomad life, thus, could not be held up with any hope of success in opposition to the mores of the Kingdom. One could not undo the history of Israel and return to the desert. Worse, however, was that the Yahwism of the desert period apparently did not provide the spiritual symbols that could be evoked authoritatively against the evils of the time. What the exact nature of the difficulty was we do not know, as the original symbols of the Mosaic period cannot be disengaged with certainty from the context created by the postprophetic redactions. But we do know that it required the efforts of a whole galaxy of Prophets to differentiate the spiritual meaning of Yahwism from a symbolism that enclosed it compactly in the ordering instructions for an association of nomad clans. And once these efforts had achieved a certain measure of success, the oppositional character of Prophetism had become doubly futile. For, pragmatically, the opposition had lost its target with the destruction of the Kingdoms; and, spiritually, it became obvious that the existence or nonexistence of a Kingdom of Israel was irrelevant for the fundamental problems of a life in righteousness before the Lord.

Further light will fall on the nature of the Israelite difficulty through a comparison with the inverse difficulty that beset the early Christians. In Christianity the *logia* of Jesus, and especially the Sermon on the Mount, had effectively disengaged the meaning of faith, as well as of the life of the spirit, from the conditions of a particular civilizational order. The separation was so effective indeed that loss of understanding for the importance of civilizational order was a serious danger to many Christians. While the Prophets had to struggle for an understanding of Yahwism in opposition to the concrete social order of Israel, a long series of

[23] In Genesis 16 Hagar is a fierce nomad woman who resents the chicaneries of her mistress. She wanders off into the desert and shifts there quite well for herself. And there she receives the divine announcement of the great destiny that is in store for her son Ishmael. In Genesis 17 she is a helpless servant sent packing into the desert. There she waits for her child to die from exposure to heat and lack of water, and must anticipate the same fate for herself. God saves her and the child through a miracle, and then proceeds to the announcement of the great destiny. In the first version the desert is the freedom to which man can have refuge from social oppression in a settled society; in the second version the desert is the place into which man is driven against his will, and where he dies from lack of sustenance. In both versions Abraham appears in the pathetic role of a husband who discards his mistress and exposes her to misery in order to have his peace at home.

Christian statesmen, from St. Paul to St. Augustine, had to struggle for an understanding of the exigencies of world-immanent social and political order. The Prophets had to make it clear that the political success of Israel was no substitute for a life in obedience to divine instructions; the Christian statesmen had to make it clear that faith in Christ was no substitute for organized government. The Prophets had to stress that status in the social order of Israel did not confer spiritual status on a man before God; the Christian thinkers had to stress that sacramental acceptance into the Mystical Body did not touch the social status of a man—that masters still were masters, and slaves were slaves, that thieves still were thieves, and magistrates were magistrates. The Prophets had to explain that social success was not a proof of righteousness before God; the Christian thinkers had to explain that the Gospel was no social gospel, redemption no social remedy, and Christianity in general no insurance for individual or collective prosperity.

The relationship between the life of the spirit and life in the world is the problem that lies unresolved at the bottom of the Israelite difficulties. Let us hasten to say that the problem by its nature is not capable of a solution valid for all times. Balances that work for a while can be found and have been found. But habituation, institutionalization, and ritualization inevitably, by their finiteness, degenerate sooner or later into a captivity of the spirit that is infinite; and then the time has come for the spirit to break a balance that has become demonic imprisonment. Hence, no criticism is implied when the problem is characterized as unresolved. But precisely because the problem is unsolvable on principle, an inestimable importance attaches to its historically specific states of irresolution. In the Israelite case, the problem is unresolved in so far as it is on the point of emergence from the compactness of the Mosaic period into the Prophetic differentiation. And the foundation of the Kingdom was, furthermore, the specific crisis that revealed the demonic derailment of the Mosaic foundation. Here we witness the interplay of experiences in the struggle of the spirit for its freedom from encasement in a particular social organization. That struggle of truly world-historic importance has, by its experiential phases, determined the unique structure of the Biblical narrative as a literary work.

PART THREE

History and the Trail of Symbols

The historiographic work was originally dominated by the foundation of the monarchy. Under the impact of the Prophetic movement, then, the focus of interest shifted from successful pragmatic existence to the substantive order under the Covenant. The exilic and postexilic historians, finally, weighted the Pentateuch heavily with additional Codes, constructed the history of the Kingdom around the Temple of Solomon and the purity of the cult of Yahweh, and superimposed the speculation on periods of world-history.

The radical shift of interest, however, did not induce the historians to abandon the work of earlier generations. The complete work, as a consequence, assumed the symbolic form *sui generis* analysed in the preceding chapter. On the one hand, the form of the narrative absorbed into its medium the variegated contents of myth and history and transformed it into the paradigmatic world-history. On the other hand, the resulting world-history was not the work of a single historian who digested primary sources and imposed his personal literary style on them. The late historians achieved the desired changes of meaning rather through selection, repression, mutilation, interpolation, and the silent influence of context. In such fragmentized form, therefore, the narrative contains a considerable amount of source materials which, isolated from their context, still reveal their original meaning.

The peculiarity of the literary form is intimately determined by the problems of an order that oscillated between the righteousness of a life in obedience to divine instructions and the organization of a people for existence in history. The compactness of the cosmological symbolism, to be sure, was broken by the Yahwist experience, but the elaboration of the experience through new symbols never completely penetrated the consequences of the leap in being for either the life of the spirit or the life in the world. Israelite symbols have, therefore, a baffling structure.

And that is perhaps the reason why their nature rarely comes into clear view in the literature on the subject. The Yahwism of the Prophets still appears to be the best recognizable "contribution" of Israel to the civilization of mankind, whereas the symbols concerning organized existence seem so closely related to the cosmological myth of the time that the specific Israelite difference is difficult to determine.

That complexity of order must be faced just as the corresponding complexity of the historiographic work. There is neither a "religious" Israel of the Covenant and the Prophets, to which the love of theologians and Old Testament scholars reaches out, nor a "political" Israel which receives preferential treatment from pragmatic historians. There is only the one Israel, which tries to exist in the historical form centered in the Covenant, though at the same time the cosmological myth creeps back wherever the exigencies of pragmatic existence assert themselves. While the form elements can be well distinguished in the sources, one must resist the temptation to isolate them against each other and to speak, as is frequently done, of a genuine Israelite order under the Covenant and its vitiation through "oriental influences." For the people who had an incomplete understanding of their God, who deserted him for Canaanite, Assyrian, and Babylonian divinities, who even degraded him to a god of the same rank as the others, and perhaps not the most reliable one, were as much Israel as the Prophets and had as good reasons for their defection as the Prophets for their opposition. When reflecting on the tensions between the form elements, it will perhaps be better not to distinguish between the forms at all, but rather to descend to the level of experience and to speak of the two experiential forces which respectively pushed toward the full realization of a life in obedience to Yahweh, and pulled the people back toward existence in cosmological form. For if the tension is expressed in the language of experiential forces, it will become clearer that Israelite symbols, even when they approach closely to the cosmological symbolism of the neighboring civilizations, are still loaded with the opposition to, or regression from, Yahwism; while Prophetic symbols, even when they come closest to a universalist understanding of divine transcendence, are still loaded with the problems of Israel's pragmatic existence.

The two counteracting experiential forces met in the creation of the historiographic work. The fragments of traditions, oral and written, were incorporated in the great narrative because the history of Israel's

and, for his service of delivering enemies into the hands of the people who recognize him, receives tithes after a successful war.

Among those who recognize the Canaanite Baal is Abram. Nevertheless, while ready to let the Baal have his share of the war loot, Abram reserves his allegiance beyond this point. Subsequent to the Melchizedek episode (Gen. 14:18–20) the King of Sodom offers to share the loot with Abram (21); but Abram rejects the offer, which must be supposed to have been generous, in violent, almost insulting language:

> I raise my hand to Yahweh, El Elyon,
> the maker of the heavens and the earth:
> If from a thread to a shoe-lace, if I take aught that is yours. . . !
> You shall not say: "I have made Abram rich."
> Not for me—
> Only what the young men have eaten,
> and the portion of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre,—
> Let them take their portion.

It is a dramatic speech; an outburst, holding back on the verge of a betrayal, lapsing into silences to cover what already has been half said. It reveals more than the resentment of a proud nomad of being made rich by the generosity of a king—if this feeling plays an important role at all. For behind the overt rejection of the King's offer there lies the rejection of Melchizedek and his El Elyon. When Abram raises his hand to Yahweh, he pointedly arrogates the Baal's epithet for his own God. By Yahweh he swears his unfinished oath not to take anything of the King's possessions. His professed unwillingness to be made rich by the King, is in reality an indignant refusal to be made rich by the King's Baal. Yahweh is the god who delivers enemies into Abram's hands, not the god of Melchizedek; Yahweh blesses Abram, not the Baal of Jerusalem; and not to the El Elyon who watches over the relations between political allies in Canaan will Abram owe his prosperity, but to Yahweh alone. Hence, Abram reduces the King's offer to the payment of an ascetic expense account.

Any doubt about the intention of the story will be dispelled by a glance at its context. When Abram indignantly refuses to become rich with the blessing of the Baal, we may justly wonder how he ever will prosper in a political order under the protection of El Elyon. The concern will dissolve when we read the opening verse of Genesis 15:

> After what just has been related, the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision:
> Fear not, Abram,
> I am your shield,
> Your reward shall be rich.

In the further course of the chapter Yahweh makes a berith with Abram (15:18), promising the dominion of Canaan for his descendants (15:18–21) when the guilt of the Amorites is full (15:16). The meaning of Genesis 14 is clarified by this sequel beyond a doubt. Abram is in the difficult situation of the Exodus. Pragmatically he has left the former home in Chaldea, but in Canaan he has settled in an environment whose understanding of human and social order does not substantially differ from the Mesopotamian. He is still a foreigner, dependent for his status on his berith-masters, the Amorites, whose principal occupation in the spiritual order of things seems to be the accumulation of guilt, and he must accept the system of order under the Baal after a fashion. Spiritually he is profoundly disturbed. The Exodus from Chaldea shows that he no longer can live contentedly in the world of cosmological experiences and symbols, but his movements in the new world that opened to him when his soul opened toward God lack yet in assurance. On the one hand, he makes concessions to the Baal—and he must, if he wants to survive; on the other hand, the new God has taken possession of him strongly enough to strain his soul and to cause, in a critical situation, the outburst of Genesis 14:22–24. The tension between god and God is severe indeed, especially since the nature of the new God and the strength of his assistance are not certain at all. The transfer of the El Elyon from the Baal of Jerusalem to Yahweh leaves in doubt whether Yahweh is God or only a highest god in rivalry with others. Moreover, while Abram rejects riches that come to him under the sanction of the Baal, he is not averse to prosperity; he does not want to be ruined for Yahweh. Hence, he must have gone home from the dramatic scene full of sorrows. He certainly has not made friends by his outburst. Will Yahweh now protect him against the possible consequences? And will he compensate him for the riches renounced? In this critical hour of his life the "word of Yahweh" comes to him with comfort for every disquieting aspect of the situation: (1) The generally assuaging "Fear not"; (2) the "I am your shield" in political difficulties; and (3) the promise "Your reward shall be rich" in compensation for the economic loss.

The comforts and promises of Genesis 15 subtly dissolve the tenseness of Genesis 14. A masterpiece is the transformation of the berith symbol. In Genesis 14 Abram is in bondage through his involvement in the Canaanite system of political compacts. He lives under baals both human and divine: the Amorites are his berith-masters (*baal berith*) in political relations, and the Baal of Jerusalem is the guardian of the political berith. In Genesis 15 the decisive step of liberation occurs, when Yahweh makes his berith with Abram. The worldly situation, to be sure, remains what it is for the time being; but spiritually the bondage is broken with the change of berith-masters. The order in which Abram truly lives from now on has been transformed from the Canaan of the Baal to the domain of Yahweh. The symbol of bondage has become the symbol of freedom. On this occasion, furthermore, the peculiar nature of a berith with Yahweh reveals itself. In the mundane situation of Abram, as we said, nothing has changed. The new domain of Yahweh is not yet the political order of a people in Canaan; at the moment it does not extend beyond the soul of Abram. It is an order that originates in a man through the inrush of divine reality into his soul and from this point of origin expands into a social body in history.[7] At the time of its inception it is no more than the life of a man who trusts in God; but this new existence, founded on the leap in being, is pregnant with future. In the case of Abram's experience this "future" is not yet understood as the eternity under whose judgment man exists in his present. To be sure, Yahweh's berith is already the flash of eternity into time; but the true nature of this "future" as transcendence is still veiled by the sensuous analogues of a glorious future in historical time. Abram receives the promises of numerous descendants and their political success in the dominion of Canaan. In this sense the experience of Abram is "futuristic." It is a component in the berith which lasts throughout Israelite into Judaic history and issues into the apocalypses. Nevertheless,

[7] On the question of personal gods as distinguished from local or nature gods, cf. Albrecht Alt, *Der Gott der Vaeter. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der Israelitischen Religion* (Beitraege zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, 3:12, 1929). Spiritually sensitive individuals have revelations of a hitherto unknown numen which receives the name of "God of N.N." Such personal gods Alt found attested by Palmyrene and Nabataean inscription of the last pre-Christian centuries. Julius Lewy, "Les textes paléo-assyriens et l'Ancien Testament," *Revue de l'Histoire de Religions*, CX (1934) corroborated the phenomenon discovered by Alt through the occurrence of the phrase "God of your father" in the Kultepe Texts of *ca.* 2000 B.C. Alt observed the more intimate relations between this type of god and man as a person, as well as the tendency of such a numen to become a god of society and history (*Der Gott der Vaeter*, 46). Cf. Eichrodt, "Religionsgeschichte Israels," *loc. cit.*, 377–79.

the lack of differentiation must not be seen as an imperfection only. For, as has been discussed previously, compact experiences contain the bond of compactness that holds the undifferentiated elements together—the bond that all too frequently is lost in the process of differentiation. While the promises of the berith still veil the meaning of transcendence, they at least preserve the awareness that eternity reaches indeed into the process of history, even though the operation of transcendent perfection through the mundane process is a paradox that cannot be solved through Canaans or Utopias of one kind or another.

Genesis 14 and 15 together are a precious document. They describe the situation in which the berith experience originates in opposition to the cosmological order of Canaanite civilization, as well as the content of the experience itself. The philological and archaeological questions of trustworthiness and date of the story will now appear in a different light. For clearly we are not interested in either the date of literary fixation or the reliability of the story, but in the authenticity of the experience that is communicated by means of the story, as well as in the probable date of the situation in which the experience originated. As far as the authenticity is concerned, the problem is not too difficult, for nobody can describe an experience unless he has had it, either originally or through imaginative re-enactment. The writers to whom we owe the literary fixation certainly had the experience through re-enactment; and the masterly articulation of its meaning through the dramatic high points of the story proves that they were intimately familiar with it. The answer to the question of who had the experience originally will have to rely on the common-sense argument that religious personalities who have such experiences, and are able to submit to their authority, do not grow on trees. The spiritual sensitiveness of the man who opened his soul to the word of Yahweh, the trust and fortitude required to make this word the order of existence in opposition to the world, and the creative imagination used in transforming the symbol of civilizational bondage into the symbol of divine liberation—that combination is one of the great and rare events in the history of mankind. And this event bears the name of Abram. As far as the date of the event is concerned we have nothing to rely on but the Biblical tradition which places it in the pre-Egyptian period of Hebrew settlements in Canaan, that is, in the second millennium B.C. The date, therefore, must be accepted.

eign; and another prince would feel justified to conduct a war against the traitor, in order to uphold the Egyptian order and, incidentally, to expand his dominion at the expense of the rival. The political situation will become clear from a letter of Shuwardata, the prince of the Hebron region, to the Pharaoh (Akhenaton):

> Let the king, my lord, learn that the chief of the 'Apiru has risen in arms against the land which the god of the king, my lord, gave me; but I have smitten him. Also let the king, my lord, know that all my brethren have abandoned me, and that it is I and 'Abdu-Heba who fight against the chief of the 'Apiru.[11]

'Abdu-Heba, mentioned as the ally of Shuwardata, is the prince of Jerusalem who otherwise appears in the Amarna Letters as Shuwardata's enemy. That the two rivals should join forces on this occasion shows that the 'Apiru danger must have been considerable. A letter from 'Abdu-Heba himself has a desperate tone:

> Let my king take thought for his land! The land of the king is lost; in its entirety it is taken from me. . . . I have become like an 'Apiru and do not see the two eyes of the king, my lord, for there is war against me. I have become like a ship in the midst of the sea! The arm of the mighty king conquers the land of Naharaim and the land of Cush, but now the 'Apiru capture the cities of the king. There is not a single governor remaining to the king, my lord—all have perished! [12]

And in the letters of Rib-Addi of Byblos, finally, the Amorites appear on the scene, in coalition with the 'Apiru. The Amorite chieftain 'Abdu-Ashirta, and later his sons, threaten to capture Byblos with connivance of the population under the leadership of Rib-Addi's brother:

> Behold our city Byblos! There is much wealth of the king in it, the property of our forefathers. If the king does not intervene for the city, all the cities of the land of Canaan will no longer be his.[13]

The Canaanite princes were too proud to mention such nomad rabble as the chieftains of the 'Apiru by name. It is, therefore, impossible to relate the events of the Amarna period to any personal or tribal names in the Biblical narrative. Moreover, the narrative has preserved no memory of Hebrew wars against Canaan in the time of Egyptian sovereignty.

[11] All quotations from the English translations by Albright and Mendenhall in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. The letter of Shuwardata, *ibid.*, 487.

[12] Amarna Letter 288. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 488 ff.

[13] Amarna Letter 137. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 483 ff. For the affair of Byblos see Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II/1, pp. 347 ff., 360 ff.

The reasons why there should be no specific references to clashes with a Canaan dominated by Egypt are a matter of conjecture. Perhaps at the time of the 'Apiru invasion the tribes who were the carriers of the Abram tradition moved on the fringe of events. Considering that the people of Israel constituted by the berith did not yet exist, the warlike exploits of one group of tribes were quite possibly of no concern to the tribes not directly involved. But it also is possible that war traditions were suppressed by later historians in their construction of the Patriarchal Age. Genesis 14 is erratic not only as a literary piece but also because it presents a Patriarch as a war lord at the head of his small but effective troop. In general, the Patriarchs are depicted as men of peace. Quite rarely is there a slip in the story, as when in Genesis 48:21–22 we find a Jacob who, somewhat surprisingly in view of his reported antecedents, bequeaths to Joseph the "Shechem, which I captured from the Amorites, with my sword, with my bow." A slip of this kind could be a reminiscence of the events which according to the Amarna Letters (see especially No. 289) led to the surrender of Shechem to the 'Apiru.[14]

Fortunately, the Biblical narrative has preserved a few fragments which reveal the political situation of Hebrew tribes in Canaan at the time of the conquest as being the same as in Genesis 14 and the Amarna Letters. Genesis 34 records a piece of tribal history in personalized form. Translated into tribal terms the source informs us that a Hebrew clan by the name of Dinah had entered into a compact, including intermarriage, with the city of Shechem, the seat of the Baal-berith (Judges 9:4). The tribes of Simeon and Levi resented the arrangement and raided the city of Shechem. But the Shechemites retaliated so effectively that the two tribes were practically extinguished. Joshua 9–10 tells the story of the city of Gibeon, which entered into a berith with Joshua after his

[14] I confine myself to such general conjectures in the briefest form possible. The relation between 'Apiru and Hebrews and between the events described in the Amarna Letters and the Biblical narrative, as well as the chronology of Hebrew history between Amarna and the Conquest of Canaan, are the subject of a voluminous literature. The shrewd and imaginative attempts to reconstruct the period from roughly 1500–1200 B.C. have in no case, however, produced convincing results. There simply are not enough sources. For a balanced survey of the problems cf. Adolphe Lods, *Israel*, 43–52, 181–89. Only one detail should be mentioned, as it has a bearing on the problem of continuity. The names of Jacob and perhaps also of Joseph are attested as place names in Canaan through the lists of Asiatic countries in inscriptions of Thutmose III (1490–1436 B.C.). Selections from such lists are now easily accessible in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 242 ff. The name of Jacob-el is attested as that of one of the Hyksos Kings in Egypt. Cf. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, I/2, pp. 321 ff. The best recent survey of the period from the sixteenth to the thirteenth century is Albright, "Syrien, Phoenizien und Palaestina," *loc. cit.*, 344–48. For the question of the 'Apiru see *ibid.*, 350 f.

necessary. As a consequence, the Yahweh of the Confederacy can hardly have been a war god. And one can, indeed, find in the narrative traces of pleased surprise when, in a critical situation, the "God of the fathers" revealed himself unexpectedly as a mighty war lord, as in Miriam's outcry in Exodus 15:

> Yahweh is a man of war,
> Yahweh is his name. . . .
> Sing to Yahweh,
> For he has triumphed gloriously;
> The horse and his rider
> He has hurled into the sea.

The same experience of surprise pervades the Deborah Song with its repeated accents on the voluntary participation of the tribes in a general war of Israel and on Yahweh's aid. It would be rash to conclude from this note of surprise that Israel as a whole had never fought a common war before the Sisera battle (and thus, in a strict sense, had never existed politically), but certainly such previous events were not impressive enough to leave their trace in the memory of the people. The Deborah Song can hardly be considered an accidental piece of poetry accidentally preserved. It must be understood as celebrating the great event in which Israel for the first time experienced itself as a people united in political action under Yahweh.[19]

If the interpretation is correct, if the war with Sisera was indeed the occasion for a decisive advance in the constitution of Israel under Yahweh, the details of the song gain added importance as a source of information on the genesis of a people. To be sure, the information is spotty, for the song is a poem, not a treatise. Still, a few things become clear.

The warriors assembled in camp for battle were called *am Yahweh*, the people of Yahweh (Judg. 5:11, 13). The god himself was not present with his people in Canaan, but came to their aid from his seat far in the south (5:4). The ark as the seat of Yahweh is not mentioned in the song; but since the ark in general was a questionable piece of war equipment, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from its omission. In the later Philistine wars it had an important function, but it proved so ineffective that the enemy captured it. Once it had been captured, it became quite

[19] The suggestions in the text follow the study by Gerhard von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel* (Zurich, 1951).

active in spreading pestilences wherever it was placed; and the Philistines were glad to return it. When it then continued to make a nuisance of itself among its own people, it was deposited in a barn and abandoned; and Israel concluded the Philistine wars quite well without the dangerous object. And, finally, after the conquest of Jerusalem, it was remembered by David and put in a tent in the city. Its strange absence from Deborah's war is perhaps a further indication that Yahweh had not previously been a war god and that his usefulness in this capacity was discovered on the occasion.

Yahweh himself was experienced as a god who manifested himself in natural forces. His appearance brought an upheaval of nature: the clouds poured down, the earth trembled, the mountains released floods, and even the stars joined in the fight. Yet, the presence of Yahweh in his storm differed from the storm which Enlil spread like a shroud over Ur. In the "Lamentations over the Destruction of Ur" the attack of Elam was experienced as the cosmic storm of Enlil; in the Deborah Song the real storm was experienced as the presence of Yahweh. And what revealed itself as Yahweh in the real storm was not a cosmic storm but the *zidekoth Yahweh* (Judg. 5:11), literally: the righteousnesses of Yahweh. The meaning of the term can only be conjectured as the righteous acts of the god by which he established just order among men. Yahweh was a god who revealed himself in historical action as the creator of true order. This conception, now, seems to be not too far from the Egyptian *maat* of both the god and the mediating Pharaoh. But again, the righteousness of Yahweh had a different complexion because there was no human mediator who would transform the cosmic into social order. One of the oddities not only of the Deborah Song but of the Book of Judges in general is the absence of a term for the human functionaries of political order in time of crisis. The designation of Deborah as a *shophet*, a judge, is probably anachronistic, for the term *shophet* belongs to the Deuteronomist redactions. But Deborah at least owes her public influence to her recognizable spiritual authority as a prophetess, a *nebijah* (4:4).[20] For Barak, however, the war leader, there is no term at all to designate his function. The charismatic leadership, on which the action of the Confederacy in war depended, obviously was not conceived as an analogue of cosmic order in society that would require appropriate

[20] It is possible that even the term *nebijah* is anachronistic. *Nebi'im* are attested with any certainty only for the time of Samuel. A personage of the type of Deborah would more probably have been a *roeh*, a seer.

expression through symbols. Hence, in spite of its brevity, the Deborah Song unmistakably reveals Israel's break with the cosmological civilizations.

The song celebrates a victory in a war. The ideas concerning warfare under the leadership of Yahweh are presupposed in the song, but their full understanding requires the use of additional sources. Military actions were numerous, but not all of them were *milhamoth Yahweh* (I Sam. 18:17; 25:28), wars of Yahweh, even though the Book of Judges sometimes gives this impression; with a rare exception, it tells only the story of the holy wars. The wars of Yahweh were engagements of the whole people, if not in fact, at least in their intention. And they were conducted according to a certain ritual. The component parts of the ritual are nowhere enumerated in their entirety but must be gathered from their fragmentary appearance on the various occasions of military action. Still, the general structure of the ritual can be discerned in the abbreviated account preserved in Judges 4:14–16:

> And Deborah said to Barak:
> "Up! For this is the day,
> on which Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand.
> Has Yahweh not gone forth before you?"
> So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.
> And Yahweh brought confusion [or panic] to Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled on foot.
> But Barak pursued, after the chariots, after the host, unto Harosheth-goiim;
> and the whole host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword;
> there was not a man left.

The beginning of the ritual is missing in the account; and some features that are known from other contexts are omitted. At the opening of the account the army stands ready to go into battle. But the moment when the *am Yahweh* stood ready for battle had to be preceded by a number of preparatory steps. There had to be a declaration, not of war against the enemy but of a state of emergency to the people, through prophetic authorities who issued a call for war. Then a charismatic leader had to be incited to action, as was Barak by Deborah; and the leader had to have sufficient authority to summon the people to action through messengers, as for instance in Judges 3:27 or 6:34. The tribes and clans deliberated and acted on the summons, with varying results, as the

Deborah Song indicates. The warrior community in camp had to be ritually pure, in particular submitting to sexual abstinence, for Yahweh was present with his people. Sacrifices were offered and oracles were obtained. Only then, when everything seemed favorable, would a leader (in the present case, Deborah to Barak) issue the verdict: "Yahweh has given the enemy in your hand"; and the army could proceed to the execution of the verdict with complete certainty of victory. For Yahweh was "going forth before them," he was conducting the war, and the army was no more than the instrument of execution. The character of the warriors as the instruments of Yahweh required their spiritual qualification. They had to have confidence in Yahweh; and they had to be conscious that not they themselves but their god was fighting and winning the war. Hence, in the war against the Midianites (Judges 7), Yahweh informed the war leader that his army was too large to give the enemy into his hand. Israel might vaunt itself to have won the war by its own human strength. The vast bulk of the army had to be dismissed, in particular those who were afraid and did not trust Yahweh sufficiently; and the victory had to be won by a few companies of hardened warriors with complete faith in their God. When the ritual and spiritual preconditions were fulfilled, the battle could begin. In the various holy wars, the external circumstances of the battles differed widely, but uniformly Yahweh came to the aid of his people by throwing a panic into the ranks of the enemy (Judges 4:15 or 7:22), a "confusion," a "terror," a bewilderment in which the enemies sometimes started fighting against one another. A numinous horror gripped the enemy, so that he was unable to offer resistance—perhaps not too surprising when a horde of seminude, fanatical dervishes came bearing down, screaming and screeching, with their hair flowing in the wind. After the defeat of the enemy in battle, the holy war came to a conclusion through the ritual of the *cherem*, the ban. Since Yahweh had won the war, the loot was his; all gold and silver went into the treasury of the god; all living beings, human and animal, were slaughtered in his honor.[21]

At the time of the Deborah Song Israel was a people when at war under Yahweh. It was a mode of existence not easy to describe, because the more obvious characterization of this period as a state of transition

[21] For further details of the war ritual, its variations, and the rich documentation see von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg*.

from nomad tribalism to national statehood might be misleading. To be sure, there was a problem of transition. The basic units of the people still were the clans and the tribes; and the state of settlement in a foreign environment was so much in flux that one cannot speak yet of a national territory. And this tribal society was clearly developing toward more permanent and better circumscribed occupation of territory, as well as toward political organization under the pressure of wars. Moreover, certain details of the song indicate that the mores had changed substantially from those of nomads. For the feat of the Kenite woman who killed Sisera was, by nomad standards, an atrocious violation of the laws of hospitality, and the creator of the song praised the ugly murder in a fashion that smacks of jingoism at its worst; the incident is tangible proof of national progress. Nevertheless, an interpretation of this mode of existence as transitional would be rash, since it contains elements that remained constant throughout Israelite history. And these elements, far from contributing to a consolidated national statehood, proved rather the forces which disintegrated the Kingdom once it was gained. For the holy war, as described in the Deborah Song, was an institution loaded with experiential difficulties and obscurities. The wars of Yahweh were fundamentally defensive wars—at least, there is not a single instance of an aggressive holy war recorded. The people were conceived as being at peace, politically in a passive condition, and not bent on using war as an instrument of national expansion and consolidation. Israel itself did not conduct these wars at all; Yahweh conducted them for his people. They had no implication of missionary violence being used for the expansion of Yahweh's territory or the mundane success of his people, as in the holy wars of Islam. Yahweh, as we have said, was not primarily a war god but came to the assistance of his people, as in the Sisera case, only when it was endangered by oppression and aggression. In particular, Yahweh did not fight against other gods; and in fact, no gods of other peoples are even mentioned in the song. This peculiar passivity, and the relegation of all military activity to Yahweh, was, however, at the time still quite compatible with a lusty participation in war when the occasion arose. In Judges 5:23, the town of Meroz, situated close to the battlefield, was roundly cursed for nonparticipation:

> "Curse Meroz," said the angel of Yahweh,
> "Curse utterly its inhabitants;
> For they came not to the help of Yahweh,
> To the help of Yahweh, joining his warriors."

The poet was not perturbed at all by a people's coming to the help of the god while the god comes to the help of the people in an emergency. The experience of Yahweh's help could blend with the spirit of a warrior community without inducing reflections on the consistency of the conception. But obviously, there was a crack in the symbolism. The war spirit of the tribes and the experience of a god who comes to the aid of an essentially passive community could part company. The development need not go in the direction of an effectively organized people, conducting its political affairs with success under the guidance of its god. It also could go in the direction of a pacifist community that would sit back and expect the discomfiture of its enemies from divine interventions without military actions of its own.

In fact, the history of Israel has followed both of these courses. And we venture to say that the recognition of this double course is the key to the understanding of Israelite history. The improvised organization of defensive wars under charismatic leaders proved inadequate against the rising pressure of foreign powers after the Philistine invasion. The improvisations had to be replaced by the permanent kingship. But as soon as the monarchy was organized, the potential tensions that could be discerned in the Deborah Song became actual. In the situation described by the song, the prophetess and the war leader co-operated in the organization of the war. The prophetess mobilized and crystallized the sentiments of the people (today we should say, the public opinion) by her songs; and the war leader let himself be induced to assume his function. The prophetess rendered the verdict that Yahweh had given the enemy into the hand of the leader; and the leader was ready to execute the verdict. But the mere articulation of these steps in the procedure makes it obvious that an organized government with a king, his policy-making officials, and his military staff could not, in making its decision, politely request the opinion of some prophet whether a war should be undertaken or not, and whether, according to the prophet's information about the intentions of Yahweh, the time was propitious for engaging in battle or not. Serious conflicts were bound to break out when prophetic and governmental opinions about the right order and policy should differ. Moreover, the conflicts that actually did break out were shaped, with regard to the basic issue, by the inconsistencies of the Yahwist experience that could be noticed in the Deborah Song; and they were fostered by the institutional changes in the wake of the permanent political organ-

cause. And second, every man did not do as he pleased, in an idyllic freedom without kings. On the contrary, nomad raids from Trans-Jordan proved so harassing to the already settled invaders that they were forced to adopt the more effective form of the monarchy. The kings at first were local princes, as in the cases of Gideon and Jephthah. But when the Trans-Jordanian pressure was aggravated by the consolidation and expansion of a Philistine power, kingship had to become national.

Syncretism, as we said, was the consequence of the Hebrews' successful penetration into Canaan. That much can be taken for granted, even if the sources do not confirm the fact. As long as there was friction between Israel and the Canaanites, the conditions for an amiable symbiosis in matters of cult were hardly given. Yahwism would be maintained at the level of relative purity that could be observed in the Deborah Song. This period of friction, however, did not last long; and it never was intense. The Book of Judges does not record any serious conflicts previous to the Sisera battle, with the possible exception of the Othniel episode (3:7–11); and that is a doubtful case since the identity of the enemy is uncertain. And subsequent to the Sisera battle, Judges records no clashes with Canaan at all. By 1100 B.C., roughly, the Hebrew penetration was an accomplished fact. Both Israelites and Canaanites were inhabitants of the same country; and their former enmity disappeared in face of the common danger from nomadic invaders who did not distinguish between the two ethnic groups when they attacked the cis-Jordanian Palestine from the east. Hebrew settlers and old residents were on their way toward becoming one people with a common culture, though the process was consummated only through the leveling effects of the Solomonic monarchy. The stylization of events on the part of the Deuteronomist redactors is apt, even today, to obscure the fact that after the Sisera battle the "judges" were the war leaders not of a confederacy of Hebrew clans against Canaan but of the inhabitants of Palestine, including the Canaanites, against external enemies. Under the name of "Israel" a new people was in the making.

The new situation becomes manifest in the story of the Midianite wars and the elevation of Gideon to hereditary kingship (Judges 6–9). The Midianite wars must be dated in the first half of the eleventh century B.C. The account in Judges is not too clear, particularly not for the

threatening enough to induce the population of a limited area to counter it with a permanent governmental organization.

As soon as Gideon was king, he claimed for himself the gold treasure of the defeated Midianites and had it made into an ephod, probably a gold-plated statue of Yahweh. The image was deposited in a sanctuary at Ophrah, the king's residence. The first act of the king, thus, was the establishment of a temple, that is, of a cult center for the monarchy in competition with the sanctuary of the Confederacy at Shiloh. While the intentions of the king are unknown, the consequences of his act are clear. Like the later Solomonic Temple, the royal chapel tended to become a popular shrine: "all Israel went awhoring after it" (8:27), as the editors peevishly remark. Whether intended or not, the Yahweh shrine at Ophrah grew into the cult center of the "kingdom" and its "people." Gideon's institution of a "temple" must, therefore, be recognized as the creation of a new symbol of political order. From the one side, Israel was developing a national consciousness in search of adequate governmental and cultic representation; from the other side, Yahweh was developing into the God of a settled and organized nation. The popular success of Gideon's temple proves that the people were experientially ready for the appearance of a particular, national divinity, of a political Yahweh who reigned over Canaan and its population. And this experiential trend showed itself even more forcefully when Solomon's royal chapel developed into the monopolistic Temple of Israel. The development was so successful, indeed, that the institution of the Temple survived the monarchy and became the rallying point of the postexilic Jewish community.

The endogenous development of Yahwism is somewhat neglected in the interpretation of Israelite history, though, in our opinion, it is important for the understanding of Israelite-Canaanite syncretism. When the Israelites accepted Canaanite gods and their cults, they were not simply disloyal to a clearly conceived "Yahweh." For apace with the political formation of the people, Yahwism was undergoing a change that brought the divinity down to the level of a particular national god. The syncretism with the gods of the land began in Yahwism itself, when the god of the fathers became a god of the country in the political sense. When Israel found its national existence through the creation of a king as its representative, it also found, in Yahweh, the transcendental representative of the nation. Political particularism, therefore, must be recog-

nized as a movement, in Yahwism, of the same rank as the universalist movement of the prophets. And if the universalism of the prophets was never quite successful, the reason must not be sought in the people's defection to the Baals and Ashtarts, but in the political particularization of Yahweh, which the prophets themselves could never overcome radically, not even in the person of Deutero-Isaiah.

The creation of the royal cult image was followed by Gideon's attempt to consolidate his position through intermarriage with the important clans of the kingdom. It must have been a formidable effort, for the story reports a result of no less than seventy sons (9:2). With this measure, again, Gideon inaugurated a technique for stabilizing the monarchy that was further developed by Solomon and his successors in Israel and Judah. The superimposition of a monarchy over a clan society made the technique inevitable, even though it was bound to cause troubles. There were the usual harem affairs, the rivalries between the wives and their sons, the uncertainty of succession, and the wholesale slaughter of brothers in which the most energetic son had to indulge in order to secure his position as successor. This normal unpleasantness of a harem regime, however, was aggravated by the diversity of cults represented by the ladies. While Gideon did not yet encounter the difficulties of the Omrides with their international diplomatic marriages, he sowed the seed of troubles for his successors when he included Canaanite concubines in his harem. One of them was a woman of Shechem, the seat of the Canaanite Baal-berith. She bore him a son, Abimelech, but under matriarchal marriage customs continued to live with her family (8:31). What the relations between the gods of Ophrah and Shechem were during Gideon's lifetime does not become clear from the account in Judges. But it must be considered as possible that the Canaanites of Shechem were bound to the monarchy through a berith under the sanction of their own god. Anyway, as soon as Gideon died, Israel transferred its whoring activities from the Yahweh of Ophrah to the Baal-berith of Shechem (8:33). At the same time Abimelech left the brothers, to whom Gideon had bequeathed the kingship collectively, and went to his mother's clan in order to obtain their support for his sole kingship. The clan agreed and persuaded the whole citizenry of Shechem. Abimelech was equipped with funds from the treasury of the Baal-berith, hired a troop of adventurers, and killed all his brothers with the exception of Jotham who escaped (9:1–5). Here for the first time the use of hired troops by a

The lesson is clear. No man who leads a useful life by the standards of the clan society will want to be king. Only a useless individual will care to be esteemed for a function as dubious as the shadow cast by a thornbush. And besides, a king, while not of much use when you are loyal, is dangerous when you resist him. His wrath may destroy like a forest fire that starts from a dry thornbush. The fable is of great value for the history of ideas, as was the Deborah Song, because here one can touch Israelite ideas in their purity, before the Solomonic kingdom and the prophetic resistance have complicated the issues. The fable does not condemn kingship as do the later sources, because Yahweh is the king of Israel and kingship as such is a defection from the Lord; it rather reflects the resentment of chieftains who feel themselves quite capable to discharge all governmental functions at the local level and consider kingship a dangerous nuisance. It is a resentment that reached deep into the period of the national monarchy and was an important factor in the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon.

CHAPTER 8

The Struggle for Empire

§ 1. The Amplitude of Yahwism

The episode of Gideon's kingship has furnished additional insight into the dynamics of Israelite order. There was apparently no factor in original Yahwism that would have imposed a particular political form on the faithful. But precisely because limiting factors of this kind were absent from his nature, Yahweh was adaptable to every social and political situation that required understanding as a manifestation of divine force. When the Confederacy was in danger and had to resort to war he could be a war god. When the nomad tribes settled and became peasants, he could become a Baal of agricultural fertility and prosperity, while at the same time he could remain for the Trans-Jordanian Hebrews a god who abhorred the agricultural perversions of his nature. When there was a question of conquering and holding a territory, he could become a god of the land like the gods of non-Yahwist peoples in other Canaanite regions. When the clan organization sufficed for political existence, he could become the god of the berith that held the tribes together by its divine life substance. When the political situation required kingship, he could become the god of royal order, in forms closely resembling the Egyptian. As a consequence, the spiritual freedom that had been wrested from captivity and desert by the inspiration and genius of Moses might have been lost again through a dispersal of divinity into particular divine forces.

The possibilities of such a relapse, in the eleventh century and after, becomes obvious in the assimilation of Yahweh's nature to that of the other Canaanite gods. A striking instance is offered by Jephthah's negotiations with the King of Moab, in Judges 11:14–28. In the debate over a contested territory the hero of the Trans-Jordanian tribes put it persuasively to the King of Moab: "Should you not occupy the territory of those whom Chemosh, your own god, drives out, while we occupy that

was ordered by Yahweh to intervene, with the pertinent question: "Is it because there is no god in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?" And the king must die for his violation of etiquette. Again, there was no question that the Philistine god was a divine force; but within Israelite territory Yahweh had sole competence to issue oracles for his subjects.

The various traditions, in our opinion, furnish the rare documentation for a political summodeism in statu nascendi. Civilizationally, the Syriac area was sufficiently unified to have the gods of its various peoples mutually recognized as ordering forces. The respective jurisdictions of the members of the pantheon were territorially circumscribed by the actual dominions of the peoples. But it was a question of events on the pragmatic level whether the jurisdiction of one of the gods would become coextensive with the imperial dominion of his particular people over the whole of the Syriac area. The experiential relation to the various gods of the pantheon could furnish arguments for every pragmatic contingency. Each god was ready to become the highest, if not the exclusive, god over whatever territory his people would conquer. If the people was victorious, its god had given the land to it, and it was his as much as the people's. If the people was defeated, the god was temporarily angry but remained potentially the ruler over the territory which his people might conquer in the future. But then again, the god of the enemy was recognized sufficiently as a force in his own right when in actual war conquest proved impossible; while the own god, even in defeat, could reveal himself as a formidable nuisance, if treated discourteously by the enemy, as was shown by the activities of the ark among the Philistines.

Nothing can be gained by putting a label—such as monotheism, polytheism, monolatrism, or henotheism—on this turgid experience of divine force. The experience must be taken as it is, in its unstable richness, pregnant with possibilities of development in one or the other direction. The divine force that revealed itself in such manner could become restricted political gods, like the gods of the Philistine city-states or of the shepherd kingdom of Moab; or local Baals, like the Baal-berith of Shechem or the Yahweh of Ophrah; or ultimately the god of a Syriac Empire, if one of the contestants should prevail over the others.

Thus there was a stage in the Israelite dynamics of order at which Yahweh could develop into a political god and, more specifically, into a

god of the same type as Chemosh. Nevertheless, while Yahweh could descend to equality with the Moabite god on the level of experience just analysed, it does not follow that Chemosh could have ascended to the height of the Mosaic or Prophetic Yahweh. The dynamics of Yahwism in its full amplitude must be taken into consideration at every particular stage of the Yahwist experience in order not to mistake the appearance of equation with other gods as an identity of nature. For in the end it was the Yahweh of Israel who, as a political god, put the first imperial stamp on Syriac civilization, and not the gods of Moab, nor of the Phoenician or Philistine city-states, even though the Philistines came close to success before their drive was broken by the recovery of Israel under David. And while various other factors contributed to the issue of the struggle, the most important one was the latent quality of Yahweh as a nonpolitical, universal god who, because of his universality, could be the spiritual force that formed great individuals.

The dormant quality could spring to life at any time, and it actually did at critical moments, in the individual inspirations of prophetic and military figures by the *ruach* of Yahweh. The result was a spiritual formation of character which—as far as our documentary information goes—was unique in its time. The great personalities of the Israelite struggle for empire are so familiar to us through the Bible that it is difficult to imagine how their appearance, representing a new type of man on the world-political scene, must have impressed their contemporaries at large. In general, we can discern their impact only in the love and fierce loyalty which they inspired in their followers when times were hard. In their more intimate circle, we know, the formation of individual characters through the spirit, as well as the implications of the phenomenon for the conduct of politics, were fully understood. For this understanding expressed itself in the creation of history, not as an annalistic recording of external events, but as a course of actions motivated by the characters of the actors. And the historical memoirs for this period were integrated into the books of Samuel.

We have spoken of "characters" and "motives." Such language, however, should not induce the belief that the merit of the memoirs consists in the psychological shrewdness, which undoubtedly they possess, in analyzing the motives of actions. Shrewdness of this kind is a condition of survival at all times, and must be supposed to exist in a society even when it does not find literary expression, as in the much older

wisdom literature of Egypt. Even in Israelite literature we find marvels of psychological observation at an earlier date, as in certain passages of the Deborah Song. What is new in the eleventh and tenth centuries of Israelite history is the application of such psychological knowledge to the understanding of personalities who, as individuals, have become the carriers of a spiritual force on the scene of pragmatic history. No such character portraits were ever drawn of Babylonian, Assyrian, or Egyptian rulers, whose personalities (with the exception of Akhenaton's, through the self-revelations in his hymns) disappear behind their function as the representatives and preservers of cosmic order in society. Their personalities are accessible, if at all, only through their recorded administrative and military actions; and even such records are frequently deceptive because the descriptions of military campaigns, for instance of the Pharaohs, were standardized to such a degree that the actual course of events can rarely be reconstructed with reliability. The nature of this outburst of brilliant historiography will perhaps best be understood if one considers that it disappeared as suddenly as it appeared. The royal personalities of Israel and Judah after Solomon have, in the Biblical narrative, no longer the clarity of the preceding period, either because no better accounts existed, or because they no longer interested the official historians; and about the greatest of the post-Solomonic kings, about Omri, we know next to nothing, since all that is preserved about his reign are the few pitiful lines in I Kings 16:21–28. The reason is that, as a consequence of the Prophetic movement, the kings had ceased to be representative of the spiritual order of Israel. The great personalities of the eighth and seventh centuries, whose characters are as vividly familiar to us as those of Saul, David, and Solomon, are the Prophets. History—that is, the existence of Israel under Yahweh—was shifting from royal to prophetic representation. Only for the short period, barely a century, when the kings saved Israel from physical extinction and built the shelter of the monarchy, was the organization of the people for worldly existence experienced as true existence under Yahweh. Take a passage like the following: "Now at the return of spring, at the time when kings go forth, David sent Joab and his servants with him, and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah" (II Sam. 11:1). At no other time in Israelite history than David's could a historian have caught this vernal splendor of a king's going forth for a show of power. Once this glory had been glimpsed, however, its memory could be pre-

with legendary elements and have undergone serious reworkings by the late editors. Particularly obscure is the point of greatest interest to us, that is, the genesis of Saul's kingship and its acceptance by the people. From the events following Saul's death, as well as from the reign of David, it is clear that hereditary kingship had indeed taken root in Israel, that the kings as persons were respected and loved by the people, that there might be quarrels about the succession, but that nobody wanted to abolish the institution.[5] Considering the jaundiced view of kingship entertained by the members of the clan society only half a century earlier—as manifest in the fable of "The Trees in Search of a King"—one would like to know what caused the reversal of sentiment. But light can be furnished only by a few reasonable assumptions. There obviously existed a national emergency. Since the clans could not cope with the Philistine power, the authority and prestige of the chieftains must have suffered, while correspondingly the war leader and king acquired the characteristics of a national savior. In the Confederacy and its cult, furthermore, all was not in good order. The story of Eli and his sons (I Sam. 2:12–36; 4) suggests a corruption of the younger generation in the priesthood that could not be controlled by the elders. And, finally, the growth of the new Israel, through amalgamation of Hebrews and Canaanites, must have advanced. The Hebrew clans, while remaining dominant, were no longer the "people" at large. The appearance of the previously unknown *nebi'im*, the prophets—that is, bands of nationalist ecstatics, spiritually respected but otherwise considered of a low social status—suggests new social strata and the formation of a "people" outside the Hebrew clans proper, with a more intense Israelite "national" consciousness.

Developments of the adumbrated type must be presupposed at the time of Saul's appearance. The circumstances of his rise to kingship are embedded in a narrative that has absorbed at least two principal versions of the events, the one royalist, the other antiroyalist.[6] The antiroyalist version betrays the prophetic influences of the eighth century and after.

[5] The respect for the royal institution, even when individual incumbents aroused misgivings and revolt, lasted well into the time of the prophetic movement. Kingship itself, as the institution founded by Saul, was for the first time explicitly condemned in the second half of the eighth century by the prophet Hosea.

[6] Lods distinguishes in the royalist version an older and a younger stratum of traditions. Cf. Lods, *Israel*, 352–56, the Appendix on "The Three Versions of the Founding of the Monarchy."

We shall deal first with the royalist version, as it is certainly the older one.

The royalist version tends to present the monarchy of Saul as having been instituted by Yahweh, and not created by the people or by Saul himself. This tendency is manifest in the legend of the asses lost by Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. The son of Kish, Saul, was sent out by his father to recover the asses; when he could not find them, he ultimately had recourse to a "seer," a *roeh*, by the name of Samuel (I Sam. 9:1–14). Samuel, however, on the previous day had received the word from Yahweh that he should anoint the young man as the leader of Israel and its deliverer from the power of the Philistines (15–16). Samuel obeyed the command, and through him, as the divine instrument, Saul was anointed by Yahweh (10:1). In the subsequent speech Samuel ordered Saul to proceed to Gibeah, a town where a Philistine garrison or stele was placed (the reading is uncertain), and there to act as "the occasion served," for God was with him (10:7). The tradition is mutilated at this point, but the passage probably referred to the overthrow of the Philistine triumphal stele which marked the beginning of the Israelite uprising. When approaching Gibeah, Saul would meet a band of prophets (*nebi'im*) carrying a lyre, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp; they would be prophesying (10:5). The spirit (*ruach*) of Yahweh would descend upon him; he also would prophesy and be changed into "another man" (10:6). Having received these instructions from Samuel, Saul went on his way, "God gave him another heart," and the predicted signs came to pass on that day (10:9).

The story is fragmentary, but its meaning with regard to kingship is clear. The unction of a king was a general Near Eastern custom, adopted by the Israelites as the "natural" ceremony for marking a man as a king, but it acquired a specific meaning in the transfer. For the unction administered by Samuel was an objective sacrament, not a magic communication of power through the administering person. The historian was careful to point out that Yahweh, not Samuel, anointed the king. And the effect of the sacrament, "another heart," was caused by God, not by Samuel's manifest act. Kingship was instituted by Yahweh. The King was a Messiah, the Lord's Anointed.

The immediacy of the relation between the King and his God seems to have been a matter of some concern at the time, since so many of the preserved traditions stress the point. This is especially true if, following a suggestion of Lods, even the legends of the youth of Samuel must be

considered to have originally been legends about Saul. In I Samuel 1, Hannah promised the Yahweh of Shiloh that if he would give her a son she would dedicate him to his service. When the son arrived, "she called his name Samuel, saying, I have asked him of Yahweh" (1:20). According to Lods it is difficult to see how the name *shemuel* could have been derived from the verb *sha'al*. "On the other hand, we should have a perfectly good etymological derivation if the original text read: 'she called his name *Saul*,' since *sha'ul* means 'asked for.' " [7] The suggestion of Lods is convincing. If we accept it, the story of the child given by Yahweh and dedicated to him is a story about Saul. And perhaps the same is true of the revelation of Yahweh to the young Samuel in I Samuel 3.

The same concern about Saul's relation with God appears in the story of his meeting with the prophets. This story requires a word of explanation—all the more so as even the Israelite historian found it necessary to add an archaeological footnote or two in order to make it intelligible to his own contemporaries. Saul "met a band of prophets" (10:10). These prophets, however, did not belong to the same type as the great prophets of the eighth century and after. The great prophets, rather, continued the type which at the time of Saul was represented by a man like Samuel. And the historian stressed the point; for in speaking of Samuel, the seer, he added that "a prophet [*nabi*] was formerly called a seer [*roch*]" (9:9). Hence, some importance seems to have attached to the difference between the seers who only later came to be called prophets and the prophets of the band. It has proved difficult, however, to describe the two types with any precision. Attempts have been made to distinguish them as types of auditory and visual hallucinations, as interpreters of dreams or signs and ecstatics, as communicants with minor divinities and with the national Yahweh, or by their methods of inducing the ecstatic state. None of the distinctions was satisfactory, since invariably they broke down in one or the other specific instance. Nevertheless, the difference, as we have said, must have been of importance, since the Israelite historians noted it expressly. Hence, we shall fall back on the distinction made in the Samuel passages themselves: the seers and great prophets were solitary figures, while the prophets whom Saul met were a "band." That is indeed a difference of such importance that a search for further distinguishing characteristics seems superfluous. For

[7] *Ibid.*, 354.

collective prophetism, based on contagious ecstasy, was a widespread phenomenon in Asia Minor which reached into Hellenic civilization in the form of orgiastic cults of Dionysos, whereas it was not characteristic of early Israelite history. Its appearance in the time of Saul would indicate a penetration of Baalic ecstaticism into Yahwism, parallel with the blending of Canaanites and Yahwist Hebrews into the new Israel. Moreover, Saul himself was exposed to ecstatic seizures by contagion,[8] whereas in the case of Gideon the *ruach* of Yahweh still descended on the leader in a solitary experience.

Beyond this point the political significance of the new phenomenon can only be discerned in shadowy outlines. The *nabi* of the collective type was certainly considered a person of low social status. The people who had known Saul as a young man of good family, and who witnessed his prophetic fit, were astonished to see him in the company, and the psychic state, of men whose fathers were unknown (10:11–12). One senses the resentment of the Hebrew clan society against persons who either were not Hebrews at all or had sunk so low in the social scale that their clan affiliation had been lost. And the ironic question "Is Saul among the prophets?" became a proverb (10:12).

Perhaps the success of Saul and his kingship was due to his sensitiveness for a new "democratic" type of spiritual experience. The idea commends itself in the light of the story of David and his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, which furnishes another instance of relations on the level of royal society, strained for the same reasons as in the Saul story. When the victorious King led the ark into Jerusalem he danced before it, in the procession, "with all his might" in a linen kilt (II Sam. 6:14). Michal, a fastidious lady, watched the phallic exhibition in front of the retainers and their womenfolk with disgust and later upbraided David for his lack of taste, only to receive from the King the information that he had danced before Yahweh, not before the women. Yahweh had chosen him as the ruler of his people, in the place of Saul and his house. For Yahweh he would debase himself with even more abandon than he had shown on this day. Even if she did not like the way he disported himself, the women of the retainers to whom she had referred would hold him in honor (II Sam. 6:21–22).[9] And the lady who had been so critical about the might dancing before Yahweh remained childless (23).

[8] Besides I Sam. 10:10 cf. 19:23–24.

[9] The meaning of the difficult passage cannot be determined with full certainty. The various translations differ substantially.

It was the eve of the battle of Gilboa, the battle against the Philistines in which Saul and his son Jonathan were to meet their death. Saul was depressed by forebodings of disaster. The spiritual force had left him, and Yahweh would not speak to him either through prophets or the oracles of priests, or through dreams. In his forsakenness he wanted to evoke the ghost of Samuel in order to receive his advice; and he called on a woman who was a "ghost-master" and could bring up the dead for questioning. This woman of Endor indeed evoked Samuel for him. The King, however, could not derive much comfort from the seer. Samuel's ghost reproached the King for having disturbed his peace wantonly. If Yahweh did not speak to Saul, the implications of the divine silence were obvious. During Samuel's lifetime, on a certain occasion well known to the King, Saul had not listened to the voice of the God as mediated through the seer; and as a consequence, Saul could no longer hear the voice. All the ghost could do now was to confirm the King's forebodings: tomorrow, Saul and his sons would die in battle, and Israel would be given into the hands of the Philistines.

At a first glance, the meaning of the story seems to be clear. The divine ordinances may be harsh, as they were on the occasion to which Samuel referred; and when man in his weakness follows the lines of expedience and compassion, the insulted God will avenge himself on the unworthy vessel of his spirit, as well as on the community which the King represents. Disobedience to the will of God is followed by personal and collective punishment.

The apparent clarity, however, vanishes as soon as Saul's action is placed in context. For previously, an ordinance of Saul had banished ghost-masters and wizards from the territory of the kingdom (I Sam. 28:3) and made their activity a capital crime (28:9). So that now, when the King had recourse to a ghost-master, he broke his own ordinance and became guilty of complicity, if not of the crime itself.

Why Saul had banished the ghost-masters is nowhere stated expressly. One of the possible motives, however, is rather obvious. The ghosts of the dead were *elohim* (I Sam. 28:13), divine beings; and their elimination as forces to be consulted would abolish rivals of Yahweh. Without questioning the plausibility or sincerity of this primary motive, there should be admitted, however, an incidental political motive which gains probability through Saul's later action when he evoked the ghost of Samuel. Since the King consulted a ghost-master himself, he clearly had not

banished this gentry because he considered them "swindlers" but, on the contrary, because they brought up genuine *elohim*. The ghost-gods were not false gods, or no-gods but were believed to be real gods, even though of a minor status. The experience of divine force still was turgid, beyond polytheism or monotheism, and in view of such turgidity, even in a Yahwist kingdom the ghost-elohim might become rival sources of authority in political matters. In the difficult and long-drawn struggle with the Philistines, discontented subjects might well consult the *elohim* in order to find out which way the war would turn; and some might have been quite as interested as Saul himself to know whether the King would meet his death at an early date. Hence, the banishment of ghost-masters had been intended perhaps to prevent precisely the type of consultation in which Saul indulged. Comparable ordinances were issued in other political cultures for the adumbrated reasons, as for instance in the Western Renaissance, when the Curia prohibited astrological forecasts concerning the death of the Pope because they were apt to cause political speculation, unrest, and intrigue. Nevertheless, a political motive of this kind, as we said, need not detract from the primary Yahwist motive. The one may have no more than reinforced the other, with a net result satisfactory to both the Yahwist and the King in Saul.[10]

The happy meeting of *raison d'état* with spiritual concern, however, does not exhaust the complexities of the episode. The ghost-elohim must have played an important role in the spiritual life of the Israelites, or it would not have been necessary to sanction their consultation so severely, and the ordinance of Saul must have been a correspondingly grave disturbance of spiritual life. Such interventions in the economy of the psyche have consequences. What we know about the experiences and actions of Saul is sufficient proof that his was not a well-organized soul living in the faith in a transcendent God, but that his psyche was a field of diversified sensitiveness for orgiastic contagion, priestly oracles, and

[10] The preceding analysis is based on the assumption that the ordinance of Saul against the "ghost-masters" is historic. Excellent authorities, however, consider the respective passages an anachronistic interpolation in the narrative. For this negative opinion see the analysis of Saul's call on the witch of Endor in Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion. Its Origin and Development*, 91 ff. I prefer the opinion of Lods, *Israel*, 358, who considers the tradition "entirely probable." The interpretation should be governed by the principle that a tradition must be accepted as long as there is no conclusive evidence against it. The fact that necromancy continued in Israel throughout its history and had to be prohibited on frequent later occasions is no valid argument against a prohibition by Saul.

advice from seers, for divine dreams and voices, and messages from ghost-elohim. He was a man but also "another man" when in trance, and above all he was a part of the nonpersonal, diffuse humanity that went by the name of Israel and had to atone collectively for royal misconduct. In Saul's difficulties with a Yahwist order it is clear that the problems of a personal soul were involved—the same problems which, contemporaneously with Saul, became acute in the troubles of the Mycenaean civilization, in the epics of Homer. In Israelite history, however, these problems were bent in a direction widely divergent from the Greek, and in determining this bent the ordinance of Saul apparently was a causative factor of the first order. The issue, as well as the different forms which it assumed in Israel and Hellas, must be briefly characterized.

The leap in being, the experience of divine being as world-transcendent, is inseparable from the understanding of man as human. The personal soul as the sensorium of transcendence must develop parallel with the understanding of a transcendent God. Now, wherever the leap in being occurs experientially, the articulation of the experience has to grapple with the mystery of death and immortality. Men are mortal; and what is immortal is divine. This holds true for both Greeks and Israelites. Into this clean ontological division, however, does never quite fit the post-existence of man. In the Homeric epic, afterlife is the existence of the psyche, of the life-force, as an eidolon, a shadow in Hades; and in the same manner, Israelite afterlife is a shadowy, ghostlike existence in Sheol. In neither case is it an existence that would bring ultimate perfection to the order of the human personality. From this initial situation was developed, in Hellas, the understanding of the psyche as an immortal substance, capable of achieving increasingly perfect order, if necessary through repeated embodiments, until it reached permanent transmundane status. This development was due to the philosophers from Pythagoras and Heraclitus onward and achieved its climax in the dialogues of Plato. Without a doubt, the polytheistic culture of Hellas facilitated the speculative construction of the problem, since there was no deep-rooted resistance to conceiving the immortal soul as a daimon, that is, as a divine being of lower rank. In Israel a parallel development was barred by the early, even if imperfect, understanding of the true nature of a universal, transcendent God. The dead were *elohim*, and no man was supposed to be an *elohim*. Genesis 3:22–24 was uncompromising on the point: "Then Yahweh-Elohim said: 'See, the man has become like one

of us, in knowing good from evil; and now suppose he were to reach out his hand and take the fruit of the tree of life also and, eating it, live forever!' So Yahweh-Elohim expelled him from the garden of Eden."

The incompatibility of human and divine status seems to have been realized fully for the first time by Saul. Since the dead were *elohim*, and since the belief that they were continued unshaken, these gods had to be relegated by means of a royal ordinance to a kind of public subconscious. Ancestor worship, the myth of a *heros eponymos*, and above all the evocation of such gods as rival authorities to Yahweh had to be suppressed. As a consequence the understanding of a personal soul, of its internal order through divine guidance, and of its perfection through grace in death that will heal the imperfection of mundane existence, could not develop. The relation to Yahweh, precarious in this life, was completely broken by death; what was not achieved in life was never achieved. A pathetic expression of this plight was the psalm of Hezekiah (late eighth century) by which the King thanked Yahweh for recovery from a sickness (Isa. 38:18–19):

> For Sheol cannot praise thee,
> Death cannot celebrate thee:
> They that go down to the Pit
> Can not hope for thy truth.
> The living, the living, he shall praise thee,
> As I do this day.
> The father to the children
> Shall make known thy truth.

Throughout the history of the Kingdom the question of the soul remained in this submersion of a "public subconscious," and even the prophets were unable to deal with it. Only in the time of Ezekiel (late sixth century), the first step toward a solution became noticeable, from the side of ethics, in the hesitant admission of personal responsibility and retribution according to a man's merit (Ezek. 14, 18, and 33). But even the break with the principle of collective responsibility did not break the impasse of experience with regard to the order of the soul and its salvation. Only under Persian influence, in the third century, did the rigid position weaken and could the idea of immortality enter the Jewish orbit.

The state of suspension in which the issue of the soul remained in Israelite history had curious consequences in the realm of symbols. On

the one hand, it favored the advance of historical realism. On the other hand, it prevented the development of philosophy.

With regard to historical realism, the suppression of the ghost-elohim eliminated the ancestor myth as a constitutive form from the public sphere. This, to be sure, does not mean that ancestor-worship or even hero-worship were unknown to the Hebrew tribes. A sufficient number of traces of such cults have survived in the Bible (and been confirmed by archaeological discoveries) to prove that the Hebrew clans, before they came within the range of Yahwist religiousness, were constituted by their ancestor cults just as any Hellenic genos. In the Yahwist period we find such sanctuaries of ancestors as the Cave of Machpelah, where Sarah and Abraham were buried (Gen. 23 and 25:9); the Pillar of Rachel's Grave (Gen. 35:20); and the burial place of Joseph at Shechem (Josh. 24:32). And we find, furthermore, sanctuaries of heroes, such as the sanctuary of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse (Gen. 35:8); the grave of Miriam at Kadesh, the "holy place" (Num. 20:1); and the burial place of Samuel at Ramah (I Sam. 28:3). Nevertheless, while the ancestors and heroes were *elohim* on the popular level of Israelite religion, they never became mythological figures on the Yahwist level on which the narrative moves. On the contrary, those who had already disappeared behind the veil of the myth in pre-Mosaic times, such as the Jacob-el, or Joseph-el, of the Egyptian lists of Canaanite place names, were recovered as historical figures. Certainly Jacob, perhaps Joseph, and probably others of whom no records are preserved were transfigured from historical chieftains into mythical ancestors and then restored to their former status much in the manner in which a modern, critical historian recaptures pragmatic events from the myth. As a result, the Israelites developed a symbolic form without parallel in other civilizations, that is, the History of the Patriarchs.

The extraordinary character of the phenomenon must be realized in order to understand its extraordinary sequel. On the "public" level, the *elohim* had become the historical Patriarchs who now were definitely dead and no longer could influence mundane events. On this level the belief in an afterlife was blotted out so drastically that the late Kohelet could say: "A living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing at all, nor have they anything for their labor, for their memory is forgotten. Their love has vanished with their hate and jealousy, and they have no share in anything

become nondivine, and into a history which had become human. This gulf between God and the world, inherent in Yahwism from the Mosaic age, could be bridged through the Israelite centuries by the survivals of cosmological symbols, by the Canaanite agricultural gods, and by ancestor cults; but when the terrible implications of this separation of God from the world had been realized through the work of the prophets, and when the intramundane, political disasters had brought home the anguish of life in a god-forsaken world, the time was ripe for the return of God into a history from which the divine forces had been eliminated so drastically.

With regard to philosophy, one must say that its development in the Hellenic sense was prevented by the irresolution concerning the status of the soul. The *philia* reaching out toward the *sophon* presupposes a personalized soul: the soul must have disengaged itself sufficiently from the substance of particular human groups to experience its community with other men as established through the common participation in the divine Nous. As long as the spiritual life of the soul is so diffuse that its status under God can be experienced only compactly, through the mediation of clans and tribes, the personal love of God cannot become the ordering center of the soul. In Israel the spirit of God, the *ruach* of Yahweh, is present with the community and with individuals in their capacity as representatives of the community, but it is not present as the ordering force in the soul of every man, as the Nous of the mystic-philosophers or the Logos of Christ is present in every member of the Mystical Body, creating by its presence the *homonoia*, the likemindedness of the community. Only when man, while living with his fellow men in the community of the spirit, has a personal destiny in relation to God can the spiritual eroticism of the soul achieve the self-interpretation which Plato called philosophy. In Israelite history a comparable development was impossible for the previously discussed reasons. When the soul has no destiny, when the relation of man with God is broken through death, even a revelation of the world-transcendent divinity as personal and intense as the Mosaic (more personal and intense than ever befell a Hellenic philosopher) will be blunted by the intramundane compactness of the tribe. The God of Israel revealed himself in his wrath and his grace; he caused the joy of loyal obedience as well as the anguish of disobedience, triumph of victory as well as despair of forsakenness; he manifested himself in natural phenomena as well as in his messengers in

human shape; he spoke audibly, distinctly, and at great length to the men of his choice; he was a will and he gave a law—but he was not the unseen Measure of the soul in the Platonic sense. A Prophet can hear and communicate the word of God, but he is neither a Philosopher nor a Saint.

No Platonic "practice of dying" developed in Israel. Still, the leap in being, when it created historical present as the existence of a people under the will of God, had also sharpened the sensitiveness for individual humanity. Perhaps because the soul had no destiny beyond death, triumph and defeat in life were experienced with a poignancy hitherto unknown to man. In the wake of Saul's kingship a new experiential mood made itself felt which, for lack of a better term, may be called the specifically Israelite humanism. The first great document of this mood was the grandiose *quinah*, the funeral elegy or dirge of David for Saul and Jonathan after the battle of Gilboa (II Sam. 1:19–27):

Your beauty, O Israel, on your heights lies slain!
How have they fallen, the heroes!

Tell it not in Gath,
Announce it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
Lest rejoice the daughters of the Philistines,
Lest exult the daughters of the uncircumcised!

Mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be upon you no dew nor rain,
Nor upsurging from the deep.
For *there* was thrown aside the shield of the hero,
The shield of Saul, no longer salved with oil.

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the heroes,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
The sword of Saul returned not in vain!

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and loved
In their lives, in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, and other delights,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel!

How have they fallen, the heroes,
In the midst of the battle!

with the request have a grievance, for Samuel's sons take bribes and pervert justice (8:3). Still, in the opinion of the historian, this is no reason to demand "a king to judge us like all the nations [*goyim*]" (8:5). What causes Samuel's dismay at this request (8:6) becomes clear in Yahweh's answer to the prophet's prayer (8:7–9):

> Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, hearken to their voice; only you shall earnestly warn them, and show them the ways [*mishpat*] of the king who shall reign over them.

The change from a government by judges to a government by kings is more than a change of political forms in the secular sense. It is a break with the theopolitical [12] constitution of Israel as a people under Yahweh, the King. Samuel may be displeased by Israel's rejection of his dynasty of judges, but the real issue is the defection from the kingship of Yahweh. Samuel, then, obeys Yahweh's command and earnestly warns the people of what will befall them (I Sam. 8:11–18). The king will press the young men into military service and serfdom; the young women will have to serve in the royal household; the best land will be expropriated and given to the king's officers and servants; the people will be taxed heavily for the upkeep of the royal administration and in addition will have to work part time for the king. "And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but Yahweh will not answer you in that day" (18). But the people is insistent; they want a king "that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (20).

Israel has its will. Samuel assembles the people at Mizpah, and the assembly proceeds to the election of a king (I Sam. 10:17–24). The

[12] I am using Martin Buber's term "theopolitical" rather than the term "theocratic" in order to signify the peculiar constitution, both existential and transcendental, of Israel as a people under God. "Theocratic" will conviently be used when existential rulership, and especially kingship, is experienced as bound by the commands of God, and especially when a priesthood measures the conduct of the magistrate by divine commands and can make its criticism effective. For the formation of the concept "theocratic" in the latter sense see Hendrik Berkhof, *Kirche und Kaiser* (Zollikon-Zurich, 1947), 143 ff. As the text will presently show, the theocratic element enters the constitution of Israel precisely when the theopolitical experience is disturbed by the establishment of kingship.

cherem.[13] Both the King and the people are lax in the enforcement of the ban and keep the best parts of the loot for themselves. Samuel has to intervene and kill the King of the Amalekites with his own hands in order to fulfill the word of Yahweh. Then he announces to Saul that he is rejected because of the violation of the divine command. Saul's plea of relative innocence (that he had given in to the pressure of his warriors) is not accepted: "For, though you are insignificant in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?" (15:17). Then Samuel withdraws from the rejected king and never sees him to his death. The aftermath again is the episode of the witch of Endor, on the eve of the battle of Gilboa.

The antiroyalist version of Saul's kingship has created one of the most important symbolisms of Western politics. Through the reception of the Bible into the Scripture of Christianity the relation between Samuel and Saul has become the paradigm of spiritual control over temporal rulership. From the first stirrings of theocratic consciousness in Lucifer of Cagliari and St. Ambrose, in the conflicts of the fourth century A.D., to the end of Christian imperial culture, and beyond it into the Calvinist theocracies of Geneva and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Samuel-Saul story was the "leading case." And even in the disintegration of imperial Christianity the warring parties still justified their positions by reference to the story, as when the Monarchomachists asserted the right of God's people to abide by the command of the Lord against an erring Saul, or when, in opposition, a James I asserted the right of the king not to fall into the guilt of Saul, but to shoulder his responsibility as the "head of the tribes of Israel" against an erring people.

A symbolism of such importance demands some circumspection of the interpreter. It cannot be dismissed simply as a late theocratic distortion of historical events. While in its present form the story has its inception certainly not earlier than in the prophetic opposition to the court of Samaria in the ninth century, and while the speeches of Samuel are delivered in the grandly flowing style of the Deuteronomist school of the seventh century, some of the historical materials as well as the issue

[13] In the *Mishneh Torah* Maimonides enumerates as holy wars the wars against the "seven nations" which occupied Canaan before the conquest, against Amalek, and defensive wars (XIV, 5, 1).

There probably existed remnants of the clan opposition which, at an earlier date, had become articulate in the "Fable of the Trees." And there probably also existed a historical Samuel, or rather more than one, who pondered on the difference between a chosen people of Yahweh and an Israel under a king like all the goyim. This is the experiential area in which the theocratic symbolism is rooted. For the idea of theocratic order is not a "doctrine" invented by some thinker at a definite point of time but a symbol which articulates the experienced tension between divine and human constitution of society. As long as Israel was a confederacy, resting on the social organization of the Hebrew clans, the tension could become active only in the rare instances of charismatic leadership in an emergency, and that precisely was the situation in which the tension would dissolve before it could harden into a serious problem of order. When the emergency situation crystallized into the routine of permanent organization, even only locally, as in the case of Gideon's attempted dynasty, the outcome was disaster. Now, however, the Israelite theopolity was supplemented by a permanent kingship of national scope; and therefore, the question had to arise whether Israel, by the acquisition of a king like all the nations, had not become a nation like all the nations? whether Israel had ceased to be the chosen people of Yahweh? And if this should be the case, how could kingship be brought into accord with the exigencies of a theopolity?

In part, but only to a part, the questions were solved by the social process in which Hebrews and Canaanites merged into the new Israel that wanted a king. The amalgamated people was indeed well on its way to become a nation like all the nations until, in the eighth century, the process was stopped and partially reversed by the Prophetic Revolt. In spite of the fact, however, that the conflict was solved to a rather considerable extent through backsliding into the Sheol of cosmological civilization, the experience of the theopolity was never so completely submerged that it could not be recovered. This is the decisive fact in the Israelite experiment with kingship. And the preservation of the theopolitical consciousness is intelligible only if we assume a continuous occupation with the problem of theocratic order from the time when the theopolity was endangered by the royal institution. Under Israelite historical conditions no institutional solution could be found that would have been comparable to the Christian development of the spiritual and temporal orders. For within the history of Israel proper the idea of the

theopolity did not bring forth its fruit, the idea of mankind as a universal church. Hence the theocratic problem, when it arose with the establishment of a national monarchy, moved from the early theopolity through the recession of order into cosmological form, the spasmodic interference of Yahwist charismatics with the routine of royal administration and dynastic succession, and the Prophetic Revolt, to the post-exilic priestly organization of the Jewish community. The compact symbol of the Chosen People could never be completely broken by the idea of a universal God and a universal mankind. Yet the problem of the church, however imperfectly differentiated, was inherent in the situation as soon as a temporal polity was built into the Yahwist theopolity, with the national monarchy.

Hence the monarchy of Saul, indeed, marked the beginning of the theocratic problem. And the Samuel-Saul story must therefore be characterized as the paradigmatic elaboration of a problem which actually arose at the time at which the paradigmatic events were supposed to have occurred. To be sure, the events did not occur as narrated, for the highly articulate formulation of the issues, as well as the rich detail, presuppose an experience of the monarchy and its conflicts with Yahwist order which did not exist at the time of its foundation. Nevertheless, the Deuteronomist historians who created the paradigmatic story and placed it in the time of Saul had a finer sense for the essential origin of the theocratic problem than the modern critics who want to place the issue in the time of its literary articulation. One may go even one step further and assume that the late historians were in possession of traditions which lent themselves to paradigmatic elaboration in the theocratic sense, even though they can no longer be ascertained. For the theocratic problem of Saul cannot be considered a whole-cloth invention as long as we accept as authentic the spiritual disorder of his later years. The charismatic war leader who rose to permanent kingship in an emergency and then lost his charisma must have experienced, with a high degree of consciousness, the need of spiritual guidance in temporal affairs. The forsakenness of his soul which drove him to the witch of Endor and his frantic search for an authentic word from Yahweh indicate a historically real experience of the tension between spiritual and temporal order. Whatever doubts may be raised with regard to the historical Samuel and his role in the anxieties of the King, there can be no doubt about the Samuel in the conscience of Saul.

§ 3. The Rise of David

With Gilboa the cause of Israel seemed lost. The Philistines again were in control of Palestine west of the Jordan. A few years later, however, the resistance could be resumed, and this time the war ended with a complete success through the establishment of the Davidic Empire. The causes of the surprising recovery, as well as the events in detail, are the subject matter of political history rather than our concern.[15] Nevertheless, the general characteristics of the period must be recalled since, in their aggregate, they determined a new phase in the Israelite occupation with the problem of political order.

During the reign of Saul (*ca.* 1020–*ca.* 1004) not only had the formation of the new Israel progressed further in the old area of the Hebrew confederacy but the process had expanded beyond it into the Judaite region south of Jerusalem. The drawing of Judah, which had not been a member of the Israelite Confederacy, into the formation of the national Israel was an event of momentous consequence for several reasons. In the first place, the material expansion of Israel broadened the territorial and ethnic basis for the struggle against the Philistines. The increase of power could not yet be utilized to the full by Saul, but it substantially contributed to the successful conclusion of the struggle by David, as well as to the strength of his kingdom. Second, geographically, the inclusion of Judah reduced the group of Canaanite towns to which Jerusalem belonged to an enclave in the territory of Israel. The geopolitical temptation to abolish the awkward wedge of towns between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom was irresistible. David's conquest of Jerusalem not only rounded out the territory but also was the precondition for his political master stroke of making the mountain fortress, which hitherto had preserved its unconquered independence and never formed part of either Israel or Judah, the neutral capital of the new empire. Third, Judah was more than a simple addition to the territory and population of Israel. In the struggle for empire the increase counted double, because previously Judah had been in the Philistine sphere of influence; the Philistine power was diminished by the amount of Israel's growth. Moreover, the long period of Philistine suzerainty

[15] For the history of the period cf. the chapters on "Saul" and "David" in Robinson, *A History of Israel*, I.

The fusion of Judah with Israel during the Philistine wars is only slightly less obscure than the origin of Judah itself. One gains the impression of a loosening of the older clan organization under the impact of continuous warfare. The normal life courses of individuals were interrupted, and at the same time new centers of social organization arose, in the armies and retinues of war leaders which could absorb such dislocated individuals. The unsettlement through military conquests, the plunder and expropriation of land holdings, and their redistribution among distinguished military and administrative personnel created a common lot for a new type of subject-population, while it produced a new ruling class of comrades-in-arms with common interest in the preservation of power over the whole area that had been drawn into the whirlpool of warfare. Moreover, new connections were formed among people who had formerly led their quiet lives in widely separate regions, when members of distant clans and tribes were thrown together and formed common loyalties through military and court careers in the king's service. A few examples from the Biblical narrative will illustrate the process.

The decisive factor in the Israelite struggle for empire, as well as in the building of the new order, was the creation of troops of professional soldiers personally attached to the war leader. We have met with this instrument of royal politics, for the first time, in the case of Abimelech's *coup d'état* against his brothers. It appeared again in Jephthah's rise to power, when "worthless fellows collected round Jephthah, and went raiding with him" (Judg. 11:3). In David's case, then, we learn more about the reservoir from which the "worthless fellows" were drawn: "And every one who was in distress, and every one who was in debt, and every one who was discontented, gathered to him. And he became captain over them. And there were with him about four hundred men" (I Sam. 22:2). And in a similar manner Saul recruited the nucleus of his permanent military retinue: "There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw a strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself" (I Sam. 14:52).

The enumerated cases, however, reveal subtle differences in spite of their apparent similarity. While Jephthah and David in their outlaw days had to be satisfied with adventurous malcontents and fugitives from justice who "gathered" to them, Saul was in a legitimate position and could "choose" his warriors, as suggested by the phrase: "Saul chose three thousand men of Israel" in order to organize them as fighting contingents for himself and his son Jonathan (I Sam. 13:2). And these

men, recruited by Saul into his military establishment, were at least sometimes men of good family. David, who entered the King's service, was recommended to Saul as "the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, skilled in playing, a landowner, a man of war, prudent in speech, a man of good presence, and Yahweh is with him" (I Sam. 16:18). The manner in which the features are assembled to form the picture of a *kalokagathos* may belong to a later age, but even under more rustic conditions we see the handsome, well-bred son of a family of substance. Further insights into the growth of the new society are furnished by the career of David. He became the berith-brother of the King's son Jonathan (I Sam. 18:3), distinguished himself against the Philistines and was promoted to a commander of the king's men (18:5), and finally became the King's son-in-law (18:20 ff.). The young commander, however, became too popular. When the women greeted the returning warriors with the song "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands," Saul began to "eye" David and to suspect in him the rival for kingship (I Sam. 18:7–9). In order to dispose of the rival he sent him on ever more dangerous missions (18:13 ff.), a device which later David used with more success against the husband of Bathsheba. When ultimately David had to flee from the murderous intents of Saul, the potential future king was in spite of his youth already a power in his own right. Adventurers gathered to him by the hundreds, certainly in expectation of great rewards when the promising young man should succeed. And not only adventurers, but his whole clan (22:1).

Here a further important element of the new order becomes visible, that is, the clan to which the successful war leader belongs. From the King's clan emerge the influential dignitaries of the realm. The main support of Saul, and after his death, of the dynasty, was Abner, the King's cousin and commander in chief. David's general, Joab, was his nephew. When Saul, in the conflict with David, assembled his officers, they turned out to be Benjaminites, men of the King's tribe; and Saul addressed them: "Hear now, you Benjaminites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?" (I Sam. 22:7). The son of Jesse indeed would not; when he rose to power he had to provide for his own people. The passage reveals the material interest which the King's men, including his tribe, had in the success of the struggle for empire, as well as the pay-as-you-go technique of financing the struggle. With

every Canaanite town wrested from the Philistines rich loot flowed in. And this source of revenue was sufficient to finance the further expansion under the primitive conditions of Saul, when the King had not yet a residence or palace, but continued to live on his estate, and assembled his officers under a tamarisk tree or seated in the hall of his peasant home with his spear leaning beside him against the wall. Even under David, when the kingdom was still growing, until it extended its control over Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Arameans of Damascus, the continuous flow of loot was an important source of revenue. Not until the reign of Solomon did a rational administration of finances become necessary, because of the luxurious increase of expenditure, parallel with the tightening of resources. And in the course of this rationalization the prerogatives of the king's tribe became most firmly entrenched. For Judah was exempt from the division of the empire into twelve administrative districts; and in all probability this meant exemption from the taxes and services imposed on the districts. The readiness of Israel to separate from the Davidic kingdom after the death of Solomon was motivated largely by the favored position of the king's tribe.

In spite of the important role which the clan played in the rise to power of a war leader, in the struggle for empire, and finally in the exploitation of the resources of the kingdom, David did not derive much comfort from the support of his clan when he had escaped from Saul to Judah. For Saul's kingship of Israel effectively controlled the south, though the Biblical narrative has preserved no tradition concerning the process in which the control was acquired. Saul could pursue David and his followers from one hiding place to another and punish his supporters until David would be forced to take refuge, together with his men, with the King of the Philistine Gath. He was given residence in Ziklag, a town dependent on Gath, and could hold his men together by the technique of plunder, derived from raids against the non-Judaite populations to the south (I Sam. 27). After Gilboa David could move in a peaceful march with his followers and their households to Hebron, take residence there, and have himself anointed King of Judah (II Sam. 2:1–4). At the same time, Saul's general and cousin Abner took Saul's son Ishbaal east of the Jordan and established him as King of Israel in Mahanaim (II Sam. 2:8–9). The arrangement apparently found favor with the Philistines, who were content with the control of west-Jordanian Palestine and could expect the two rival kings to be no danger for the future.

The peace lasted seven-and-a-half years (II Sam. 2:11). Then the social forces which had been activated by the kingship of Saul became virulent again. The kings' clans had tasted of the spoils that came with conquest and empire. And if the kings kept their peace, as apparently they did, their generals had other ideas. The struggle for empire started moving again, not through any conflict with the Philistines, but through an encounter between "Abner and the servants of Ishbaal" and "Joab and the servants of David" (II Sam. 2:12–13). The reason for the meeting between the two armed forces of the generals at the pool of Gibeon, north of Jerusalem, in a territory which belonged to neither of the two royal domains, is not explained in the Biblical narrative. In view of later events the meeting appears to have had more behind it than the officially ascribed desire for a sham-fight between twelve young warriors from each side. Anyway, the sham-fight, in which all participants actually killed each other, developed into a real fight between the troops of the opposing camps; and the real fight, in which Abner in self-defense killed a brother of Joab, developed into "a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David" (II Sam. 3:1). The fortune of the long war turned against the Benjaminites. At this juncture Abner provoked an incident with his king Ishbaal which permitted him to transfer his loyalty to the rival for kingship (3:6–11), with a show of righteous indignation; he thereupon offered David a berith with the promise of bringing all Israel over to him (3:12). David was ready to accept, under the condition that his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, would first be returned to him—apparently in order to improve the legitimacy of his succession to the kingship of Israel. Abner fulfilled his part of the berith. He delivered Michal to David and gained the approval of the elders of Israel, and especially of the Benjaminites, for going over to David (3:13–20). He was ready to assemble the Israelite notables for the formal berith with David. At this point of the transaction, when he was about to become David's kingmaker and when substantial power in the future kingdom presumably was to pass into the hands of the Benjaminites, Joab intervened and without much ado murdered Abner, under pretext of the blood feud which had its origin in the fight at the pool of Gibeon (3:21–30). The deed had the result which Joab probably had calculated. With their strong man dead, the Benjaminites had little hope of ever again achieving power under their sole control. Two of them murdered Ishbaal, who had become useless for their purpose, and brought his head

sidered a solution of Israel's problems, since after a bloody internal history of little more than two centuries the independent kingdom fell under the Assyrian onslaught and, as a consequence, Israel ceased to exist as a distinguishable political and civilizational entity.

These are the stark facts of pragmatic history. But they have been so successfully overlaid by the paradigmatic construction of the Biblical narrative that even today the lack of critical concepts makes it difficult to treat adequately the problems of continuity and identity. On the one hand, the language of "Israelite history" must arouse misgivings in view of the fact that the most important event in its course was the disappearance of Israel. On the other hand, the language is justified because certainly something continued, even if the "something" defied identification by a name. The problems of this nature, however, will be treated in their proper place in the further course of this study. For the present, we need only draw attention to their existence, in order to conduct the analysis with awareness of the pragmatic context.

The pragmatic context for the period under discussion is furnished by the united monarchy of Israel and Judah which, for lack of a better name, we shall call the Davidic Empire. It does clearly not continue the monarchy which the Israelite Confederacy had developed as an emergency organization, but must be considered a new imperial foundation imposed by the conqueror, his army, and his clan, on the territories and peoples of Israel, Judah, and the Canaanite towns. The elements of conquest and force which entered into the making of the empire, however, were balanced, at least in the early years of David's reign, by a genuine popular support engendered by the relief from Philistine dominion as well as by the appeal of imperial power and courtly splendor. Nevertheless, the empire did not outlast the reigns of its founder (*ca.* 1004–966) and his son (*ca.* 966–926). And a careful observer of the eighty years might arrive at the conclusion that the empire in a stable form did not last for any time at all, for during David's reign the empire was still in the making, gradually expanding its dominion over Edom and Damascus through military governors, and over Moab and Ammon through tributary princes. But under Solomon, though the direct administration was extended over most of Ammon and Moab, the empire as a whole was crumbling, as Edom in the south and the Aramean Damascus in the north regained their independence. If the territories and peoples assembled by conquest at the time of David's death could have been held together

by his successors for a few generations, a stable Syriac Empire, comparable in type to the Egyptian and Mesopotamian empires, might have come into existence. But whether such an imperial organization of the Palestinian and Syrian territories and peoples, when stabilized, would have been an Empire of Israel, even if it should have adopted the style, may justly be doubted.

The rapid succession of rise and fall, without a breathing space for stable existence, left no time for problems of this kind to develop. The causes which determined the rapid decline and the division of the empire were rather variegated. Certainly David's weakness in dealing with his sons had something to do with it, as well as the personality of Solomon, which, through the rare openings in the veil of glorification thrown around it by the Biblical narrative, looks somewhat less than wise. But there is no profit in pursuing details difficult to ascertain at best. For even men of impeccable character and statesmanship might have floundered in the attempt to overcome the fundamental obstacle to the building of a durable empire, that is, the hopeless poverty of the Palestinian soil. Palestine was too poor to maintain a first-rate military power, not to mention a magnificent court, in the style of the rich river civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. We have touched already on the financial aspects of Saul's warfare and David's conquest. Loot as a major source of revenue had to cease when the conquest had reached its limits and the dominion had to be administered rationally within its boundaries. Labor in the king's service, taxation, and income from the control of trade had to replace the unorthodox financial methods of the war period. And when that point had been reached, the scarcity of resources quickly proved to be the limiting factor.

The actual difficulties, as we have indicated, have disappeared behind the veil of glorification surrounding the reign of Solomon. Nevertheless, certain incidents allow at least a glimpse of the true situation. We find in I Kings 9:15–22 that Solomon recruited his slave-labor force from the descendants of Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, that is, of non-Israelitic peoples whom "the people of Israel were unable to destroy utterly." Neither the wholesale destruction of people who, when alive, could have produced revenue, nor the use of their survivors as slave laborers on royal building projects, can have improved the wealth of the country. Moreover, contrary to the suggestion of I Kings 9:22, Israel

was not a military aristocracy ruling over slave laborers, but the Chosen People itself was pressed into service by a "levy of forced labor out of all Israel" (I Kings 5:13–18) for the unproductive purpose of building the Temple. And the twelve "officers over all Israel," at the head of twelve administrative districts, who each provided for the King's household for one month of the year (I Kings 4:7–19) can hardly have levied the provisions from anybody but the Israelites themselves. The country suffered and the revenue for royal projects was running low. In the twentieth year of luxurious building, I Kings 9:10–14 reports, Solomon could obtain a sum of gold only by selling twenty cities in Galilee to Hiram of Tyre. But when Hiram inspected his new territory he found the cities in poor condition, and "so they are called Cabul [no good] to this day" (13). It is not surprising, therefore, that Israel broke away from the house of David when after Solomon's death the successor threatened to increase the burden, and that the superintendent of slave labor, Adoram, was stoned to death on the occasion (I Kings 12:16–18).

§ 2. The David-Bathsheba Story

For the period of the Davidic Empire, and especially for the reign of David and the Solomonic succession, the Biblical narrative of II Samuel and I Kings abounds with information on pragmatic events, on the motivations and actions of the leading personalities, and even on institutional details. We know more about these two generations than about any other period of human history prior to the Hellenic fifth century as narrated by Thucydides. When from this richly flowing source we attempt, however, to extract the experience of order, as well as the symbols which governed the new monarchy, we encounter difficulties, since the narrative contains no episodes that would concentrate the issue of order in a manner comparable to the great episodes of pre-Davidic history. There is no Abraham wresting the idea of the berith from a more compact context of experiences, no "Fable of the Trees," no Deborah Song, no Saul and Samuel struggling with the idea of kingship and its relation to Yahwism. Not that sources of this kind are altogether missing—they are hidden away, as we shall see, in other sections of the Bible. In the narrative itself the problem of order is curiously subdued; and the one great occasion on which the question of just order becomes articulate, the Nathan episode of II Samuel 12:1–15a, is a paradigmatic interpola-

tion whose lateness only accentuates the absence of such elaborate concern with the issue of justice at the time itself.

The peculiar twilight in the spiritual atmosphere will be sensed when we study the Nathan episode in its setting.

The context of the Nathan episode is provided by the story of David and Bathsheba. It is the eternal, sordid story of the man who stays home and takes advantage of a soldier's absence in war to have an affair with his wife. The old story acquires historical importance because the man who stayed home was the King of Israel, the Messiah of Yahweh, and the soldier was one of the "King's servants," Uriah the Hittite. The King tried to obscure the paternity of the expected child by ordering a furlough for Uriah. But the attempt failed because the Hittite observed the sex taboo on Israelite warriors during a holy war. Then Uriah was sent to his death by David's famous letter to Joab. The war widow performed the ritual lamentations for her husband and then joined the King's harem (II Sam. 11). Yahweh was displeased and took measures. The child died within a week of its birth. During the illness of the child David was disconsolate, he fasted and prayed and waked. When the child at last was dead, David immediately stopped his disconsolation, washed, ate, and went to the house of Yahweh to worship. To his servants, who were astonished at his conduct, he explained that while the child was still alive he could hope that Yahweh would be gracious and save him, but now that the child was dead no useful purpose was served by acts of mourning and contrition. Then he went in to Bathsheba and produced Solomon (II Sam. 12:15b–25).

The story forms part of the Memoirs on the reigns of Saul and David, probably written by a man whose youth was in part contemporary with the events and released to the public about 900 B.C.[1] Into this story was fitted the Nathan episode. The train of the narrative was interrupted after the birth of the child. At this point Yahweh sent Nathan to the King (II Sam. 12:1–15a), and the prophet approached the King with the parable of "The Poor Man's Lamb" (12:1b–4):

> There were two men in a certain city: the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he reared it; and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his own morsel, and drink from his own cup; and it lay in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that had come to him.

[1] For the debate about the Memoirs, their authorship, purpose, and date, see Lods, *Histoire de la Littérature Hébraique et Juive*, 160–68.

David was indignant about the rich man's action (5–6), only to learn that he was in the evildoer's position and would have to suffer Yahweh's punishment (7–10). The more detailed description of the punishment anticipated later historical events (11–12) and then returned to the punishment immediately at hand, to the death of the child (13–15a), so that now the original story could continue and still make sense.

An analysis of the David-Bathsheba story, as well as of the interpolated episode, must beware of the misinterpretations so generously bestowed by later generations, down to our own, upon an anecdote which seems to have the *haut goût* of human interest. It should be clear, therefore, that we are dealing neither with a sentimental love story nor with horrors of royal treachery. There will be no occasion either to condemn the morals of the King or to come to his defense with the argument that other oriental monarchs have done similar things, and worse, without compunction. As far as the present study is concerned, the story is relevant under three aspects. In the first place, the story is told in a book of political memoirs. Whatever the anecdotal value of its subject matter or the literary art of the narrator, it has its place in the Memoirs because the mother of Solomon was an important political figure. We may assume there was more than one Bathsheba in the neighborhood of the royal residence who hopefully took a bath where she could be seen from the roof of the King's house; and quite possibly more than one succeeded in the immediate purpose; but only one of them became the woman who played a decisive role in the struggle for succession and brought Solomon to the throne. Hence, the anecdote is preserved in its original context not because of the interest attaching to the details of its subject matter but because it is part of the political, and especially of the court, history of the Empire. As a matter of fact, the author is so vague on the issues—rather grave issues—raised incidentally by the detail of his story that a later historian would find it necessary to interpolate the Nathan episode

in order to clarify at least one of the strands of meaning. In the second place, therefore, the story is relevant as the occasion for the fable of "The Poor Man's Lamb." And in the third place, finally, the story together with the interpolation is relevant to us as a source for understanding the crisis of Yahwist order in the Empire, as well as for the manner in which it was sensed by a man who was close to it in time, if not a contemporary.

The story is told with the restraint that characterizes the Memoirs as a whole. This restraint, which seems to tell everything and yet leaves the decisive issues in semiobscurity, is their signature. It is a cultivated, courtly style, far from the spiritual fierceness and uncompromising clarity of earlier periods. Hence the anecdote as told is rich in implications, but short on direct formulation. Still, it is outspoken enough to make the restraint recognizable as a style that is caused by spiritual disintegration as much as it serves as an instrument for its description. The silences and omissions betray the discretion of a highly placed person who is writing on the affairs of a regime, as well as the uneasiness of a man of the world when he senses his realm of immanent action, with all its glory, charm, passion, tragedy, and *raison d'état,* threatened with disaster from such an uncomfortable quarter as the spirit. All of the problems in the anecdote are fairly obvious, but almost none becomes quite clear.

The lack of clarity in the story becomes noticeable as soon as one tries to interpret it consistently in the light that radiates from its one absolutely clear point, that is, from the sex taboo that had to be observed by warriors during a holy war. When David tried to cover the affair with Bathsheba by giving the husband an opportunity, he received a stern lesson from Uriah (II Sam. 11:11):

> The ark, and Israel, and Judah, dwell in booths;
> and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field;
> shall I then go into my house, to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife?
> As you live, and as your soul lives, I shall not do this thing.

The unexpected obstinacy of a Hittite warrior who took the ritual of the Wars of Yahweh seriously must have greatly embarrassed the more sophisticated Messiah. He saw to it that the man was made drunk, hoping that in a state of intoxication his principles would mellow. And only when this attempt failed did he send him off with the letter to the faithful Joab,

to his death. But even with the husband dead it seemed wise to move the woman into the harem quickly; for the case of Uriah had shown that not everybody in the kingdom took the war ritual as lightly as the King and his court retinue.

If the interpretation be assumed as correct, the story reveals a serious crisis of Yahwist order in the empire. And it reveals not only the crisis but also the reluctance to talk about it, or perhaps even a lack of sensitiveness for its nature. According to the story David's affair with Bathsheba was no more than a moment of passion. The King accepted what must have looked like an invitation, and perhaps was one; he had no intention of taking the woman into the harem and of having her husband killed for this purpose. On the contrary, he wanted to hush up the matter and have it forgotten. What then forced the extraordinary course of action on the King? Was it the necessity to protect the woman, or himself, against the consequences of adultery? The story is silent on the point. Nor does it mention why Yahweh was "displeased" with the affair. And the virtual murder of Uriah does not seem to have caused anybody to raise an eyebrow. The only motive mentioned at all is the sex taboo, placed forcefully in the center of the story in the address of Uriah. If, however, the war ritual is the core of the royal difficulties, as we must assume, then the state of Israelite order appears in a somber light, indeed. There is a King of Israel, though of a Judaite clan, who takes the sex taboo during a holy war lightly enough to break it, but seriously enough to make at least an attempt to cover his violation. His court personnel is sufficiently obedient to aid him in the affair and can be relied upon not to gossip in indignation so that the King's violation would reach the husband. And the King expects the warrior on furlough also not to be squeamish about the rules. But then comes the surprise that, of all people, a Hittite would take the taboo seriously. That situation in itself indicates a deep corrosion of the Yahwist order.

Even more revealing, however, is the circumstantial content of Uriah's answer, as it raises the question how holy the holy war of the time could have been. For here we receive the information, important for Israelite military history, that the armed forces were organized in the two groups of the militia and the professional "servants of the King." The people of Yahweh, both Israel and Judah, with the ark, were employed as a reserve, and at the moment were encamped in the rear, while the professional army was engaged in the more dangerous and tactically more difficult siege

operations against Rabbah. When we reflect on this new role of the Chosen People as the strategic reserve of the imperial army, and compare it with the holy war at the time of Deborah, when Israel gained its active existence under Yahweh, we must wonder not only about the holiness of the war but about the very identity of the actors. To be sure, the wars were still fought under Yahweh, and even the people's militia did not always have a secondary role. In the first phase of the great war against the Ammonites the professional army fought alone, and on this occasion Joab himself addressed his brother before the battle (II Sam. 10:12): "Be strong, and let us prove our strength for our people, and for the cities of our God; and Yahweh do what seems good to him." And in the second phase of the war (II Sam. 10:15–19) it was the militia alone who did the fighting—one suspects because the professional army had to be husbanded. But again one must wonder about the identity of Israel, when a professional army fights not only for the people but also for the "cities of our God," that is, for the cities of Canaan, and when the ritual of war under a charismatic leader has been reduced to the sedate piety of the commanding general's invocation. The holiness of the third phase, in which Uriah found his death, is even more questionable, since the account of the campaign opens with the previously quoted verse (II Sam. 11:1) which suggests an "optional war" at the return of spring, "when kings go forth to battle," not a defensive war under Yahweh at all. The Israel of the holy wars was giving way, so it seems, to the exigencies of the empire's rational administration and warfare. As far as the professional army was concerned—which definitely was not the old *am Yahweh*—it is difficult to see how it could maintain the pathos of the Chosen People's war under Yahweh. And this must have become especially difficult when Solomon introduced the weapon of the war chariots. For the garrison towns for the charioteers—Hazor, Megiddo, Beth Horon, Baalath, and Thamar—were old Canaanite towns and the military personnel was professional (I Kings 9:15–19).[2] As far as the people of Israel was concerned the process of gradual dissolution was not entirely painless. That much can be gathered from the story of the population count in II Samuel 24. Apparently, a rational administration of the army required a count of "the valiant men who drew a sword." David ordered the census, but on this occasion he

[2] On this question see von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg*, 36, as well as the further literature given there.

that permitted only one conclusion: Yahweh was with him! We remember the scene when David, reproved by Michal for his dance before the ark, answered:

> Before Yahweh, who chose me above your father, above all his house,
> to appoint me prince over the people of Yahweh, over Israel,
> before Yahweh will I make merry.

This mixture of sincere piety and shrewd brutality, this readiness to bewail and punish crimes and then to pocket the profits, to accept the deeds of Joab during his lifetime and then to provide in his testament for his servant's execution by the successor—all this is not pleasant, but it is not immoral. It is primitive and lusty. It is Yahwism pulled down to the level of mundane success. And the mixture never becomes shabby or hypocritical because it is held together by that authentic wholeness of personality for which we use the term charisma. Yahweh was with him, indeed—one can say no more.

One can understand that later generations were baffled by the enigma of the charismatic brute as much as his contemporaries, and more so. The Nathan episode, not precisely datable but belonging to the prophetic period, was an attempt to make sense of a drama whose meaning had been lost. If this attempt failed to bring out the essential point, that is, the violation of the sex taboo, this was perhaps due not to a lack of understanding but to the obscurity of the Memoirs on the point. In a comparable case, in the violation of the ritual of the holy war by Saul, in I Samuel 15, the point was well understood by the historians who created the paradigmatic elements of the Samuel story, probably because in this case the traditions were sufficiently well preserved to make the issue clear. In the David-Bathsheba story, however, the issue was so obscure that other elements of the situation suggested themselves for elaboration. One must be aware, as Gerhard von Rad has pointed out justly, that none of the historians who welded the traditions into their final literary form had ever witnessed a holy war, a ritual which by their time belonged to a distant past.

Nevertheless, while the fable of "The Poor Man's Lamb" did not touch the issue of the sex taboo, neither does it indicate simply a misunderstanding of the David-Bathsheba story. As the theocratic interpolations in the Samuel-Saul story brought to paradigmatic clarity issues implied in the situation, so the Nathan episode brought a newly emerging problem into

focus. When the old order of Israel and its wars under Yahweh was dissolving under pressure of the rising forces of kingship, court, professional army, and the rationality of imperial administration and warfare, the problem of the order governing the new forces became acute. When the king was elevated by the permanence and authority of his office far above the common people, when his conduct was no longer governed by the ritual of a charismatic war leader, when the king's interest in her must have been a great temptation for a woman, when the king had means, not at the disposition of a commoner, of dealing with an annoying husband, the king's conduct was bound to emerge as a new topic of reflection and speculation. The possible misuse of power would impose special duties of restraint on the king, while correspondingly a sphere of personal rights of the subject, inviolate to royal action, had to be circumscribed. Under David's kingship questions of this nature began to become crucial. Hence, the Nathan episode dwelt on the king's power and its range under the aspect of its origin in the favors showered by Yahweh on David (II Sam. 12:7–8). As a consequence, the taking of Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah appeared as an arbitrary human addition to the divine gifts, and had to be interpreted as contempt of "the word of Yahweh" (9). The episode tended to form the notion of an "estate of the king," comprising the king's conquests and possessions, his office and powers, as well as the privileges and duties of the incumbent. In all these respects the estate was a divine trust, to be held under the conditions imposed by Yahweh. While the old order of the Israelite Confederacy was disintegrating, a new Yahwist order for the mundane forces of the empire began to crystallize. In the Nathan episode the degree of articulation was comparatively low; and never in Israelite history did it reach the level of a philosophy of law in the technical sense. Nevertheless, even in the compact form of the episode the substance of the issues—of royal conduct, of justice, of the subject's rights—became clear. As far as the literary form is concerned, the fable of "The Poor Man's Lamb" must be ranked with the fable of "The Trees in Search of a King" as one of the Israelite "Fables for Kings"—if we may use the term which Hesiod has coined for the literary genus.

§ 3. David's Kingship

To the historian as well as to the reader who desires clarity about the ideas of a period, the preceding analysis will appear tortuous and un-

queror established himself with his army as the ruler over a defenseless population. To be sure, the establishment would have met with little resistance anyway because on the one hand, the reign of Saul had familiarized the people with the institution of kingship as well as its advantages in the struggle with the Philistines, and on the other hand, the Yahwism of Judah was less articulate than that of the confederate Israel.

In the background of David's kingship in the towns of Hebron, however, there lurked from the beginning the idea of a succession to Saul's kingship over Israel. For from the point of view of Abner, who had made Ishbaal the king over "all Israel" (II Sam. 2:9), the kingship of David can have been hardly more than high treason against the King of Israel. Under the shadow cast by illegitimacy and usurpation was conducted the war between the houses of Saul and David that ended with the murder of Ishbaal. On occasion of the subsequent surrender ceremony, the "elders of Israel" somewhat belatedly discovered that they were of the same bone and flesh as David, and that even at the time of Saul Yahweh had ordained David to be shepherd and prince of Israel (II Sam. 5:2). With the stain of illegitimacy removed by the formal declaration of the "elders of Israel," David made a berith with them before Yahweh, and they in return anointed him "king over Israel" (5:3). While the source has nothing to say about the content of the berith, the sequence of events suggests that its stipulations had been the condition for the unction which ultimately conferred the kingship over Israel on David.[4]

At first sight, the berith seems to be a relatively clear element in the royal institution. The Davidic kingship rested on a contractual relationship between the ruler and the representatives of the people. As soon as the berith is examined more closely, however, its meaning becomes uncertain. Whatever the stipulations from both sides may have been, the situation of II Samuel 5:3 marked the berith as a treaty of surrender in a politically and militarily dismal, if not hopeless, situation. It sanctioned the rule of a semiforeign conqueror. Moreover, the other elements of the situation must be taken into account. In the first place, David was already king of Judah, without benefit of berith with anybody. Furthermore, on this occasion he became king not only over the Israel whose elders concluded the berith with him, but also over the Canaanite towns about whose

[4] For a more elaborate reconstruction of the pragmatic events, using conjectures to fill the gaps of the narrative, cf. the chapter on "Der Grosstaat Davids" in Noth, *Geschichte Israels*.

representation in the act we hear nothing. And subsequent to the berith, he established a capital for the united kingdom in a region and town which at the time had yet to be conquered from non-Israelite populations. Hence, the berith at Hebron, far from being the basis of David's kingship, can be considered no more than the form in which the clans of Israel submitted to the ruler of the growing empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that we hear nothing of a berith when the empire passed from David to Solomon. The succession was regulated by the entirely different means of (1) the murder of Amnon, David's oldest son, by Absalom (II Sam. 13); (2) the abortive revolt of Absalom and his murder by Joab (II Sam. 15–18); (3) the formation of a court party in favor of Adonijah (I Kings 1:5–10); (4) the formation of an opposition and the harem intrigue in favor of Solomon, resulting in the latter's unction as king while David was still living (I Kings 1:11–53); and (5) the murder of Adonijah after David's death (I Kings 2:12–25). To be sure, the berith was not entirely without importance, for it kept alive the Israelite identity within the empire, an identity which could break out in rebellion and separation at any time. Absalom, for instance, utilized in his revolt the unrest of Israel caused by the partiality of the King's judicial administration for Judah (II Sam. 15:2–6). And after Absalom's death the revolt continued under the leadership of Sheba, a Benjaminite, one of those "worthless fellows" (20:1) whom on previous occasions we have found in the retinue of future kings. David was probably right when he judged Sheba's revolt more dangerous than Absalom's, for Sheba was an authentic Israelite leader, not handicapped by his relation with the king's clan (20:6). After Solomon's death, furthermore, when Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made king by "all Israel" (I Kings 12:1), Israel asserted its freedom to negotiate a berith with the heir presumptive. The meeting that had been intended as a ceremonial formality ended as a revolt. With the war cry

> What portion have we in David?
> We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
> To your tents, O Israel
> Now see to your own house, O David!

Israel left the empire. The act of separation inevitably raised the question who had left whom; and the answer was not the same north and south of the new border. The Judaite legitimists who ultimately edited the Biblical narrative were certain that Israel had broken away from "Israel": "So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day" (I Kings 12:19). But in Deuteronomy 33:7 there is preserved a northern prayer:

> Hear, Yahweh, the voice of Judah,
> and bring him in to his people!

The confusion suggested by the sentence that Israel broke away from "Israel" did not escape the contemporaries and it worried the later historians. The Davidic Empire was pragmatically a foundation in its own right. Israel could join it in ill grace; it could revolt against it under a native leader; it could finally break away from it; but David's foundation existed, whatever Israel felt about it. Nevertheless, the new political entity was not much of a power in pragmatic politics without Israel. And even worse, its legitimacy was doubtful when the Israel from which it had borrowed its symbolism openly rejected it. David had a shrewd politician's understanding for the precariousness, in both respects, of his foundation. He carefully propped the legitimacy of his succession to Saul's kingship over Israel by keeping Michal in his harem; he insisted on the formal acceptance of his rule by Israel, through the berith at Hebron; he even had himself anointed a second time to make sure that his already existing kingship was really a kingship over Israel; he developed, in the Michal episode, the notion of a *translatio imperii* by Yahweh from the house of Saul to himself and his successors; and he was worried more about the revolt of Sheba the Benjaminite than about the outburst of sedition and murder in his own family. But no amount of understanding could change the fact that Israel was the Chosen People. The confederate Hebrew clans were Israel in that Yahweh was their God; and Yahweh was the God of Israel. Any conflict between Israel and the Davidic foundation stirred up the crucial question: was Yahweh with Israel, or was he with David?

The problem was not resolved until, with the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel disappeared as a rival, so that Judah could not only claim Yahweh for itself but also inherit the history of Israel as its own. Only then was the field free for the paradigmatic elaboration of a symbolism whose initial construction can be traced back to the conflict of David's time. The Either-Or of Israel and David could be overcome only by the assumption that Yahweh's choice of Israel included the choice of the house of David as its ruler, that the Berith of Yahweh with his people was at the same time a Berith with the house of David for perpetual kingship. The beginnings of the construction can be discerned in David's notion of a *translatio imperii,* developed in the Michal episode (II Sam. 6:21–22),

in so far as Yahweh was interpreted in these verses not as the god of Israel only but also of the kingship, as well as of the order of its succession, over the people of Yahweh. And the historian of I Kings 12:19 went one step further when he destroyed the idea of the theopolity that had prevailed in the time of Saul and Samuel. In the earlier reign Israel's call for a king was still a revolt against Yahweh; now, at the time of Solomon's death, the rejection of the king meant not a return to Yahweh, but a new rebellion against Yahweh in the person of his royal representative. From the Philistine wars and the Davidic victories there emerged the experience of a Chosen King who, in case of conflict, took precedence from the Chosen People. Yahweh was with Israel when Israel was with David and his house. The king became the mediator of Yahwist order in the same sense in which a Pharaoh was the mediator of divine order for his people.

The lines along which the construction would have to move, thus, were clear even by the time of David. But no source which can be reliably dated as contemporary seems to have taken the decisive step. As in the case of the David-Bathsheba story, the solution was elaborated in a Nathan episode, in II Samuel 7.[5] The nature of the episode as an elaboration is assured by its position. It follows immediately the story of David's dance before the ark and his answer to Michal, which belongs to the oldest stratum of traditions in the Second Book of Samuel. David's claim to be prince of Israel by Yahweh's appointment is the theme taken up by the word of Yahweh, as communicated by Nathan (II Sam. 7:8b–9):

> I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep,
> that you should be prince over my people, over Israel.
> And I have been with you, wherever you have gone, and
> I have destroyed all your enemies from before you.
> And I will make you a great name like the name of the
> great who are in the earth.

The promise to David, then, was linked with the promise to Israel (10):

> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them,
> that they may dwell in their own place, and they shall be disquieted
> no more.

And, finally, the two promises to David and Israel were blended in a formula that from now on forever should be associated with the name of Yahweh (26):

> Yahweh of the hosts is god over Israel;
> and the house of your servant David shall be established before you.

[5] Cf. the parallel account, with slight variations, in I Chronicles 17.

The word (*dabar*) of Yahweh, spoken through the mouth of the prophet, had the character of a covenant with David, though the term berith did not occur in II Samuel 7. That this, however, was the meaning intended was confirmed by II Samuel 23:5: "For he has made with me an everlasting *berith*, ordered in all things and secure." Yahweh's Berith with Israel had been expanded to comprise the house of David.

§ 4. David and Jerusalem

David's kingship, as will have become clear, differed fundamentally from Saul's. In the case of Saul the royal institution developed out of the charismatic leadership of the Israelite Confederacy; and the transition from leadership in an emergency to permanent rule, while it seriously disturbed the symbolism of the theopolity, gave rise to no more than the theocratic problems. In the case of David kingship developed out of the leadership of a professional army which could be used for or against Israel. The Davidic kingship was the institutional form of a conquest; and this new royal form, in the process of acquiring the larger part of the Syriac civilizational area as its imperial body, followed its own laws of symbolization, on principle not different from the forms developed in the neighboring Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. The language of the imperial symbolism was determined by the most important event in David's career, that is, by the conquest of the Jebusite Jerusalem and the need to come to terms, shared by every Near Eastern conqueror and empire builder, with the principal god of the newly acquired territory, in his case with the El Elyon of the new capital.

The Davidic form, however, developed unique characteristics, since it was diverted from an evolution toward pure cosmological symbols by the fusion of Jebusite forms with the noncosmological Yahwism of Israel. The meeting between the high-god of the Syriac civilization and the god of the Chosen People resulted in a syncretistic cult. El Elyon and Yahweh blended into a god who retained the characteristics of Israel's Yahweh while acquiring from El Elyon the features of the *summus deus* of a cosmological empire.[6] The exploration of this new syncretistic form has begun only recently and the debate is still in flux. A well-rounded picture of

[6] For the blending of the two gods and the Davidic syncretism see Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Uppsala, 1943), 175: ". . . David, the actual and intentional founder of Israelite sacral kingship in the real sense of the term and of the 'syncretistic' royal official religion." Cf. Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet*, I, 138 ff.

the state of the problem would require a monograph. In the present context we shall restrict ourselves to the most important sources and their implications.

In a study of the imperial symbolism David and Jerusalem are inseparable, because the symbolism of the conqueror is involved in that of the conquest.

The question who David was has been a burning issue in Old Testament science ever since it has become certain that "David" was originally not a proper name but designated a military function, a royal office, and perhaps even a divinity.[7] In the Mari Texts we find frequently the term *dawidum* with the meaning of a "general" or "troop commander."[8] While in the face of these texts alone there can hardly be a doubt that David adopted the term as his name, the opinions diverge with regard to the occasion and the time of the event. Noth conjectures that the title may go back to the time of David's command of a mercenary troop and was transformed into a name at an indeterminate later time, while Johnson is sure that "only after the capture of Jerusalem" was Saul's successor known "by what may be interpreted as a divine name."[9] We are inclined to agree with the view that the conquest of Jerusalem was the occasion for elaborating the imperial symbolism, including the king's name, and endowing it with official sanction—even if the name should have been applied to David by his entourage or by the people at large before that event—because the imperial cult, of which numerous liturgies and hymns are extent in the Psalms, must have been created at some time and the period following the capture of Jerusalem is the most likely one. Nevertheless, a consensus in this matter will hardly be achieved in the near future, for a number of reasons. Above all, the narrative is silent on the measures which must have been taken at the time; and, as a consequence, we do not even know what David's original name was.[10] And the matter is further complicated by the range of meaning which the

[7] Sigmund Mowinckel, *Han som kommer* (Copenhagen, 1951), 45.

[8] *Archives Royales de Mari.* Publiées sous la direction de André Parrot et Georges Dossin. XV. *Répertoire Analytique des Tomes I à V.* Par Jean Bottéro et André Finet. (Paris, 1954.) In the "Lexique," p. 200, *s.v. dawidum* are given more than twenty references to the term.

[9] Noth, *Geschichte Israels,* 165. Aubrey R. Johnson, "The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus," in S. H. Hooke (ed.), *The Labyrinth* (London, 1935), 81.

[10] If the tradition of the single combat between David and Goliath is reliable, the alternative version, in II Samuel 21:19, in which Elchanan performs the feat, will be of interest in this connection. Against the assumption that Elchanan is the original name of David it may be argued, however, that the Elchanan of the story is one of David's *gibborim,* clearly distinguished from David himself.

words derived through vocalization from the consonantal complex *dwd* have in the Semitic languages.[11] In the Mari Texts the *dawidum* designates a military leader; in the Jebusite Jerusalem at the time of the conquest, however, the term was probably "a Canaanite priestly-royal denomination taken over by David."[12] The view is supported by the rubric *ledawid,* which precedes a considerable number of Psalms. The traditional translation of *ledawid* as "of David" or "by David," assuming David as the author, is certainly wrong. The Psalms in question are meant "for David," that is, for the use of the King when he officiates in the cultus. Moreover, they are not meant for the conqueror of Jerusalem in person but for any David, that is, for any of the kings of the Davidic dynasty, including its founder. And, finally, Engnell is quite possibly right when he assumes the *ledawid* to be "an original cultic-liturgical rubric inherited from pre-Israelite Jebusite times with the actual import of 'a psalm for the king.' "[13] All of this, of course, does not preclude that one or the other of the Psalms has David for its author.[14] In addition to the meanings of military commander and king, *dwd,* vocalized *dod,* finally has the meaning of "the beloved one," probably designating "a vegetation deity corporalized in the king."[15] Within the Old Testament the *dod* occurs as applied to Yahweh in the song of Isaiah 5:1. From these variegated materials we tentatively conclude that the name David was assumed by the conqueror of Jerusalem (whatever his original name may have been) for the purpose of symbolizing his position as ruler of the empire under all of its aspects of military commander, priest-king, representative and beloved of the god.

The conquest of Jerusalem was part of David's imperial program.

[11] The consonants *dwd* can be vocalized in several manners, the most important ones for our purpose being *dawid, dod, dodo.* It should be noted that only Chronicles vocalizes unequivocally as *dawid* by inserting a *yodh* after the *waw.* That practice reflects a late, selective intention, for Samuel, Kings, and the Psalms confine themselves to *dwd,* leaving the vocalization open. The pointing of the Masoretic Text accepts the vocalization of Chronicles also for Samuel, Kings, and Psalms. It should be further noted that in the passages on the early feats of David and his *gibborim* there appears an odd number of Dodos. The aforementioned Elchanan is, in II Samuel 23:24, the "son of Dodo of Bethlehem"; and the Eleazar of 23:9 is equally the son of a Dodo. The difficulties and uncertainties of vocalization become apparent when the meaning of the context is in doubt. The passage II Samuel 21:15–16 is translated by RSV as: "David grew weary. And Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giants . . . thought to kill David"; while the Chicago translation has: "Then arose Dodo, who was one of the descendants of the giants, . . . and he thought to slay David."

[12] Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship,* 176.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] On the complicated question of the *ledawid* see Sigmund Mowinckel, *Offersang og sangoffer. Salmediktingen i Bibelen* (Oslo, 1951), 87 ff., 360 ff., and the long Note 31 on pp. 601 ff.

[15] Engnell, *Divine Kingship,* 176.

About this program, as well as about its import for the creation of the Jerusalem cultus, we know today a good deal thanks to the ingenious interpretation of Genesis 14 by Umberto Cassuto, Julius Lewy, and H. S. Nyberg.[16] In Chapter 7, "From Clan Society to Kingship," Genesis 14 was our source for Abram's experience of Yahweh as his personal God and for the transformation of the berith symbol. On that occasion we confined our interpretation to the meaning which the text was intended to have in its present position in the history of the Patriarchs, but at the same time we noted that the story was a literary oddity, in that it represented an independent Jerusalemite tradition and could not be ascribed to any of the major J, E, and P sources. The question why the Abram story was preserved in the peculiar form of a tradition attached to Jerusalem is answered by the scholars just mentioned with the assumption that the text in its present form is a piece of imperial propaganda originating in the time of David.[17] The intervention of Abram on the side of the Canaanite kings against their Mesopotamian enemies had the purpose of legitimatizing the rule of Israel, especially under David, over the conquered peoples. They had formerly been under the dominion of the oriental kings and were liberated by Abram; hence, the conquerors of Canaan, from Moses to David, exercised a right that had belonged to Israel since Abraham.[18] The territorial claims of the Empire were expressed by the extension of Abram's pursuit of the enemy to "Hoba, north of Damascus." [19] The intervention in favor of Lot, the ancestor of Moab and Ammon, had the purpose of reminding Ammonites and Arameans of

[16] Umberto Cassuto, *La Questione della Genesi* (Florence, 1934). Lewy, "Les textes paléo-assyriens et l'Ancien Testament," *loc. cit.*, 29–65. H. S. Nyberg, "Studien zum Religionskampf im Alten Testament," *loc. cit.*, 329–87. The reader should be aware that excellent Old Testament authorities still have their misgivings about the new interpretation. Cf. Albrecht Alt, "Das Koenigtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda," *Vetus Testamentum*, I (1951), 2–22. Alt (p. 18) considers it possible that Jebusite forms were taken over by David, but finds the materials of Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 too thin to furnish a secure foundation for the interpretations put on them.

[17] I should like to stress that the assumption concerning the present form of the text, which I accept, does not affect the interpretation of the Abram story given previously. We have to distinguish in Genesis 14 between (1) an original Abram tradition which is not preserved, (2) the present form, in which the tradition has been couched by the Davidic propaganda, and (3) the return to the Abram element, contained in the present form, by the redactors of the Patriarchal history. Old Testament texts quite frequently have more than one meaning, due to the levels of oral tradition and literary elaboration. The problem of multiple meanings regrettably is not yet fully realized by Old Testament scholars. The discovery of new meanings is, therefore, all too often accompanied by the assumption that meanings previously found were errors of interpretation.

[18] Cassuto, *Genesi*, 372. Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 377.

[19] Cassuto, *Genesi*, 372. Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 360.

their former oppressors and their salvation by Abram: "an Israelite protectorate over these peoples lies in the air." [20] With regard to the relations within the Empire, David recognized Jerusalem and its El Elyon, as had his ancestor Abram, but rejected the recognition of other Canaanite kings, as Abram did in the person of the King of Sodom.[21] Hence, the text can be characterized as "the ideological document, by which David wanted to set forth his right to Jerusalem. The ancestor Abram in Hebron is the cover-figure for the young Jewish tribal king David in Hebron." [22]

The symbolic form which the kingship and the empire had to adopt was intimately connected with the character of Jerusalem as a Jebusite town and the seat of the high-god El Elyon. The Abram story is again the reflection, and perhaps the justification, of David's compromising identification of Yahweh with the Canaanite god, which entailed the acceptance of Jebusite cult forms into the Yahwism of the Empire. Traces of this syncretism can be frequently found in the hymnic literature, as in the Yahweh who is incomparable among the "sons of god" (*bene elohim*) (Ps. 89:7), to whom the surrounding *bene elohim* ascribe glory and strength (Ps. 29:1), and who is the greatly terrific *El* in the secret council of his divine entourage (Ps. 89:8). This Yahweh-Elyon sits on "the Mount of Assembly, in the farthest end of the north"; and the Babylonian tyranny is described as the attempt to scale the Mountain of God and to become "equal to Elyon" (Isa. 14:12–15). The "city of God" is "the dwelling of Elyon" (Ps. 46:5); and "David" is his first-born, the "Elyon among the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:28).[23] Moreover, El Elyon has the aspects, or hypostases, of Shalem and Zedek, who appear in a supporting position.[24] The name Jeru-shalem itself means the "creation of Shalem"; and Shalim is an old, west-Semitic deity, attested through theophorous names as early as the Kultepe Texts of *ca.* 2000 B.C.[25] That he probably was a wine-god is suggested by Genesis 14:18, where Melchizedek, the king of Shalem and priest of El Elyon offers wine and bread to Abram.[26] El Elyon's aspect of Shalim (Hebrew, *shalom:* prosperity, success, har-

[20] Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 376.

[21] Cassuto, *Genesi*, 374: Israel owes nothing to Canaan. All that Israel possesses is exclusively the gift of Yahweh, who is identified with the El-Elyon of Jerusalem. Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 361.

[22] Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 375.

[23] Johnson, "The Role of the King," *loc. cit.*, 87, 95, 77.

[24] Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet*, I, 119.

[25] Lewy, "Les textes paléo-assyriens," *loc. cit.*, 62.

[26] Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 355.

monious situation, peace, but also a *shalom* war, a war that will lead to the desired peace) is paralleled by Zedek (righteousness). In the Biblical narrative we meet two kings of Jerusalem who bear the theophorous names of Melchi-zedek ("Zedek is my King"; Gen. 14:18) and Adoni-zedek ("Zedek is my lord"; Josh. 10:1, 3). In the hymnic literature Yahweh will speak *shalom* to his people, his *zedek* will go before him, and "*zedek* and *shalom* kiss each other" (Ps. 85). The extraordinary importance which *zedakah* has as the cardinal virtue in the prophets, as well as the realization of Yahweh's kingdom as a realm of peace through a prince of peace, derive from the Jerusalemite El Elyon who at the same time is *shalom* and *zedek*.

The policy of establishing a dominion of Shalem finds its expression in theophorous names. Illuminating are the names of the sons born to David at Hebron (II Sam. 3:2–5; I Chron. 3:1–4) and Jerusalem (II Sam. 5:14–16; I Chron. 3:5–9). Among the Hebron sons we find, aside from names indifferent to our problem, formations with Yahweh such as Adoni-yah and Shephat-yah, while only one of the names, Ab-shalom, is formed with Shalem. Among the Jerusalem sons formations with Yahweh have disappeared entirely, while the preferred combinations are with El (Elishama, Eliyada, Eliphelet) or Shalem (Shelomo).[27] The occurrence of Ab-shalom among the Hebron sons perhaps indicates that David's imperial, syncretistic program was already in preparation before the conquest of Jerusalem itself, during the years in Hebron.[28] Moreover, the same symbolism was also used by the enemies of the Davidic Empire and its successor states. Several of the Assyrian kings combined in their name Shalmanassar the names of Ashur and Shalem, the great divinities of the eastern and western Semites. "In the names Ashur and Shulmanu is contained the whole political program of the Assyrian Empire" to establish a universal state over the eastern and western Semitic peoples.[29] And Shalmanassar V (727–722) became indeed the destroyer of the Kingdom of Israel. The symbolic claim was, finally, renewed after the Exile, when Zerubbabel named his son Meshullam and his daughter Shulamit (I Chron. 3:19).[30]

About the arrangements following the capture of Jerusalem we receive only scanty information from the narrative, and even this must be

[27] Lewy, "Les textes paléo-assyriens," *loc. cit.*, 62. Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 373 ff.
[28] Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet*, I, 139. [29] Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 353.
[30] Franz M. T. Boehl, "Aelteste Keilinschriftliche Erwaehnung der Stadt Jerusalem und ihrer Goettin?" *Acta Orientalia*, I (Leiden, 1923), 80.

interpreted in the light of the symbolism that pervades other sections of the Bible. We hear neither about a destruction of, or even severe damage to, the city in the course of the conquest, nor about an extermination or decimation of the population—though its composition must have been strongly affected by the influx of the Davidic court officials and of the military and administrative personnel. The narrative thus offers no reason to assume that Jerusalem after the conquest was not substantially the same Jebusite city it had been before. Of the institutional changes the priestly appointments are of interest. David made several of his sons priests, though we do not learn of whom or of what temple; specifically named as priests are Zadok and Abiathar (II Sam 8:16–18). The latter two were obviously of the highest rank, and both officiated with the ark (II Sam. 15:24–29). Of Abiathar we know that he belonged to the family of Eli, the priest of the Yahweh sanctuary at Shiloh. In Zadok Nyberg wants to recognize the last priest-king of Jerusalem, who abdicated in favor of David and was rewarded with the priesthood. The suggestion has much to recommend itself, especially in that it would explain the role assigned to Melchizedek, the ancestor of Zadok, in the Abram story of Genesis 14.[31] In evaluating the suggestion one must also consider the respective positions taken by Zadok and Abiathar on occasion of Solomon's succession to the throne. Abiathar supported Adoniyah, while Zadok took the part of Solomon: it looks as if Yahwist and Zadokite factions had formed at the court with the result that, after the accession of Solomon, Zadok could get rid of his Yahwist rival in the priesthood (I Kings 2:26–27). With Abiathar's banishment to Anathoth the Yahwist dynasty of priests disappeared from Jerusalem.[32]

The Biblical narrative received its final form after the return from the Exile, when the high priests had usurped the former functions of the king. It is not surprising, therefore, that we learn little from the narrative about the king's position in general, and about his function as the high priest in particular, which David and his successors inherited from the Jebusite rulers of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we have a fairly clear picture of the continuity, because a sufficient number of coronation oracles, liturgies, and hymns has survived. Psalm 110 is of special importance for

[31] Nyberg, "Studien," *loc. cit.*, 375.
[32] Geo Widengren, *Psalm 110 och det sakrala kungadoemet i Israel* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1941:7, 1), 21.

(6) The concluding verse of the Psalm, "From the brook will he drink on his way; therefore will he lift up his head," seems to be a ritual direction for the king, who is supposed to drink from the brook Gihon the water of life.

Since an important phase in the creation of a king, the unction, is missing, Psalm 110 is perhaps a fragment. It will be good, however, to reserve judgment in such matters, because there are no independent sources for Israelite rituals; on the contrary the rituals must be reconstructed from sources like Psalm 110. The absence of the unction would be explained if the Psalm were a complete ritual for one day of a ceremony which extended over several days. It would also be explained if it were a ritual for the anointed David, who on this occasion entered into the cosmological symbolism of the Jerusalem priest-kings. Whatever the precise nature of the ritual in question may be, it shows conclusively how the imperial symbolism of the cosmological civilizations entered Israel by way of the Jebusite succession.

§ 5. The Imperial Psalms

The principal source for the imperial symbolism in the wake of David's foundation is the Psalter. The discovery of this source, however, is so recent, and the debate about its nature is so strongly in flux, that we cannot proceed to a presentation of the symbols themselves without first clarifying our own position in the matter. This is especially necessary in view of the fact that the very terminology of "imperial Psalms" and "imperial symbolism" is not the usage of the literature on the subject but our innovation.

1. *The Nature of the Psalms*

The discovery that the Psalms are not original expressions of personal or collective piety written in postexilic or perhaps even post-Maccabaean times, but derive from hymns, liturgies, prayers, and oracles to be used in the cult of the pre-exilic monarchy, is one of the important events, perhaps the most important one, in the Old Testament study of the twentieth century. While the discovery has by now been almost generally accepted,[35] the exploration of details, far from being concluded, furnishes

[35] The principal exceptions are American: M. Buttenwieser, *The Psalms. Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago, 1938), and R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old*

by Yahweh on this occasion happens to be an Egyptian coronation formula. The juxtaposition of the two form elements (as for the moment we shall say neutrally) is further complicated by the fact that on occasion of the Exodus from Egypt, Yahweh had declared Israel to be his first-born son, in opposition to the Pharaonic sonship. Hence, the declaration of the king as the son of God not only introduced the Egyptian symbolism, but also affected the sonship of Israel. A number of questions inevitably suggest themselves: Has Israel now ceased to be the son of God? Or has an order of the Pharaonic type been reimposed on Israel, by a new dispensation? Or is the monarchy perhaps the alembic in which Israel will be transformed into the remnant that is fit to enter into a new Covenant with Yahweh? Such questions will occupy us in the further course of this study. For the present they are raised only in order to suggest that the history of Israel rather than the text of the Old Testament is the region in which the issue is located.

The "transformation of the mythological elements," or at least of their "essential form," is not an issue on the level of literature. The Nathan prophecy, or the Psalms, give rise to the thorny problems precisely because they contain the mythical elements without any transformation. We shall not be surprised, therefore, that the efforts of Kraus to resolve the problem through text interpretation have meager results. With regard to the symbols of the "son" who is "begotten" by Yahweh (Ps. 2:7) just as the Pharaoh is by the sun-god, he can only persuasively plead that such "concepts are hardly to be understood in a physical or mythical sense." Once they are placed in the Israelite context, they are "adequate expressions" for the prophetic institution of the King; and, even more, they "point toward the creative act of Yahweh's word." [70] That is all. The text interpretation does not carry us beyond the assurance that mythical symbols don't mean what they mean when they occur in the Old Testament.

In order to overcome the impasse, we must abandon all attempts to harmonize the text. Both the historical and cosmological symbols must be accepted at their face value as the expressions of the corresponding experiences of order; and it must be recognized, consequently, that the Davidic Empire, as well as its Israelite and Judaite successor states, were built on conflicting experiences of order. How such a composite order can function at all is not a question of the "subordination" of one set of

[70] Kraus, *Die Koenigsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament*, 69 ff.

symbols to the other one through the interpretative skill of contemporary Old Testament scholars, but of the balance of the conflicting experiences in the Israelite society from the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C. The history of Israel must be examined if we want to know whether the motivations of action, originating in the conflicting experiences whose coexistence is conclusively proven by the symbols, were held in such balance that the order remained stable. Only the actions of individuals or groups can indicate the relative vigor of the experiences, as well as the corresponding strength or loss of substance of the symbols.

We do not have to engage in profound research in order to find the indexes of the conflict. In the ninth century, for instance, when the cosmological form of kingship in the Northern Kingdom threatened to take final precedence of Yahwism in the cult, the prophetic revolt against the Omrides revealed the strength of the historical form. And as far as Judah is concerned, the David Covenant and the Sinai Covenant were in permanent conflict throughout the period of the monarchy, with wave after wave of reform movement which reasserted the Sinaitic foundations of the old theopolity against the ascendancy of kingship. The tension between "divine kingship" and the Sinaitic tradition came to an end only with the kingship itself. And by that time there had already emerged from the conflict the indications of a new type of order, in the prophetic symbols of the remnant, the new Covenant, and the Messiah of Yahweh. The conflicts of this nature are difficult to overlook in the history of Israel, and they have, of course, not escaped the German scholars. On the contrary, they have contributed brilliantly to their exploration.[71] Nevertheless, it has not yet been seen that here lies the answer to the questions which defy treatment on the level of literary criticism.

6. *Conclusion*

Our own position with regard to the various issues has been intimated on the occasion of their emergence. We shall now bring the scattered remarks into focus by recalling an early study by Wensinck on the subject of cosmological symbolism.[72] Wensinck had seen that each New Year is

[71] Cf. Leonard Rost, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, LXXII (Leipzig, 1947). For the reform waves in Judah see Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel*, 70 ff., 82, 90. Of particular importance are the *Deuteronomium-Studien* of Gerhard von Rad, which reveal the non-Jerusalemite landed gentry as the social force behind the Deuteronomic reform (p. 43).

[72] A. J. Wensinck, "The Semitic New Year and the Origin of Eschatology," *Acta Orientalia*, I (Leiden, 1923), 158–99.

a memorial and repetition of Creation. Order is not an eternal status of things, but a transition from chaos to cosmos in time. Once created, order requires attention to its precarious existence, or it will relapse into chaos. In the New Year festivals are concentrated the cults which restore order under all its aspects: The order of the world under the rule of the creator god; the renewal of the cycle of vegetation; the foundation and restoration of the Temple; the coronation of the King and the periodic restoration of his ordering power. The drama of transition from chaos to cosmos, which draws its primary symbols from the vegetation cycles, is therefore a form that can be applied wherever a problem of order is at stake. As the principal examples of its application in the Old Testament Wensinck enumerates the story of Creation, the Exodus from Egypt and the passing through the Red Sea, the wandering in the Desert and the conquest of Canaan, the Babylonian captivity and the return from the Exile, the prophetic visions of a destruction of the world and its renewal through Yahweh. More subtly he finds the form applied to the prophetic writings with their sequence of prophecies of doom and blessedness, as well as to the figure of the Suffering Servant who emerges in triumph from humiliation. And the prophetic application of the form, finally, inspires Wensinck to the definition that "eschatology is in reality cosmology applied to the future."

While the formulations of Wensinck were frequently unprecise, his vision was admirable. From his study we can reap the enduring insight that the symbolic forms of the cosmological empires and of Israel are not mutually exclusive. Although each of the great forms has an organizing center of experience of its own, they are parts of a continuum in so far as they are linked by the identity of the order of being and existence which man experiences, on the scale of compactness and differentiation, in the course of history. Neither does the cosmological form become senseless when the organizing center of symbolization has shifted to the experience of God's revelation to man, nor does the history of the Chosen People become senseless with the advent of Christ. The ritual renewal of order, one of the symbolic elements developed within the cosmological civilizations, for instance, runs through the history of mankind from the Babylonian New Year festival, through Josiah's renewal of the Berith and the sacramental renewal of the sacrifice of Christ, to Machiavelli's *ritornar ai principij*, because the fall from the order of being, and the return to it, is a fundamental problem in human existence. Once the adequate ex-

pression for an experience of order has been developed within the cosmological form, it does not disappear from history when divine revelation becomes the organizing center of symbolic form. For within the historical form created we must distinguish between the area of experience which is more immediately affected by revelation and the much larger area which remains relatively unaffected. The relation between God and man requires new symbols for its adequate expression, such as the *dabar* (the word of God), the *nabi* (the revealer of the word), the *berith* (the covenant), the *da'ath* (the knowledge of God), and so forth. But the conditions of existence in the world, such as the celestial and vegetational cycles, birth and death, the rhythm of the generations, the work to sustain life, the necessity of governmental organization, remain what they were and do not require new symbolization. A large part of the cosmological symbolism will therefore be received into the historical form, though that transmission without transformation is liable to produce tensions within the new symbolic form. We have noted the conflicts of this type in the tension between Sinai Covenant and David Covenant.

In the light of these observations, the irruption of the "oriental myth" into the "order of Israel" will appear more intelligible and less disturbing than it does in the debate on the Psalms. We must realize that what we briefly call the "order of Israel" is the history of a society, held together by a core of ethnical identity and the forming power of the Sinaitic revelation. Within the course of its history, now, the order of that society has undergone remarkable changes. It was originally created by the Sinai Covenant. And the Berith was somewhat extraordinary under the aspect of order, for it provided for the right relation between God and man, as well as for the relations between the members of the Chosen People, but made no provision whatsoever for a governmental organization that would secure the existence of the people in the power field of pragmatic history. This gap was now filled by the organization of David's conquest in the wake of the Philistine wars. And since the symbolism emanating from the Covenant center had not extended beyond the range just indicated, the cosmological symbolism poured into the vacuum left by the Covenant.

This problem of the vacuum left by the Covenant must not be glossed over by the language of a genuinely Israelite order that emanated from the Sinai Covenant, and of foreign elements that entered with David's kingship. For such a distinction, perhaps motivated by theological or "religious" concerns, implies that the Covenant provided a complete

order for a society. The conditions of existence in the world, which in fact were sorely disregarded in the Covenant order, would then be considered factors of reality which can be changed in such a manner that the existence of a society under the Covenant, and nothing but the Covenant, will become historically possible. If we take that position, however, we have introduced the prophetic vision of a new mankind in a realm of peace into the premises of our interpretation. And that is impermissible in a critical philosophy of order and history.

Hence, we shall deal with the Psalms under the aspect not of an intrusion of "oriental" elements into the existent order of Israel but of the completion, through governmental institutions, of an order that was about to cease to exist because the conditions of existence had as yet not found their place in the order of revelation. These institutions were provided by the Davidic Empire, and their symbolism is consequently as much a part of the complete order of "Israel" as is the Covenant. We shall speak, therefore, of the "imperial symbolism" and, in so far as that symbolism can be found in them, of the "imperial Psalms." This terminology will have to take precedence of such categories as the "Royal Psalms," which have their origin in literary criticism. All other questions, important as they are in their own right, will be considered secondary to the function which the symbols have in the imperial sector of Israelite order. The fact, for instance, that the symbolism of Empire and Kingship is cosmological in nature must be accepted as a matter of course, since a king like the other nations had was the supplement to the Covenant order which Israel not only wanted but badly needed in order to survive. The question of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Ugaritic parallels is of minor interest, because the symbolism has its origin not in literature but in the exigencies of imperial existence in the world. The much debated question whether the Enthronement Songs really have their function in a cult of the monarchy becomes less burning because a symbolic ramification more or less does not affect the principle of the matter. The presumption will be that imperial symbols have their origin in the imperial order, unless the sources clearly indicate another place. The following selection of representative examples from the Psalms can, therefore, be brief. They have only to demonstrate the appearance of the cosmological symbolism within the order of Israel, in preparation for the study of the ensuing conflicts.

The indigenous Israelite problems of the imperial symbolism begin *after* the fusion of the Sinaitic order with the Davidic kingship. On the

one hand, the symbols exert the pressure of their cosmological compactness to bring Israel nearer to the point where it becomes a nation like the others. On the other hand, the center of the Sinaitic revelation exerts pressure to differentiate the compact meaning of the symbols so that they will fit into the historical form. On this differentiating power of the historical form we must reflect in conclusion, because it has strongly affected the meaning of the Psalms. The opening phrase of the Enthronement Songs, the *Yahweh malak,* will illustrate the problem.

The *Yahweh malak* (*e.g.*, Ps. 93) is translated by the King James Version summarily as "The Lord reigneth!"—and the translation is not wrong. Nevertheless, the original meaning has to be rendered as "Yahweh has become King!", right here and now in the cult of Yahweh's enthronement which the faithful in the time of the monarchy attended. Nobody can say, however, to what extent the phrase in the perfect tense was loaded, for the attendants of the cult, with the differentiated understanding that "Yahweh has become King!" in the ritual renewal of his cosmic rule, because "Yahweh is King!" in eternity. The symbols are compact indeed, and they carry the meaning of a divine force that is both eternally beyond the world and, in a rhythm of defeat and victory, within the world. Moreover, the rule in eternity cannot only differentiate from the compact meaning but separate from it entirely. The average reader of the King James Version will hardly have heard of the "cult-functional conception" of the Psalms and be blissfully unaware of the original cult meaning of the *Yahweh malak*. And, finally, nobody can say with certainty at which point in the history of Israel the *Yahweh malak* in the sense of a present rule of the God over his Chosen People has begun to taste bitter on the tongue of the singer who suffered the misfortunes of Judaite history, and out of despair arose the hope that someday Yahweh would be really the king of his people in a perfect realm of peace. That would be the point at which the ritual renewal of Yahweh's rule in the cosmological sense began to shift into the eschatological hope of a restoration of order, never in need of renewal, at the end of time.

The connection between cosmology and eschatology was seen by Wensinck and expressed in such formulas as: eschatology is "a cosmogony of the future." [73] Mowinckel made the connection the main issue of his *Psalmenstudien II*, which bears the subtitle "The Enthronement Festival of Yahweh and the Origin of Eschatology." He summarized his results

[73] *Ibid.*, 170. Cf. the previously quoted formula, *ibid.*, 198.

in the following two theses: (1) The contents of eschatology stems from the cultic Enthronement Festival; and (2) eschatology has developed by moving into an indeterminate future what originally were the immediate consequences, realized in the course of the year, of the annual enthronement of Yahweh.[74] The realm of God, originally a cultic presence to be renewed every year, has finally become the eschatological realm of God at the end of days.[75] Wensinck, while he had seen the connection, did not touch the question why anybody should "apply cosmology to the future" and thereby produce eschatology. Mowinckel went one step further and described what happened to the cosmological symbols as their "historization," but he did not explore the question why the myth was historized in Israel but not elsewhere.[76] Gerhard von Rad, finally, with his unerring sensitiveness for problems, warned against the language of "historization," because history is in Israel a primary factor.[77] We can now formulate the problem as the unfolding of meanings implied in the compact symbols when they enter the historical form of Israel. When the revelation of the transcendent God has become the experiential center of order and symbolization, the transcendental implications of the compact symbols are set free; and correspondingly the volume of meaning in the symbols shrinks until the ritual renewal of order in time becomes a prefiguration of its ultimate restoration in eternity.

§ 6. The Imperial Symbolism

The symbolism of the imperial order is an amalgamate of Yahwist with cosmological symbols drawn from the Canaanite environment, as well as from the neighboring imperial orders. With regard to the principal source of Israelite imperial institutions, liturgies, and coronation rituals, opinions are shifting, parallel with the increasing knowledge of the surrounding civilizations, from Babylonian and Egyptian to Ugaritic. More recently the understandable enthusiasm for Ugaritic sources has encountered the warning of Gray: "It has been too freely assumed that the Hebrew kingship was modelled on a Canaanite prototype." [78] For king-

[74] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II*, 226.
[75] On the realm of God as cultic presence cf. *ibid.*, 213.
[76] *Ibid.*, 214.
[77] Von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*, 20.
[78] John Gray, "Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice," *Vetus Testamentum*, II (1952), 219.

He has pity on the poor and the needy,
And the lives of the needy will he save.
From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
And precious is their blood in his sight.

Yahweh had become the *summus deus* of a cosmological empire, while Israel had merged into an empire people under a Pharaonic mediator from the house of David. The order of the Covenant, to be sure, had not been abolished; but the beauty of the Psalms must not deceive us about the change which the order of Israel had undergone since the Confederacy of Deborah's time. A tension had been created through the introduction of a rival experience and its symbolization that troubled the history of the Kingdom to its end. And for the Davidic and Solomonic period, at least, it is justifiable to speak of a decomposition of the old Yahwist order.

Nevertheless, the Psalms have an importance far beyond that of symptoms of the new tension in the order of the Kingdom. Our selection of examples not only maps out the topics of imperial symbolism but also conveys the future development with which they abound. For the imperial Psalms were included in the hymnbook of the Second Temple, not as souvenirs of a dead past, but as the expression of Messianic hope. As the Davidic Empire had emerged from Israel and gained a life of its own, so from the Davidic Empire emerged the symbol of the Lord's Anointed, of Yahweh's Messiah, with a life of its own. The fading memories of the mundane climax could be filled with new substance from the eschatological hopes for a spiritual savior king who would deliver Israel forever from the tribulations by its enemies. To be sure, as Martin Buber has seen rightly, that was still the great fall from existence as a Chosen People in the historical present under its God, but certainly it also was one step closer to a humanity in the historical present under Christ. From the first century before the Christian Era there is extant a collection of hymns, under the title of the Psalms of Solomon. Psalm 17, written after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in 54 B.C., has preserved the last phase of the Messianic hope in its Davidic, pre-Christian form: [84]

See to it, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David,

[84] R. H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, II, *Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford, 1913), 647–51. The following quotations in the text have been slightly altered in the light of the translation by Paul Riessler in *Altjuedisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Augsburg, 1928).

start where a respectable society has difficulties even ending. Nevertheless, the mystery of Israel's start at the wrong end of evolution must be accepted, the progressivist thesis that first things come always first notwithstanding. In this one case the sequence actually was reversed; and the reversal was the cause of Israel's extraordinary creativity in the realm of symbols. For the disorderly beginning of existence with a leap in being provided the experiential motivations for the people to respond to its gradual descent into Sheol with the creation of symbols that would preserve its attunement with transcendent being on each new level of mundane involvement. Each step of further adjustment to the pragmatic conditions of existence had to be measured by the standards of the initial existence as the Chosen People under God. The result was something in the nature of a model experiment in the creation of symbols of mundane existence under the conditions of an already enacted leap in being.

In the ninth century, the exigencies of the power game brought the experiment to an end. The diplomacy of the Omrides had to compromise with the cosmological order of the surrounding powers to such a degree that a solution to the problem could no longer be found within the range of Yahwist symbols. At the risk of destroying the conditions of Israel's mundane existence, the response had to be a revolutionary return to the origins. The archaic Israel reasserted itself in the political revolt of Elijah, Elisha, and the Rechabites. On the level of pragmatic history the movement was a ruinous reaction that broke all hopes for a recovery of Israelite power; on the spiritual level, however, it preserved Israel from sinking insignificantly into a morass of ephemeral success.

On the following pages we shall first sketch the pragmatic situation that faced Israel with the dilemma of spiritual or worldly suicide. We shall then deal with the Book of the Covenant as our principal source for the general mood of discontent with the internal development of Israelite society, and finally with the revolt against the Omride dynasty.

§ 2. The Pragmatic Situation

When Israel withdrew from the Empire, Judah was left in possession of the capital, its administration, and the Davidic dynasty, and continued to exist with a minimum of internal difficulties. The Israelites themselves, however, were faced with the task of organizing themselves as a state. It was a throwback to pre-imperial times; and the social forces that could

One must not press a poorly preserved text too far. Still, the very mutilation in the Masoretic Text indicates the important point that was the source of embarrassment. For the God who manifested himself by setting the sun in the heavens, while remaining himself in darkness, could hardly be anybody but the God of the Amon Hymns of Dynasty XIX, Amon the "Hidden," who was Re in face. This identification should not be understood crudely as a "reception" of Amon by Solomon, but rather as a meeting of the Yahweh who approached a cosmic divinity with the Amon whose nature was experienced as "hidden" behind all cosmic manifestations. With due precautions one can say, therefore, that Solomon's Temple, while built for Yahweh, was built for a god approximating in nature the Amon of the New Kingdom.[8]

When all is considered, the connections between the Davidic Empire and Egypt must be assumed to have been more intimate than would appear from the sources in their present state. On the court level, though not in popular cults, a *rapprochement* between Yahweh and Amon had been achieved that could well be construed from the Egyptian side as a suzerainty over Solomon's domain. When the King died, an important realignment of forces must have taken place, now covered by an unrelieved, suspicious silence. For Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (I Kings 11:3). Even if we make generous allowance for exaggeration, there must have been hordes of sons, one or more of them perhaps from "Pharaoh's daughter"—and we hear nothing at all about the intrigues and murders that might be expected to surround the succession. Rehoboam, the son of an Ammonite wife, followed his father as if he were the only son living. What had become of the grandsons of Pharaoh, presuming there were any? Had a nationalist court party taken matters in hand and broken the Egyptian connection? We do not know; but whatever had happened ought to have furnished ample reason for an Egyptian intervention.

Into the context of a revolt against the Egyptian influences represented by the Temple must also be placed the cult reforms of Jeroboam

[8] Hubert Schrade, *Der Verborgene Gott* (Stuttgart, 1949), 46 ff. draws attention to the darkness of the Debir in the Solomonic Temple as an unusual feature in the temple architecture of the time, as well as to the debate about light or darkness of the sanctuary in the poems of the Ras Shamra tablets (the relevant passages of the "Poems about Baal and Anath" can be found in Pritchard [ed.], *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 134). It is possible that the Phoenician debate was stirred up by the Amarna Revolt of Akhenaton with its lighting of Egyptian sanctuaries, and that the reaction accentuated darkness. But that is a matter for archaeologists to explore.

in Israel. He set up two golden bull calves, the one in Beth-El, the other in Dan, as the true gods who brought Israel up from Egypt, in rivalry with the Temple at Jerusalem (I Kings 12:26–33). These bulls, the thrones of the invisible Yahweh who is present wherever he chooses to be, were probably not a defection from Yahwism, as the Judaite historians presented the matter, but on the contrary a protest against the defection of the Temple and a return to a purer form of Yahwism. The adamant silence with regard to the Egyptian elements in Solomon's reign would have a further weighty motive if the separation of Israel had been more than a clan rivalry and expression of economic discontent, if it had been a genuine Yahwist revolt against the foreign god in the Temple. It could have been a revolt similar in motivation and structure to the Israelite revolt against the cult policy of the Omrides, to which we now must turn.

The Egyptian invasion was a disaster for the cities and peoples in its path, but it receded and was not renewed. The real danger was brewing in the East with the spasmodic increase of Assyrian power. After the expansion of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries Assyria had been seriously reduced in power, economic wealth, and territory through the events subsequent to the fall of the Hittite Empire. The recovery under Tiglath-pileser I (1116–1093) was followed by a century and a half of wars against Aramean nomads who threatened Assyria with extinction. In 932 began the first western expansion under able rulers, carrying the wars into the area of Syria, Palestine, and Phoenicia. This was the period in which the Syriac alliance, forged by the Omrides, fought the battle of Karkar, in 853, with a measure of success, though Jehu had to pay tribute to Shalmanezer III in 841. From 782–745 the Syriac states had some peace because the less energetic Assyrian kings of this period had difficulties in warding off the rising power of Urartu. In 745, with Tiglath-pileser III, began the second great expansion toward the west; it brought the end to Israel when Samaria was conquered by Sargon II in 721.

At the time of Omri's accession to the kingship in 886, two generations of wars among the clans of Israel, aggravated by the wars against Judah in the south and the Arameans in the north, would have convinced a lesser man that energetic measures had to be taken in order to save Israel from extinction, especially since the Assyrian power was tangibly growing even if it had not yet reached out toward the seacoast.

The alliance of Tyre, Israel, and Judah would have been a power of some weight indeed, strong enough to become attractive for the other peoples of the Syriac area and to form a nucleus of resistance against Assyria and Egypt. It certainly proved its value on occasion of Karkar. Whether it would have held together under the pressure of repeated Assyrian attacks, or could have been developed into a strong empire, is doubtful.[10] But the question was never put to the test because of the resistance aroused in Israel by the international form of the alliance. For the guardian of the alliance (its *baal berith*) was the Baal of Tyre on an equal footing with the Yahweh of Samaria. When the daughter of the priest-king of Ashtart came to Israel, a personal sanctuary of the Baal was not enough. The political partnership of Yahweh and Baal Melqart required an official temple of the Baal in Samaria with a public cult in which the king had to participate (I Kings 16:32–33). And the passage in II Kings 8:18 suggests that an official cult of the Baal was also organized in Jerusalem, when the alliance was extended through the marriage of the King of Judah with Ahab's daughter. On the question of whether the exchange of gods was reciprocal and Yahweh received a cult in Tyre, the sources are silent.[11] The reception of the Baal Melqart as a political god in Israel was a clear break with the idea of a theopolity of the Chosen People under Yahweh. The Solomonic sanctuaries for the foreign wives could be regretted as weaknesses of a king; and the Temple, however Egyptian it may have looked, was still a Temple of Yahweh; but now a foreign god had received public status. If Israel had been threatened with the loss of its ethnical identity in the Davidic Empire, it now was threatened with the loss of its spiritual identity in the Phoenician

[10] The power of Phoenicia, at the time very high, was rapidly waning. The great age of Phoenician colonization, from the twelfth century onward, was drawing to its end. The last great foundation was Carthage in 814. Phoenician power was actually shifting westward into the area of the colonies.

[11] Since no further sources are extant, speculations on the structure of the triple-alliance are useless. We have spoken of the "equality" of Yahweh and the Baal Melqart. Such language should mean strictly that the Baal received a public cult in Samaria by the side of the god of the country. How the relationship looked from the Phoenician side we do not know. The temples of Baal Melqart were placed in all Phoenician colonies as the politico-religious guarantee of permanent affiliation with the mother city. It must be considered as possible that the relationship with Samaria was not reciprocal. What from the Omride side was presumably considered a triple alliance with its center in Israel may well have appeared from Tyre to be the political measure of a Mediterranean thalassocracy to protect its trade routes in the Asiatic hinterland against Aramean interruptions. Ethbaal, the proud and energetic founder of a new dynasty, may have looked on Samaria as a valuable inland march of his empire. The assumption of mutuality in the relations, with a cult of Yahweh in Tyre, is reasonable in view of what we know about the Omride policy, but no more than probable.

alliance. The *raison d'état* had brought Israel to the point of losing its *raison d'être*. The revolt, both popular and prophetic, of which Jehu made himself the political and military executor broke out. Its successful conclusion entailed the extermination of the Omrides. The alliance was not only dissolved, but the former partners became bitter enemies, because the relatives of the royal houses of Tyre and Judah had been murdered.

§ 3. The Book of the Covenant

In the crisis of the ninth century begins the Israelite concern with the codification of the law in written form. Probably the oldest code extant is the brief collection of commands in the Yahwist (J) account of the Sinaitic legislation, in Exodus 34:17–26. Not much later but considerably more extensive is the Elohist (E) code of Exodus 20:23—23:19, commonly designated as the Book of the Covenant by modern historians.[12]

A study of the Book of the Covenant requires, first of all, a preliminary understanding of the "law" contained in it. For the code was a private undertaking. To be sure, the collection had to be organized by someone who was familiar with the law; and it is therefore reasonable to assume a priest, or a group of priests, as the codifiers. But there is no indication that the task was undertaken at the behest of the royal administration; and certainly the collection was not a statute of the realm

[12] The Book of the Covenant is an object of controversy with regard to (1) its literary structure and genesis, (2) the date of composition of the whole and of its parts, and (3) the origin and date of the contents of the various parts. We cannot avoid the controversial issues altogether, since several of them affect the meaning of the law book and its contents, but we shall confine the discussion in the text to the questions that have a direct bearing on our specific problems. For a fuller analysis see J. M. Powis Smith, *The Origin and History of Hebrew Law* (Chicago, 1931), as well as the literature quoted in the work. The study of Smith is not always the most penetrating, but it conveniently supports its comparisons of the Hebrew with other Oriental codes by appendixes which contain translations of the Code of Hammurabi, the Assyrian Code, and the Hittite Code. For a more judicious analysis of the relations between the Book of the Covenant and the other codes cf. Lods, *Histoire de la Littérature Hébraique et Juive*, 1950, 204–19. Lods should also be consulted for the present state of the controversy and the literature since 1931. Moreover, since the study of Smith, fragments of Babylonian codes antedating the Code of Hammurabi have been published. Their English translations, by Kramer and Goetze, can be found in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. The same collection of texts also contains new translations of the Code of Hammurabi (Meek), of the Assyrian Code (Meek), and the Hittite Code (Goetze). Of special value for the subsequent analysis in the text were Alfred Jepsen, *Untersuchungen zum Bundesbuch* (Stuttgart, 1927), and Albrecht Alt, "Die Urspruenge des Israelitischen Rechts" (1934) in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I (Munich, 1953), 278–32.

spiritual and moral confusion; and in grieving over the state of confusion they develop a technical vocabulary for its description. Men are in a state of ignorance. But it is not an ordinary ignorance, in the sense of not knowing what never was learned. For the children of Israel have heard a good deal of the God whom they now do not know. The ignorance is a forgetfulness. And since God is a being not to be forgotten involuntarily, the want of knowledge is a rejection of God.

In order to appraise the meaning of Hosea's prophecies, we have to recall what appeared in the section on "The Struggle for Empire" as the difference between the Israelite and Hellenic types of symbolization. The idea of the psyche, we said, could not be fully developed in Israel because the problem of immortality remained unsolved. Life eternal was understood as a divine property; afterlife would have elevated man to the rank of the Elohim; and a plurality of elohim was excluded by the radical leap in being of the Mosaic experience. As a consequence, the eroticism of the soul that is the essence of philosophy could not unfold; and the idea of human perfection could not break the idea of a Chosen People in righteous existence under God in history. Instead of philosophy, there developed the construction of patriarchal history, a specific kind of humanism, and ultimately the apocalyptic hope for divine intervention in history.

The prophecies of Hosea reveal the limitations imposed by the initial compactness of Israelite experiences. The prophet tried to describe a society in crisis, and he found the root of the evil in the "want of knowledge" concerning matters divine. Up to this point his analysis was literally the same as Plato's in the *Republic*. Plato, as Hosea, diagnosed the evil as an ignorance of the soul, an *agnoia* concerning the nature of God. But Plato could proceed from his insight to an analysis of the right order of the soul through its attunement to the unseen measure. And he even developed the concept of "theology," in order to speak in technical language of true and false conceptions of divinity. Under the condition of the more compact experiences and symbols in Israel, Hosea could not find the answer to his problems in the attunement of the soul to the divine measure, but had to seek it in a renewed conformity of human conduct to the measure as revealed in the "word" and the "law" of God. Not the advance toward philosophy but the return to the covenant and the law was the Israelite response to the challenge of the crisis.

If the new concern about the covenant and the law is understood as

the response to a crisis of mundane existence, functionally of the same type as the response through philosophy in Hellas, certain problems of Israelite history will become more intelligible. Before the ninth century we hear little of Moses and his work. To be sure, it was alive in the very existence of Israel as a theopolity under Yahweh, as well as in the oral traditions which, beginning with the ninth century, formed the raw material for historiography. Nevertheless, the events of the Mosaic period belonged to the past. The present was concerned with such pressing issues as the occupation of the promised land, the wars with Canaanites and Midianites, the growth of the new Israel in symbiosis with the inhabitants of the country, the friction between the clan society and the charismatic war leaders and kings, the wars with the Philistines, the rise of the Davidic Empire and its dissolution. Moses and the law were distinctly not topics of current interest. Only when the involvement in mundane existence had reached the impasse of the ninth century, when the *raison d'être* of Israel was at stake, did the meaning of Israel's existence become topical. Through the combined work of the historians, prophets, and code makers the meaning of Israel's existence under the revealed will of God was clarified; and the work found its center in the figure of Moses, the original prophet and lawgiver, as the instrument of God in bringing the Chosen People into existence. The prophets could reawaken the sense for the meaning of a people's existence under the will of God. The code makers could express the meaning in systematically organized rules of conduct, taking into account the conditions of the age. And the historians could ascribe the codes to Moses, until the Torah achieved the bulk of the extant Pentateuch. The three types of work—prophetic, legal, and historiographic—were inseparable in the response of Israel, and in its succession of Judah, to the crisis of mundane existence.

In the light of the foregoing reflections we shall now analyze the so-called Book of the Covenant, or rather a text whose precise limits have yet to be established. For the term "Book of the Covenant," in so far as it refers to the text of Exodus 20:23—23:19, is a concept of modern Old Testament philology, which has its good sense in the debates of higher criticism but cannot be used for our purposes. If we want to understand the concern about the "law" in the ninth and eighth centuries, we must accept the structure of the text as intended by the authors of the Biblical narrative. The Book of the Covenant in the

modern philological sense does not form an independent unit of meaning, but is embedded in the Elohist account of the Berith concluded between Yahweh and his people at Mount Sinai. The account comprehends Exodus 19–24. Prophetic sensitiveness, nomoethetic skill, and historiographic imagination have joined forces to create a unit of meaning that must be treated on its own terms.

Within this body of text, in 24:8, occurs the term "Book of the Covenant" which the modern critics have used for their own purposes. As intended by the authors of the narrative it refers to the body of Sinaitic legislation in Exodus 20–23. That body consists of two classes of rules, designated in 24:3 as the "words [*debharim*] of Yahweh" and the "ordinances" (*mishpatim*) or decisions. The legislation itself distinguishes between the two classes in so far as Exodus 20 opens: "And God spoke all these words [*debharim*], saying . . ."; while Exodus 21 opens: "Now these are the ordinances [*mishpatim*], which thou shalt set before them. . . ." The *debharim* of Exodus 20:2–17 are today commonly referred to as the Ten Commandments, or the Decalogue, because in the Yahwist version of the *debharim* their number is expressly given as ten (34:28). The *mishpatim* of Exodus 21:2—22:15 form the nucleus of the law code to which modern usage refers as the Book of the Covenant. The term in the Biblical sense, thus, comprises both the *debharim* and the *mishpatim*.

The meaning of the term in Exodus 24:8, however, seems to be an enlargement of an originally narrower meaning. For in Exodus 24:3 the people take the oath of the covenant on the *debharim* alone; and in 24:4 Moses writes down only the *debharim*, not the *mishpatim*. The Yahwist account of the Sinaitic legislation, furthermore, contains only the *debharim*. And in Exodus 34:27 it refers to the covenant with Israel as made in accordance with the *debharim;* no *mishpatim* are mentioned. Deuteronomy 5:22, finally, insists that Yahweh pronounced the *debharim* "and added no more." From the passages quoted we infer an oral tradition of a Sinaitic Decalogue that was accepted by all of the historical schools. In their historiographic work it could be used to crystallize the essence of Yahwist order according to the lights of the historians and their age. In the realization of the purpose, however, the practice differed. The oldest narrative of the Sinaitic legislation, the Yahwist (J) of Exodus 34, was satisfied to use the Decalogue alone. The youngest one, the Deuteronomist, returned to the practice with a note of criticism. For in between,

will say (20:7): "Thou shalt not invoke the name of Yahweh your God in vain" (that is, for magic practices); and a rule will say (22:18): "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live." In this case the rule concretizes the general command to the level of a *mishpat* but retains the "Thou shalt" of the *dabar*. This peculiar mixed form looks like a lawgiver's way to remind the people of the divine authority behind a *mishpat* (perhaps Saul's?) that has fallen into desuetude. Or the *dabar* says (20:3): "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; and the *mishpat* elaborates (22:20): "Who sacrifices to gods, save to Yahweh alone, shall be destroyed under the ban [*cherem*]." This could be a genuine *mishpat* of high antiquity, but it certainly was not enforced at the time of Israel's official cult for the Baal of Tyre, to say nothing of the general cult practices of the people. Its inclusion among the rules looks like a prophetic protest against the iniquities of the age. Examples of this kind make it probable that the Elohist text of the Sinaitic legislation is not a code of positive law at all, but rather a complex attempt to weave the meaning of the terse *debharim* into concrete rules of social order. For his purpose, we assume, the Elohist historian found various means at his disposition. He could use the four *mishpatim* decalogues, because quite probably they were already collected under the aspect of their conformity with the spirit of the *debharim*, regardless of the enforcement practices of the time. And he could draw on the cultic decalogue that had been used also by the Yahwist historian.

The materials formalized in the recognizable decalogues, however, were not sufficient to execute the plan completely. The want of "kindness" about which Hosea complained required the formulation of counsels beyond the letter of the law. A few examples will reveal the final intentions of the Elohist. "A resident alien shalt thou not ill-treat, nor oppress" (22:21); "If thou lend money to any of my people, any of the poor among you, thou shalt not be toward him like a creditor" (that is, take no interest; 22:25). The rules move on the level of concreteness of the *mishpatim*, and even may have the form of the "if"-law, but they carry no sanction. And the absence of a human sanction is stressed when a divine sanction is attached: "If thou take, take in pledge the cloak of thy neighbor, before the sun goes down shalt thou restore it to him; for it is his only covering, the garment for his skin; wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he cries unto me, I will hear; for I am kind" (22:25–26). In this case the "if"-law with a divine

sanction is further amplified by a reasoned appeal to the moral sensitiveness of the rich man. In still other instances, the reasoning is attached to the command without threats of divine sanction: "Thou shalt not take a bribe [in a law suit]; for a bribe blinds the open-eyed, and perverts the words of the righteous" (23:8). The counsels are concerned with the misery of the poor and the uncharitable conduct of the rich in a community that has split into a wealthy upper class and an impoverished subject population. The rift can be remedied not by enforcement of *mishpatim* but only by return to the community spirit of the *debharim*. To exist as a people under the covenant with Yahweh requires more than obedience to the letter of the law. And the Elohist provides counsels of equity and charity that will, if observed, transform the spirit into concrete social order.

The account of the Sinaitic legislation concludes, in Exodus 23:20–22, with Yahweh's appointment of a Messenger who will go before the people and guard it on its way. "Take heed of him and hearken unto his voice . . . for my name is in him." If the people oppose the voice, there will be no pardon for the offense; if the people heed the voice, Yahweh will be on their side against all enemies. From the words, the ordinances, and the counsels we return to their origin in the present under God created at Mount Sinai. That present has not become past, but is a living present through the Messenger whose voice is with the people—right here and now in the work of the Elohist. The eternal voice speaks always in the present. As it spoke through Moses, so it now speaks through the historian who is lawgiver at the same time and prophet. Through paradigmatic reconstruction the past is re-created as a present. And it is the historian—not the king and his administration—who re-creates Israel's present under Yahweh. The historian's work subtly transfers the authority of Israel's order from the Kingdom to the new carriers of the spirit.

§ 4. The Prophet Elijah

The Yahwist movement against the Omrides found its support in a group of solitary prophets—a support that could be intensified to revolt and incitement to murder. Three of them are known by their names, Elijah, Elisha, and Micajah; two more have remained anonymous. The great spiritual force among them was the prophet Elijah, even though the

general his style. Not only does the eternal call appear in the historical costume of Elijah, but the divine order from which man falls away has to be concretely the Law of Moses. And it is worth noting that here for the first time in Israelite history, as far as sources are extant, the phrase "Law of Moses" is used to designate the Sinaitic legislation. Moses has become the lawgiver in the same symbolic sense in which Elijah has become the messenger. Moreover, the content of Elijah's prophecy, the coming Day of Yahweh, is a divine punishment in form of a political catastrophe in historical time. And the warning itself, finally, is to be understood in historical concreteness, in so far as the Day of Yahweh can be averted, if the people heeds the warning, repents, and returns to the Law of Moses. In 3:24 Malachi lets Yahweh assign to his Messenger the function of a historical savior:

> And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to their sons,
> and the hearts of the sons to their fathers,
> lest I come and smite the land with a ban [curse—*cherem*].

The warning cry of the symbolic Elijah, thus, is richly loaded with historical contents: The voice of the Messenger announces the judgment of Yahweh on his people in the present; and for the future it holds out the alternatives of the Day of Yahweh, if the voice be not heard, or the restoration of the Law of Moses, if the call for repentance have success.

The historical substance of Malachi's symbolism does not permit us, however, to identify the symbolic with the historic Elijah. The prophet of the ninth century can be used by Malachi as a symbol because the historic Elijah was the speaker of a related experience. The historic figures are reasonable, in Hegelian phraseology, because there is reason in history; the texture of history can become the symbolic language for Malachi's experience of judgment because the judgment is present in the texture of history. We have spoken, therefore, of the historical substance that has entered into the symbolism. While this substance, the experience of divine judgment, is associated by Malachi with Elijah, the language in which Elijah expressed it cannot be inferred from Malachi. In order to find the probable form of Elijah, further sources must be considered.

The awareness of alternative symbolisms will be sharpened if we remember that the experience of judgment was not new—certainly not for Malachi, but neither for the Elijah with whom Malachi associates it. The Book of Judges, with its recurrent calls for return to the will of

Listen to him" (Matt. 17:5).[16] When they descended from the mountain, Jesus cautioned his disciples not to divulge what they had seen, until the Son of Man was raised from the dead (17:9). The disciples, however, began to wonder. The Son of God was with them. Why, then, should the scribes say that first Elijah must come? (17:10). The question was answered by Jesus in the Logion 17:11–12:

> Elijah does come, and he is to restore [*apokatastasei*] all things.
>
> But I say unto you: Elijah has come already,
> And they did not recognize him, and did to him at their will.
> And in like manner the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.

The Logion is followed by the Evangelist's information that only then the disciples understood Jesus was speaking to them about John the Baptist (17:13).

The drama of the vision on Mount Tabor and the Logion form together one unit of meaning. The best, though not the most obvious, access to it is given through the structure of the Logion. For that structure, far from being a mere literary device, is a form that grows from the contents conveyed by its means. In the Logion, Jesus first restates the prophecy of Malachi—though with emphasis on the *apokatastasis* wrought by Elijah rather than on the Day of Yahweh; and then with the "But I say unto you," introduces the new meaning of the Elijah symbol. The same structure is to be found in other Logia, in particular in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus first states the old teaching ("You have heard that it was said to the men of old") and then (with the grandiose "But I say unto you") opposes his own message. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, now, the meaning of the opposition is made explicit in Matthew 5:17:

> Do not imagine that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets.
> I have come, not to destroy them, but to bring them to their full meaning.[17]

[16] Goodspeed's translation "He is my Chosen" instead of "In him is my delight" comes perhaps closest to the intended meaning.

[17] No translation of the passage is satisfactory without an explanation. The King James Version has "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill"—which is literal, but leaves us in the dark about the intended meaning. Goodspeed has "enforce"—which leans too much on the legal sense. Rieu has "to bring them to perfection"—which in our opinion comes closer to the sense of saturation, with a meaning already present in the Law and the Prophets, in the Greek *plerosai*. We prefer our rendering in the text.

than the fourth century B.C.) we find the judgment terrible for the persecutors of Israel and Judah, but joyous for all those "who call on the name of Yahweh" (2:32). And those who escape will be set off from those who go to destruction by an outpouring of the spirit (2:28–29):

> It shall come to pass afterward,
> That I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;
> Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
> Your old men shall dream dreams;
> And your young men shall see visions.
> Even upon the manservants and the maidservants,
> In those days I will pour out my spirit.

That is the passage of Joel which Acts 2 resumed in its interpretation of the Pentecostal outpouring of the spirit. No meaning of this nature could be developed from cosmological symbols without the leap in being that was Israel's claim to be the Chosen People.

Whether the threatening day of Yahweh was the creation of Amos or not is an open question. The fact that in his prophecies it occurs for the first time in the extant literature proves nothing either way. The text, by the form of the question in 5:20, suggests that the people whom he addressed were familiar with the threatening variety of the symbol and could be reminded through the question of the less popular meaning. In weighing this matter we must rely on the argument previously used in dealing with the idea of theocracy and its ascription to Samuel. While the paradigmatic ascription could not be considered proof that the historical Samuel had elaborated the idea, the later historian showed considerable insight into the connection between experience and symbol when he discerned the situation of Samuel as a source of experiences which, if articulated, would have to find their expression in the theocratic idea. We face a similar problem with regard to the threatening Day of Yahweh. Malachi associated it paradigmatically with Elijah. The historical Elijah was heightened to the prototypical figure who announced the impending catastrophe. As in the Samuel case, the paradigmatic association is no proof that the historical Elijah created the symbol. But again, the Malachi oracle has well discerned the situation of the ninth century as the likely source of experiences which, if articulated, could be expressed in the symbol of the terrible Day. And as we suggested, in the case of Samuel, that theocratic ideas must have occurred to more than one prophet of the age, so now we assume that in the crisis

of the ninth century more than one prophet in Israel conceived the idea of a Day of a somewhat different complexion than the one expected by the people in their chauvinistic, cosmological defection from Yahweh. For in the logic of symbols the terrible Day was related with the joyous Day as a reaction to it. In so far as the joyous Day with its exuberant expectation of world-rule originated in the Empire and its symbolism, the terrible Day was a distinctly antiroyalist protest. There is no historical situation where it would fit better than in the prophetic revolt of the ninth century.

In postexilic Judaism, as well as in Christianity, Elijah was considered one of the great figures in the drama of God's revelation to man. That much is certain. In order to determine his role more clearly, we shall now list, in systematic order, the main stages in the development of eschatological symbols which in the preceding analysis had to be mentioned incidentally:

(1) The problem of eschatology was given with the ambiguity of Canaan. The Kingdom of God was understood as the establishment of a Chosen People in historical existence in a definite geographical area. In order to disengage the idea of a kingdom that was not of this world from the compact symbol, there had to be eliminated the following components: (a) that a particular people in the ethnic sense was the carrier of the kingdom in history; (b) that the kingdom could be realized through mundane organization of a people; (c) that the kingdom could be realized in history as a continuous state of perfect conduct under the will of God by any human group.

(2) Canaan was put under strain after the Conquest. Peaceful existence of the Chosen People in form of the theopolity proved impossible in the new habitat; and the amalgamation with Canaanites diluted the original Yahwism through various forms of syncretism. The two disturbances of order were connected by the symbolic rhythms of Judges as defection and divine punishment. The idea of peace and prosperity as a reward for good conduct was primitive, to be sure, and even had a touch of magic, but at least the sense of guilt and divine judgment was alive in it.

(3) With the success of kingship and Empire two further elements entered the complex of symbols. On the one hand, the role of the prophet became marked as the guardian of Yahwist order, through Samuel and

Nathan, and the outlines of the theocratic problem appeared. On the other hand, the general defection from Yahwism reached a new low in the tenth century with the transformation of Yahweh into a cosmocrator. To this period we assigned the transformation of the Canaan symbol into a glorious Day of Yahweh that would establish the rule of the Empire people over the nations and the earth.

(4) After the separation of Israel from the Empire, in the ninth century, the defection affected the public cult. That was the critical period, as we suggested, in the formation of the complex of eschatological symbols. The code makers and historians returned to the sources and tried to re-establish the standards of order by which defection could be measured. The "*malakh* of the *berith*" appeared as the permanently present voice of the spirit. And the prophets transformed Israel's Day of cosmic victory and glory into a terrible day of judgment visited by Yahweh on the Kingdom in form of a political catastrophe.

(5) The complex was formed, but in the crisis of the ninth century it was still directed against the dynasty and foreign influences. The revolt against the Omrides, although led by a general, had the support of the people and, in particular, of the Rechabites. The organization of the Kingdom in its specific form was the source of the evil. The people itself was yet guiltless and could be relied upon to realize the state of perfection unless misguided by kings and their foreign wives. In the eighth century, with Amos, began the line of the great prophets who understood that the people itself was guilty. The intoxication with the monarchy was passing and the Chosen People of the premonarchical time came into view again. The terrible Day of judgment was now threatening the people itself. At the same time, in the eighth and seventh centuries, the historians further elaborated the early Patriarchal and Mosaic history, while the code makers concentrated the standards of Yahwist order in the Deuteronomic speeches of Moses.

(6) In the postexilic Malachi, in the fifth century, the elements that had entered into the complex congealed into a pattern. Moses and Elijah became the prototypes of the lawgiver and the prophetic voice. The two Days of Yahweh became the alternatives of Israel's final restoration or destruction. And, what easily might be forgotten, the anonymous "Malachi" was the prophet who combined the symbols of past and future into a new, integral symbol in order to express his sense of defection and judgment in the present.

(7) With Malachi the symbols loaded with historical imagery of past and future had achieved something like a balance. And at their center became visible the eternal present in which the divine-human drama of history was enacted. With the appearance of Jesus, God himself entered into the eternal present of history. The Kingdom of God was now within history, though not of it. The consequences of the Incarnation for the historical order of mankind were not realized at once; and it took some time to find even moderately suitable forms of expression.[19] The symbols of the past lost their dominant position first. In the vision on Mount Tabor, Moses and Elijah talked to Jesus—and then they disappeared, even though Peter was willing to accommodate them as members of a spiritual trinity. The Law and the Prophets were now "fulfilled." The symbols of the future were more tenacious. In the very context of the vision on Mount Tabor, Jesus himself (Matt. 16:27–28) assured his disciples: "For the Son of Man is to come, in the glory of his Father, with his messengers; and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. I tell you truly, there are some among those standing here who will not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Only gradually, in the early Christian centuries, were the futuristic, historical images transformed into the genuine eschatological symbols of the coming of the Antichrist, the Parousia, and the Last Judgment—events no longer within historical time.

The ninth was the crucial century in the history of eschatology, in so far as in that period the assembly of elements that entered into the complex of symbols was completed. The law as the standard of order, the defection of Israel, the experience of judgment, the alternatives of restoration and catastrophic punishment—all were present, though they had not yet found the balance of Malachi. The completion was associated with Elijah. Through Moses his servant Yahweh had concluded his covenant with Israel; through Elijah his messenger, in the depth of defection, he threatened the offenders with judgment and destruction. Through

[19] This sentence refers strictly to the problems of adequate symbolization. The mystery of the Incarnation itself, of the consubstantiality of God and man, is impenetrable. And its consequences for the substantive order of history are not fully realized as long as history lasts. Even in reference to adequate symbolization the sentence must be taken with proper qualification, for the meaning of history under the Christian dispensation is as far from satisfactory positive expression today as it was at the time of Jesus and his generation. The sentence, thus, means only that it took some time to overcome even the most obvious inadequacies of traditional symbols of historical order.

Moses the people had made the leap in being and gained its freedom in the present under God; through Elijah it was reminded that Yahweh's choice could be renounced and the covenant be undone. To be the Chosen People was not an insurance of success in pragmatic history, but a form of existence that could be lost as it had been gained. The leap in being was fraught with the possibility of the fall from being. Moses and Elijah, the prophets of the rise and the fall, belonged together. The dynamics of existence under God required the warner and restorer as much as the founder.

In the dynamics of existence Moses and Elijah complemented one another. In the process of history the foundation of the people through Moses was followed by the defection of Israel, as represented by the Omride dynasty. Elijah, the warner and restorer, entered history as a third force. The triangle of historical forces is essential for the understanding of the situation. If the prophetic revolt had been nothing but a political opposition to the government of Israel, it would hardly have been successful. The prophets were a force because even the dynasty did not question a spiritual authority derived from Moses. Regrettably we know very little about the interplay of the forces. And in particular, we know nothing about the origins of Elijah. The prophet was all of a sudden there, in the presence of the King, and announced to him from the blue sky: "As Yahweh, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (I Kings 17:1). Having pronounced these words he was no longer there; and the sky remained blue for years on end without a drop of rain. Drought and famine followed. A man like Elijah must have been a headache for a government, even if it was concerned about the welfare of the people only after a fashion.

The abruptness of the prophet's interference with the affairs of Israel deserves attention. In part it must be explained by the nature of the sources, as well as by the use which the writer of Kings made of them. His main sources were the Acts of the Kings of Israel and the Acts of the Kings of Judah. From the Acts the historian made brief extracts for each reign, such as we find for the reign of Omri in I Kings 16:21–28, or the reign of Ahab in 16:29–34, and referred his readers for further information to the Acts themselves. When in I Kings 17 the narrative broadens out into a wealth of detail concerning the prophetic revolt, it is clear that the extracts from the Acts are now interrupted by the stories and legends about Elijah, Elisha, and the other prophets. The abrupt

Berith. Under the conditions of Israel's history, the concreteness of their task faced them with problems that were never quite resolved. On the one hand, the prophetic experience moved toward the clarity of understanding that Yahweh was not only the one God beside whom Israel must have no other gods, but the one God for all men beside whom no other gods existed. On the other hand, the concrete Israel was changing its identity from the Hebrew clans of the conquest and the amalgamation with Canaanites, to the people of the Davidic Empire that included Judah, further to the divided Kingdoms and then to Judah alone, and finally to the organization of the postexilic community around the restored Temple. Yahweh tended to become a universal God of mankind, while the protean Israel became smaller and smaller. Hence the prophets were torn by the conflict between spiritual universalism and patriotic parochialism that had been inherent from the beginning in the conception of a Chosen People.

The tension was to reach tragic proportions when it became fully conscious, in the exilic Deutero-Isaiah's symbol of the Suffering Servant for mankind, before it dissolved anticlimactically in the restrictive reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra. Nevertheless, even when the remnant had thus withdrawn into its shell, the consciousness of the dilemma remained alive, as in the unknown author of the Book of Jonah. At this late date, however, in the story of a prophet who received Yahweh's order to save Nineveh through his preaching but tried to evade the divine command by fleeing in the opposite direction, the consciousness had become ironic:

> The word of Yahweh came to Jonah . . . . Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach against it . . . . Then Jonah arose and fled to Tarshish, from the presence of Yahweh. . . .

One need not agree with enlightened critics who consider Jonah the profoundest book of the Old Testament, but neither should one forget that by the fourth century, within the orbit of the canonized literature, the tragic dilemma of Israel had acquired a comic touch.

While in the pre-exilic literature of Judah the dilemma certainly had nothing comic, one sometimes wonders to what degree the tragic implications became ever fully conscious. To be sure, the problems were clearly articulated, but the articulation provoked no reflection; the conflicts were submerged, as it were, by a fanatical will of collective existence. The catastrophe of the Northern Kingdom had the serious repercussions in the Judaite experience of order that expressed themselves in

the creation of the Deuteronomic Torah, and one should suppose that such a radical reorganization of symbols would have aroused some critical observation, expression of grief, or reflective apology. Israel, after all, had perished; and Judah was the surviving heir of its traditions. The transfer, though, caused nothing more than the slight ripple of terminology that can be observed in Isaiah and Micah. In a phrase like "The Holy One of Israel," for instance, the term "Israel" still meant for Isaiah the community that had been constituted by Yahweh through the Berith. But it also could absorb the political contingencies and mean the people as organized in the two Kingdoms, as in the verse 5:7:

> For the vineyard of Yahweh of the hosts is the house of Israel,
> And the men of Judah are his cherished plantation.

And once the Yahweh of Israel had become the Yahweh of the Kingdoms, the politically separate Judah could slip into the symbolism of Israel, as in 8:14:

> For to both the houses of Israel shall he prove a holy place,
> A stone to strike against, and a rock to stumble upon.

From the Judah that had become one of the houses of Israel, then, it was only a small step further to the Judah which in political fact had become the only house of Israel after the disasters of 734 and 722, as in Micah 3:1:

> Hear now, you heads of Jacob,
> And rulers of the house of Israel.

The ease of the transition, the sleight of hand by which the Israel that had lost its political existence was thrown out of its symbolic existence and replaced by Judah, recalls the charismatic brutality of David in his acceptance of success and survival.

With a similar brutality the splendid rhetoric of Deuteronomy rolls over the tension between the one God of mankind and the Yahweh who is Israel's (now, Judah's) personal possession. Deuteronomy 4:35 admonishes the people: "You were made to see, that you know that Yahweh is God, none beside him"; and 4:39 continues: "Know it this day, and lay it to your heart, that Yahweh is God, in the heavens above and on earth below, none else." Since the language is unrestrained by qualifications, the verses can be understood (as by some historians indeed they are) as the first formulation of theoretical monotheism. And yet, doubts

with regard to their precise meaning will arise when we read in 6:4–5 the famous invocation:

> Hear, O Israel: Yahweh—Our God, Yahweh—One!
> And you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your might!

For the oneness of Yahweh, as the context shows, is compatible with the existence of the gods of other peoples whom Israel is warned to follow (6:13–15). And the oneness and universality of a God of all mankind is, furthermore, difficult to reconcile with the surrender of other peoples' cities, houses, and property to Israel (6:10–12), or with the injunction to exterminate the conquered peoples in order not to be contaminated by their gods (7:1–5; 7:16–26). But then again it seems to be the universal God who, through a free act of love, has singled out Israel for the covenant (5:2) and consecrated it as his people in preference to other peoples whom he might have chosen as well (7:6–8). And Israel is assured that "Yahweh, your God, he is God; the trustworthy God, who keeps covenant and faith with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations" (7:9). From the conflict of formulations one can only conclude that the level of doctrinal articulation, of a "theology," was reached by Deuteronomy no more than by the earlier documents we have studied. To be sure, the tendency toward a differentiated understanding of the one, universal God is marked, but still it is so deeply embedded in the compact experience of the people and its destiny, that the context deprives the monotheistic passages of the meaning they would have in isolation. The fierceness of collective existence will not yet admit dissolution into the freedom of individual souls, whether Israelite or not, under God.

2. *The Speeches of Moses*

The book of Deuteronomy is the symbol in which the spirit of the prophets blended with the Judaite will of collective existence. According to the most plausible conjectures it is the work of priests under prophetic influence, or in cooperation with disciples of the generation of Isaiah and Micah, who had to grapple with the problem of a Yahwist order for Judah during the reign of Manasseh (692–639). It is a code of law, couched in the form of speeches by Moses, in order to endow the demands of the *malakh* with the authority of the founder.

The conjectured time of its creation, the period of Assyria's greatest

is no longer told in continuity with the traditions. Moses is now the fictitious historian who tells his people his and their own history of Exodus, Berith, and Desert and presents them with the alternative of the blessing or the curse (11:26–29):

> Behold,
> I set before you a blessing and a curse:
> The blessing—if you shall hearken to the commandment of Yahweh your God which I command you today;
> The curse—if you shall not hearken to the commandment of Yahweh your God, and swerve from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.

Moses, not Yahweh, sets before the people a blessing and a curse; Moses, not Yahweh, commands the way from which the people must not swerve. The words and ordinances which in Exodus emanate from Yahweh, flow in Deuteronomy from the authority of Moses. The actual constitution of Israel in historical form through God has become in Deuteronomy a story of the past on which is grafted the legislative authority of the fictitious Moses.

The author of the people—if we may borrow the phrase from Giambattista Vico—has become the author of a book; the existence in the present under God has been perverted into existence in the present under the Torah. That perversion was not a relapse into the cosmological myth, for the memory of the Sinaitic leap was preserved as the legitimating background of the Mosaic speeches, but it nevertheless partook of the myth, in that the immediate existence under God now was broken through the mediation of the fictitious author of the Torah. The Moses of the Deuteronomic Torah must be compared, with regard to his function, to the Pharaoh as the transformer of the cosmic-divine *maat* into the statutory *maat* of social order. While the present under God did not give way to a living Pharaoh, the man to whom God had spoken face to face was now embalmed and had become a mummified Pharaoh.

When the instructions of Yahweh were transformed into the Torah of Moses, an epoch was marked in the history of Israel—if we may use the term loosely so as to include the Judaite successor—for the continuity of the tradition was now broken by the introduction of a new mythical element. The tradition, to be sure, had not disappeared but was preserved in the contents of the Deuteronomic speeches. Nevertheless, a break had occurred, when the present under God had become a past under

God. The Torah of Moses was not the living constitution of Israel in historical continuity, but an archaistic myth by which the author tried to reconstitute, in the spirit of Israel, a Judah that was on the point of disappearing in the Sheol of civilization. The original experience of the Berith was no longer alive enough to be a freely flowing source of order in the community, but it was still enough of a living force to recapture itself by the violence of an artifice.

The word of God had become the Book of the Torah, written by a Moses who had become a Pharaonic mummy. A new myth had been created, with consequences as far-reaching as they were unexpected. We shall briefly suggest the more obvious effects of the myth, for they make themselves felt even today and affect the methods of scriptural interpretation:

(1) The Speeches (words—*debharim*) of Moses, which in their present form comprise Chapters 1–30 of Deuteronomy, are the first pseudepigraphic book in Hebrew literature. When the D and P historians inserted the book in the J and E narratives, its pseudepigraphic character pervaded vast sections of the historiographic work. Since it seemed appropriate to interpolate the Speeches immediately before the traditions concerning the death of Moses, the present Deuteronomy 31–34 became part of the book of the Speeches, so that the authorship of Moses extended to the narrative of his own death. Moreover, the whole body of the narrative to the death of Moses fell under the form of the new myth: the Priestly and Holiness codes were interpolated, as the present book of Leviticus, into the narrative; the authorship of Moses was extended to cover the history from Genesis down; and even the character of "torah" was transferred to the historiographic work. The evolution toward the Five Books of Moses as the Torah must have been completed by the late fifth century, for the Israelites of Samaria, who at that time began to separate from the Jews of Jerusalem, could adopt the Pentateuch, alone, as their sacred scripture.

The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch remained unchallenged for the next fifteen hundred years. The first cautious questions were raised by R. Isaac of Toledo (A.D. 982–1057) and R. Abraham ibn Ezra (A.D. 1088–1167), when they recognized certain passages, which referred to later events and institutions, as irreconcilable with the authorship of Moses. They found no immediate followers, however, and another

four hundred years of silence lapsed before the questioning of details became more frequent in the wake of the Reformation. From the eighteenth century onward one can speak of a continuous critical occupation with the structure of the Biblical narrative until in the nineteenth century, with the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, the solid basis for Pentateuchal criticism was secured. The myth of Moses, thus, had lasted for two-and-a-half millenniums before it was ultimately dissolved, and before a reliable picture of genesis and structure of the Pentateuchal books had been gained through the efforts of generations of Old Testament scholars. Only in the twentieth century has it become possible, therefore, to discern behind the mythical Moses the great contours of the man who created history as the inner form of human existence in society.

(2) The myth of Moses-the-author would not have resisted dissolution so tenaciously unless it had found shelter in the conception of the Bible as the "word of God." The origins of the conception can still be discerned in the ambiguous phraseology concerning the reception of the Book of the Torah by Josiah, in II Kings 22–23. When the King had heard "the words of the Book of the Torah" (22:11) he was shocked and frightened. Not only had the fathers not hearkened to "the words of the book," but Yahweh had now to be expected to act any day "according to all that was written therein concerning us" (22:13). The royal suspicions concerning the imminent divine sanction were confirmed by the prophetess Huldah: Yahweh was just now about to bring evil on the place and its inhabitants, "namely all the words of the book which the King of Judah has read" (22:16). In order to avert the disaster the King accepted the book as the law of the realm in the previously mentioned ceremony; and again, on the occasion were read "all the words of the Book of the Covenant which was found in the house of Yahweh" (23:2). In the several passages the term "word" refers not only to the commandments of the Decalogue, or to the provisions of ritual, constitutional, criminal, and civil law, but also to the surrounding Introduction and Conclusion, which contain the abbreviated history of Exodus, Berith, and Desert, as well as the blessing and the curse. The "word of Yahweh," thus, was expanded to embrace "all the words that are written in the book"; furthermore, the *toroth,* the instructions addressed by Yahweh to his people, were expanded into a new genus of scripture, the Torah; and the new scripture, finally, was elevated to a special rank of sacredness through a type of act which, on occasion of its later recurrence, came to be called "canonization." The consequences

of expansion and canonization made themselves immediately felt in the tension between the word of God that had been mummified in the sacred text and the word of God that continued to be spoken through the mouth of his prophets. One can imagine how horrified Jeremiah must have been when he saw conformity of action to the letter of the law supersede the obedience of the heart to the spirit of God.

The myth of the Word had an even greater success than the myth of Moses. From its origin in the Deuteronomic Torah it pervaded not only the Pentateuch but the whole body of literature eventually included in the rabbinical canon; and it imposed its form, through canonization, also on the Christian literature. While it did not destroy the life of the spirit, it inevitably proved an obstacle to its free unfolding. For when the historical circumstances under which the word of God is revealed to man are endowed with the authority of the word itself, the mortgage of the world-immanent circumstances, of which we have spoken previously, will become something like a sacred incubus. Statutory elaborations, which are meant to penetrate social order with the spirit of the "essential" Decalogue under varying economic and political conditions, tend to become canonical fossils and prevent further reforms. Mythical elaborations of the origin of the world in divine creativeness, as we find them in Genesis, are understood literally as information about the physics of the universe and give rise to formidable "conflicts between science and religion." And the myth of the Word extends even to translations, so that the philological correction of some old translator's mistake will be condemned by fundamentalists as a tampering with the "word of God." The myth of the Word, finally, had a prodigious career in the modern centuries. For the late-medieval fatigue of spiritual order led to a reform movement which, in a manner strangely resembling the Deuteronomic reform of the seventh century B.C., assigned to the New Testament the function of a Torah of true Christianity. And the vehement reassertion of the myth in the Christian sphere was followed by the expansion of its form into the various Gnostic creed movements, as for instance in the Comtean creation of a Torah for the *réligion de l'humanité,* or the formation of a Marxist Torah in the Communist movement.

4. *The Regulation of Revelation*

Because of the characteristics just adumbrated, the Deuteronomic Torah has become more than one book among others in the Bible. If it had remained the literary exercise of its unknown authors, preserved

perhaps and discovered only centuries later as a forgotten scroll, it would be no more than a piece of evidence for the degree to which existence in historical form had weakened in the reign of Manasseh. Priestly and prophetic circles, we would have to say, had been capable of transforming the historical Moses into a novelistic figure. The discovery of the manuscript at the opportune moment, however, as well as its acceptance as the symbolic form for the Kingdom of Judah in the last generation of its existence, has made it the crystallizing nucleus of the Bible. One might even say there would have been no Bible, that is, no Book, unless *the* book had metamorphosed the history of Israel into the Torah and existence under God into existence under the written Law. That is a strange success for a book; and it suggests forces stronger than a mere literary whim, or the skill of a codifier, or the propitious moment of discovery.

The Torah could not have had its fateful success unless the genius of the unknown author had summarized and brought to their fulfillment century-old motivations of Israelite order, reaching back at least into the time of the prophetic revolt in the Northern Kingdom. In the preceding chapter, in the section on the Book of the Covenant, we have studied the peculiar response to the crisis of the ninth century. The "forgetfulness" of the people about the *toroth* of Yahweh provoked the construction of a paradigmatic code, organized into the *debharim* and the *mishpatim*—that is, into a decalogue of principles followed by statutory elaborations and counsels of conduct. The nature of the work was peculiar in that it was neither a code of law enacted by the royal administration nor probably even meant by its authors as a project to be enacted, nor a collection of laws actually observed; but rather an attempt to cast in the form of divine instructions (in their varieties of words, "if"-laws, and counsels) what under Hellenic conditions would have become a philosophy of right order supported by a theology.

Under the conditions of Israel in the ninth century the philosophic solution was precluded, as we have seen, because the conception of an immortal psyche as the field of right order had not differentiated, and was even prevented from being formed by, the taboo of Genesis on man's striving for immortality like the *elohim*. The prophets were not philosophers, and the hearing of the specific word was not the ordering of the soul by the unseen measure. The instructions had been the symbolic means for transforming the leap in being into the concrete order

of Israel; and the revision of instructions remained the means for bending the order, under changed economic and social circumstances, again to the spirit of Yahweh. Since the Sinaitic revelation, however, had been the constitution of Israel in historical form, the revised instructions, in order to be authoritative, had to be integrated into the growing corpus of the narrative. We had to stress, therefore, the inseparability of the prophetic revision from the legislative and historiographic aspects of the Book of the Covenant.

While the conditions of the solution had not changed by the seventh century, the reflection on the conditions had entered, as a new factor, the problem to be solved. At the time of the prophetic revolt the solution was limited by the degree of differentiation which the experiences and symbols had reached, but the field was open for further changes on principle. And the history of prophetism from Amos and Hosea to Deutero-Isaiah furnishes rich evidence for the tendencies to break the parochialism of Israel through the universalism of a mankind under God and its collectivism through the personalism of a berith that is written in the heart. The mortgage of the historical circumstances of revelation could have been gradually reduced, if the men who were willing and able to do it had found followers. In the actual course of events, however, the tendency prevailed to make the mortgage permanent by including the circumstances of revelation into its contents. That, of course, could not be done by turning the wheel of history backward and recapturing the situation of Israel in the desert; it could only be done by including the organization of the Kingdom of Judah in the seventh century in the contents of revelation.

In the Deuteronomic Torah we find, therefore, two strata of contents. In the basic stratum the Torah reproduces the structure of the Book of the Covenant of the ninth century: The *toroth* are again divided into the *debharim* of Deuteronomy 5 and the *mishpatim* beginning with Deuteronomy 12; and the purpose is again the reconstruction of the concrete order in the spirit of the decalogic words. In this stratum we are still moving in the continuity of Israelite traditions; and underneath the layer of paradigmatic revision there are still present elements of high antiquity. Superimposed, however, is a second stratum in which the historical contingencies of revelation are submitted to permanent regulation. The *toroth* of this second class, in Deuteronomy 17:14—18:22, pertain to the king, the priests, the prophets, and Moses. In their aggre-

Jerusalem (Deut. 12), a special provision entitles them to transfer their residence to Jerusalem and to have an equal share in the dues of the Temple (18:6–8). That provision, however, had to be abandoned in practice, for the priesthood of Jerusalem defended its position, as well as the new affluence, against the starved brethren who flocked into the capital city; and the Levites from the province had to be satisfied with an inferior position and a small stipend. From this time dates the division of priests and Levites.

Deuteronomy 18:9–22, finally, regulates the status of the prophets and of Moses himself. The provisions are of particular interest, because they allow us to discern the picture which the Deuteronomist circles had of Moses. The section starts with an attack on "the abominations of the goyim." When Israel has come into the promised land, there shall not be found one among them who makes a child pass through the fire or who uses divination, not a soothsayer, augur, sorcerer, or charmer, not one who consults ghosts, or familiar spirits, or the dead (18:9–11). Yahweh has driven the inhabitants of Canaan out, in favor of Israel, because he abhors such practices. Israel must hearken to Yahweh alone; and since the people will not hear the voice of God himself for fear they might die (18:16), he will raise up from their midst, from time to time, a revealer (*nabi*—prophet) like Moses through whose mouth Yahweh will speak his word (18:15, 18). Moses, thus, is a prophet, the first of the series of the revealers who, for Israel, take the place of the diviners, soothsayers, sorcerers, and necromancers. Their primary function is the mediation of "the word of Yahweh" so as to make the consultation of other divine forces superfluous. Under this aspect Moses is the man who has freed Israel from polytheism and superstition and brought it into the presence of the one God. The function of his prophetic successors is less clear. The question would have to be raised what they could reveal after the "word" has been so amply revealed in the speeches of the Deuteronomic Moses? Could later revelations contradict the contents of the Torah? Was it permissible for a prophet to question the importance of sacrifices and cults prescribed by the Torah, or even to consider them an obstacle to a true obedience of the heart to the spirit of Yahweh? The Deuteronomic authors, however, avoid such issues. They only reflect on the obvious question of how the people should know whether the word of a prophet is indeed the word of Yahweh; and they offer as a criterion the actual occurrence of the event predicted in the name of Yahweh

never the book of Israel lies so deeply below the historians' consciousness that today it is practically forgotten. Hence, the aspects of the Torah, which occupied us in our study of Israelite order, in particular the problems of the mythical Moses, are hardly ever touched in the work of Old Testament students—though one would assume that the fight against Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch might arouse some interest in the genesis and meaning of the myth. The Torah as the symbolic end of Israel's life, as the contraction of the universal potentialities of the Sinaitic revelation into the law of an ethnic-religious community, as the occasion on which the historical circumstances of revelation were transformed into the revealed word, and as the instrument used by the sages to suppress prophetism—all that is understandably of less importance in the orbit of exegesis than the spiritual treasure which after all was preserved in this magnificent sum of the Sinaitic tradition. The heritage of Israel was saved, for the first time, when the Southern Kingdom survived the Assyrian onslaught; in the century and a half thus gained for mundane existence, that heritage was greatly enriched through the prophets of Judah; and in this enriched form it was saved for the second time through the energetic repristination of traditions in Josiah's Reform, before Judah fell to the rising tide of Empire. The exegetes and historians of religion are interested in the Torah not as the entombment of Israel, but as the transmitter of its spirit to Judaism and Christianity. Hence, when now we turn to the preservative aspect of the Torah, our account can be based on the sensitive and sympathetic interpretations by Gerhard von Rad and Walther Eichrodt.[3]

In the first of his studies, Gerhard von Rad touches the decisive point, the "relaxed theology" of the Torah as it expresses itself in Deuteronomy 30:11–14:

> For the commandment, which I command you today,
> it is not hidden from you, nor is it far off.
> It is not in the heavens, that you should say:
> "Who will go for us to the heavens, and bring it down to us,
> and make us to hear it, that we may do it?"
> Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say:
> "Who will go for us over the sea, and bring it here to us,
> and make us to hear it, that we may do it?"

[3] Gerhard von Rad, *Das Gottesvolk im Deuteronomium* (1927); *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs* (1938); *Deuteronomium-Studien* (1947); *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel* (1951). Eichrodt, "Religionsgeschichte Israels," *loc. cit.*, 377–448, the chapter on "Die Politische Theokratie der Reformkreise," *ibid.*, 421–27.

> No, very near to you is the word,
> in your mouth and in your heart,
> that you may do it.

The atmosphere is relaxed indeed, for these words are not spoken by Yahweh to Israel, but by the mythical Moses who reminds his people that the will of God is now spelled out to them, for everyone to hear, in unequivocal language. No longer will there be a soul in anguish like Saul's when God is silent; no longer will there be a trembling in fear that existence in truth might be missed. "The search of man for the possibility of his right relation to God has become superfluous with the promulgation of Deuteronomy. The people can now live in fulfillment of their duties; their position before God is quite uncomplicated." Life can be conducted in a *nunc aeternum,* as it were; there is no crisis in the present, and the future holds no threat.[4] Von Rad especially stresses the recurrent "today": The commands are given "today"; the people vow acceptance and obedience "today"; the blessing and curse are put before the people "today"; and the Jordan will be crossed "today."[5] The *hayom* of Deuteronomy, in fact, symbolizes a peculiar time experience of "today and always today," in which the transcendent-eternal presence of God with his people has become a world-immanent, permanent presence of his revealed word. The mediation of the divine word through Moses (Exod. 20:19) has been accomplished, the word as communicated is now within history, and the eternity of the divine will has become the everlasting presence of the Torah. The Law, thus, far from being the burden it is frequently imagined to be on the part of Christian thinkers, is on the contrary the great liberation from the tension of existence in the presence of God. The *hayom* of the Torah, while originating in Israel's historical form, is the symbolic expression of a new experience of order in which the inrush of the Holy Spirit has been toned down to the inspired exegesis of the written word. A permanent peace of mind has replaced the existential anxiety of the fall from being —though not everything is quite peaceful in this new mode of existence.

For the law book of the Bible is its war book. The word of Yahweh flattened into the law of Moses, when existence in historical form flattened into the desperate aggressiveness of survival in pragmatic existence. The

[4] Von Rad, *Das Gottesvolk,* 59–61.

[5] Deut. 5:2–4; 9:1; 15:15; 26:17; 27:9; 29:10; 30:15, 19. Cf. von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs,* 25 ff.

battle, as well as rules for the siege of cities. It furthermore abounds with bloodthirsty fantasies concerning the radical extermination of the goyim in Canaan at large, and of the inhabitants of cities in particular.[9] And the law to exterminate the goyim is, finally, motivated by the abomination of their adherence to other gods than Yahweh: The wars of Israel in Deuteronomy are religious wars.[10]

The conception of war as an instrument for exterminating everybody in sight who does not believe in Yahweh is an innovation of Deuteronomy. The Holy Wars of the Confederacy had been defensive wars, in which Yahweh came to the aid of his people when it was attacked by its enemies.[11] While the new fierceness fortunately could be practiced only in rewriting Israel's history of the Conquest with streams of blood that had not flowed at the time, this kind of warfare more mythical than holy is nevertheless of importance in so far as it reveals the same change in the structure of experience and symbolization as the transition from existence under God to acceptance of the Torah. We are dealing here with phenomena that have been little explored; and caution is, therefore, in place. Nevertheless, it looks as if in Deuteronomy we were touching the genesis of "religion," defined as the transformation of existence in historical form into the secondary possession of a "creed" concerning the relation between God and man. In the case of Deuteronomy, this first "religion" in the history of mankind would have to be described as the Sinaitic revelation, mediated through Moses, when broken by the belligerence and civic virtue of a little men's patriotic movement.

The last sentences must not be understood as depreciatory. The spirit lives in the world as an ordering force in the souls of human beings. And the human *anima naturalis* has an amplitude of characterological variety that breaks the ordering spirit in a broad spectrum of phenomena. Plato and Aristotle, in the construction of their paradigms of the best polis, which must accommodate the variety of characters, have made this fundamental problem of social order explicit. The prophets, philosophers, and saints, who can translate the order of the spirit into the practice of conduct without institutional support and pressure, are rare. For its survival in the world, therefore, the order of the spirit has to rely on a fanatical belief in the symbols of a creed more often than on the *fides caritate formata*—though such reliance, if it becomes socially predominant, is apt to kill the order it is supposed to preserve. With all its dubious aspects admitted, Deuteronomy is still a remarkable recovery of Yahwist order, when held against the practice of Judah under Manasseh; and when held against the alternative of a complete destruction of Yahwist order through the Exile and the dispersion of the upper class, it has proved to be its salvation in the form of the Jewish postexilic community.

[9] For instance Deut. 11:23 ff., 19:1, 20:16 ff. For the documentation of these aspects of Deuteronomy cf. von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg*, 68 ff.

[10] *Ibid.*, 70. For the formal organization of Deuteronomy, following the model of the Sinai pericope, cf. von Rad, *Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*, 23–30.

[11] Cf. Chap. 7.2.2.

Under this aspect of the preservation of Yahwist order in a concrete community in pragmatic history, Deuteronomy is considered by Eichrodt. As an attempt to reform the Kingdom of Judah, Deuteronomy was "a romantic dream," followed by the rude awakening under Jehoiakim. Its greatness lies in its general "religious orientation" that was apt to induce a new attitude toward governmental order in the people. The love of Yahweh has selected the insignificant people, and the divine love permeates its order. Before God all men are equal; and the legal order of Deuteronomy stresses, therefore, brotherly aid, the protection of the weak and the poor, and the administration of impartial justice with circumstantial detail (Deut. 15:22–25; 16:18–20; 17:1–13). The king himself, not excepted from the rule of equality, is no more than the specially responsible guardian of the order and protector of the weak (17:14 ff.). In their imaginative project of the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*) the codifiers have successfully translated the divine order of love into an institutional model, counteracting thereby the apotheosis of the state, as well as the conception of a secular order of law and government in isolation against spiritual order. This translation makes sense only if it is more than mere legalism. Hence, at the center of the conception is placed the personal obligation of every member of the community to obey the law of God; the personal appeal and personal commitment of Deuteronomy 6:5 guarantees the survival of the order, not through external security, but through the conviction of the men living under it. This model is not an Utopia, nor can it be criticized as unrealistic. "It is the vision of might overcome by right, of egoism by consecration, of material interests by the power of the spirit; it is the vanguard of implacable resistance against the externally successful powers of this world, of the camp that from now on will call the history of urges and instincts

phenomenon will be understood best if one recalls that repristinations and archaisms are a general trait of the age. While the Deuteronomists of the seventh century and after were occupied with the repristination of Sinaitic traditions, Assurbanipal collected in Nineveh the enormous library to which we owe principally our knowledge of Mesopotamian literature, and the Egypt of the Saitic period went two millenniums back for an archaistic revival of the literary and artistic styles of the Old Kingdom. The parallel cases of repristination and archaic interests suggest the breakdown of the older civilizational order, under the impact of the wars among the empires, as the common cause of this frantic struggle for the preservation of historical identity. Not only the most obvious victim, Judah, but the warring empires themselves were gripped by the *malaise;* and the worst offender among them, Assyria, went to a destruction as sudden as it was complete even before Judah. The expansion of the cosmological empires beyond the boundaries of their civilizational origin, the displacements of populations, and the foreign dominations created, in the souls of the victims of such violence, a disorder which no empire of the cosmological type could repair. And from the struggle for the bare survival of order in the soul of man emerged the Jewish community victoriously, both in its own right and as the matrix of Christianity.

inated in circles of the type which created the rich literature of legends surrounding Elijah and Elisha. With regard to its meaning one must again avoid the positivistic fallacy of using the story as a piece of ethnographic evidence that Moses was a primitive sorcerer. It only proves that the superiority of Yahweh over other gods could also find its expression on a primitive level.

(3) If any doubt about the proper method of interpretation should still remain, it will be dispelled by the subsequent stories of the plagues which Moses and Aaron bring on with their staff. Nothing could be more inapposite than an attempt to save the historicity of the stories by surmises about natural phenomena which conceivably could have been their raw material, for the legends of the plagues, as they follow one another, become increasingly self-reflective and reveal the superiority of Yahweh as the historical substance consciously submitted to their formation. On the occasion of the last but one of the plagues, the darkness over Egypt, even the symbolism of the plagues themselves becomes transparent for the spiritual issue, for there was a darkness over Egypt that one could touch, "but with the sons of Israel there was light in their abodes" (Exod. 10:23). And with the last plague, the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, the struggle between light and darkness reaches its climax. Exodus 11:4–5 circumscribes nature and extent of the plague:

> Thus says Yahweh:
> At the mid of the night I shall go forth mid through Egypt.
> Then all the first-born in the land of Egypt will die,
> from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits on his throne,
> to the first-born of the slave-girl behind her mill,
> and all the first-born of the live stock.

Israel, however, will be exempted from the plague "so that you will know that Yahweh makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel" (11:7). And Exodus 12:12, finally, formulates the nature of the distinction:

> For I shall pass through the land of Egypt in that night, and smite
> all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast,
> and execute judgments on all the gods of Egypt,
> I, Yahweh.

The darkness over Egypt is the darkness of its gods, while the light over Israel is the light of Yahweh. And the slaying of the first-born, while it inflicts misery on man and beast, is—in a manner yet to be clarified—a

tion that the meaning of a passage can be exhausted by cutting it into the pieces which, by philological criteria, must be assigned to various component sources. In our opinion the passage in its present form stems from a hand which combined the various J and E strands into the story of the encounters between Moses and Pharaoh, and was deliberately placed where it stands today in order to serve as a summary of the leitmotifs which run through the legends of the audiences and the plagues.

The first motif, in 4:21, concerns the magical activities of Moses and Aaron, as well as the prolonged obstinacy of Pharaoh, which allows for the series of legends and the *crescendo* of the plagues. Since this motif belongs to the form of the prophetic legend analyzed previously, it is of no further interest to us here. Its date must be late, since it presupposes the existence of the legends; the contents of the verse may even be as late as its formulation.

Relevant for our present purpose, however, are 4:22–23, since the motifs assembled in them concern the historical substance. The conflict between the Yahwist experience and the pharaonic order is brought on a formula as simple as it is perfect. We remember the Pyramid Text in which the Pharaoh is greeted by the gods:

> This is my son, my first-born;

and we find now opposed to it in 4:22 the new formula:

> My son, my first-born, is Israel.

In adapting the Egyptian symbol to the new experience the same method is followed as in the Abram episode of Genesis 14, where the symbols of the *berith* and the *baal-berith* are transferred from the Canaanite El-Elyon to the god of Abram. The argument with regard to the date of both experience and symbol used on that occasion will also apply to the present problem. Experience and symbol fit the situation of the conflict with Egypt; there is no reason why the formula should not be dated in the Mosaic period, or why its authorship should not be ascribed to Moses himself.[5]

The formula is brief and clear, but its implications are manifold and sometimes obscure. First of all, it is not an exercise in adequate symbolization but a principle of order. It occurs in the summary of leitmotifs for the legends of the plagues and the Exodus; and the first point of order

[5] Nowhere in the literature have I found a reference to the relation between Exodus 4:22 and the Egyptian coronation ritual.

flowing from the principle of 4:22 is the command of 4:23 to the Pharaoh: "Let my son go, that he may serve me." The motif has to be hammered persistently through the legends, for the Pharaoh understandably is not inclined to accept the command. When Moses and Aaron inform him that in obedience to the command of Yahweh he must let the people go so that they can hold a feast for their God and offer sacrifices to him (5:1, 3), the Pharaoh roundly questions (5:2):

> Who is Yahweh, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go?
> Yahweh—I don't know him,
> and Israel—I shall not let go!

and he orders more severe treatment for the mutinous people (5:6–23). But the command is inexorably repeated (7:26; 8:16; 9:1; 9:14; 10:3);[6] the people must serve their God in the desert. In the course of the retardations it becomes, furthermore, increasingly clear that the Exodus is not an affair of Israel alone, but that the Pharaoh is fatally involved in the reordering of relations between God and Man. The emigration of Israel means more than the loss of a working force; the Egyptian ruler has been spiritually demoted and must surrender his position as Son of God to Israel. Yahweh demands Israel for his service, but he commands the Pharaoh to recognize the new order; he reminds the ruler, through Moses, that he could efface the Egyptians from the earth, but that he wants to spare them (9:16): "so that I will show you my power, and that my name be declared all on the earth." The Egypt after the Exodus will not be the same as before, for now a greater power than the Pharaonic will have been recognized. At last, when the first-born are slain, the ruler breaks down; in the middle of the night he summons Moses and Aaron and desperately orders them (12:31–32):

> Up, out from the midst of my people, you, and the sons of Israel!
> Go, serve Yahweh, as you have spoken,
> and take your sheep and your kine, as you have spoken,
> and be gone!
> and also work a blessing for me!

Still, there is a rest of resistance. When Israel has gone, the Pharaoh and his advisers reconsider. They go in pursuit with their army to bring the people back. And Yahweh has to enforce the new order with symbolic finality through the miracle of the Red Sea: The army of the former Son

[6] References to the Hebrew text. The first two references are 8:1 and 8:20 in the RSV.

of God is enveloped in darkness (14:19), thrown into a panic (24), and submerged in the floods (27–28), while the new Son of God, his people Israel, walks safely up to dry ground and into the desert. The scene closes with Miriam's song of triumph:

> Sing to Yahweh,
> For high he rose, high,
> The horse and its rider,
> He hurled in the sea.

When now we take a closer look at the new Son of God, as he emerges from the darkness of Egypt into the light of the new dispensation in history, we find him an odd creature. He is, first of all, not an individual human being but a social group; he has, furthermore, not the least desire to be a son of God; and finally, he expresses his disgust with, and resistance to, the new role so outspokenly that we begin to wonder what conceivable meaning the phrase "Son of God" could have when applied to an obstreperous bundle of humanity that hardly can be called even a people. When, after the first audience, the work-load for the Israelites is increased, the foremen wish the attention of Yahweh on Moses for getting them into difficulties (Exod. 5:21). And when, at the Red Sea, the Egyptian army draws near, the people turn against Moses: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the desert? What a way to treat us, bringing us out of Egypt! Isn't this what we told you in Egypt would happen, when we said: 'Leave us alone and let us serve Egypt, for it is better for us to serve in Egypt than to die in the desert' " (Exod. 14:11–12). There never would have been a first-born son of Yahweh if the God had had to rely on the people alone; there never would have been an Israel without the leadership of Moses. If there was a clash between the orders of Israel and Egypt, it had its origin in an experience of Moses.

The transformation of the indifferent and recalcitrant Hebrew clans into the Israel of Yahweh must have taken some time, as well as the efforts of a strong personality. It presupposes the existence of the man who could bring the people into the present under God because he had entered into it himself. Moreover, the formula of Israel as the Son of God could hardly have been intelligible and effective, unless the people had been penetrated with Egyptian civilization to a certain degree; and its creation, in particular, points to a man who lived so intensely as an Egyptian that he could conceive it in its full weight as the abrogation of Pharaonic order.

The traditions preserved in Exodus which suggest the Egyptization of the clans and their leaders are so well known that they require only the briefest recall. Exodus 12:40 gives the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt as four hundred and thirty years. Whether the figure is correct or not we do not know. We know just enough about the general history of the area at that period to make more than one conjecture concerning the date of entrance and exit possible, but not enough to make one of them convincing beyond a doubt. The clans may have entered Egypt during the Hyksos period (1680–1580) and been driven out along with the foreign dynasty, or they may have left a generation later, or during the Amarna period (fourteenth century), or in the late thirteenth century. They also may have entered only during the Amarna period and left about a century later. The Biblical figure would fit best an entrance during the Hyksos period and an exit in the thirteenth century. With regard to the date of entrance we have no opinion of our own to offer; with regard to the exodus we prefer the latest date, under Dynasty XIX, for reasons that will be set forth in the present chapter. Under any assumption the sojourn of the clans was long enough for Egyptian influences to make themselves felt in the people at large. And in particular it was long enough for individuals to rise in the hierarchy of Egyptian society, as suggested by the traditions about Joseph, whose mummy the emigrants took with them (13:19). A similar rise must be assumed behind the traditions about Moses, though all concrete details have disappeared behind the veils of the legend. The story of the exposure of the infant, his preservation, and upbringing as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (2:1–10) is a typical legendary form, which has its closest parallel in the Near East in the story of Sargon of Akkad.[7] No biographical circumstances can be extracted from a form that would fit any Egyptianized Hebrew of high social rank once he has, for other reasons, become important enough to be a suitable target for legendary treatment.

In the legend of exposure and rescue there is embedded, however, a detail of nontypical, specific character, that is, the reference to the name of Moses and its meaning. When the child entered the household of the princess, "she called his name: Mosheh; and said: For out of the water I drew him" (Exod. 2:10). The passage has the more immediate purpose of

[7] For an English translation of Sargon's legend see Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 119.

in general. In the later course of the hymn, however, the nature of the rescue is narrowed down and approaches closely the complex of the Red Sea miracle. The hymn is one of the Imperial Psalms, if we may stretch the genus so as to include the *imperium in statu nascendi*, and David is drawn from the waters in order to emerge as the ruler over the nations (42–46):

> They cried for help, but there was none to save;
> They cried to Yahweh, but he answered them not.
> And I beat them fine, like dust before the wind;
> I cast them out, like the mire of the streets.
> You have rescued me from the strife of the people;
> You have made me the head of the nations;
> A people whom I had not known serve me.
> As soon as they hear of me, they submit to me;
> The sons of the stranger come cringing to me.
> The sons of the stranger lose heart,
> And come trembling out of their fastnesses.

At first sight that seems a strange way for the symbol of the "drawing out" to take. If we remember the sequel to the Davidic victory, that is, the coronation liturgy of Psalm 2 in which the King has become the Son of Yahweh, the meaning of the symbol appears to have been reversed. When Moses brought Israel up from Egypt, he drew the new Son of God from the waters in which the old one perished; and now Yahweh draws from the waters a ruler who resembles the Pharaonic Son of God. Has Israel now been demoted and Pharaoh resurrected? Has the symbol of the Son of God gone full circle, back to cosmological rulership?

In order to understand the issue, we must first realize that the evolution toward the Davidic Son of God was one of the possibilities inherent in the Mosaic conflict with Pharaonic order. The exodus of the Hebrew clans, as we have stressed, was more than a national liberation in the romantic sense. The Egyptian ruler did not have to set them free because of some principle of national self-determination, but in order to let them change their subjection to the service of Yahweh; he had to recognize Yahweh as the God who issued the command. The divine-cosmic order of Egypt was abrogated; and the release of Israel implied the recognition of Yahweh's historical order in which the new Son of God held first place. The god of Moses was the God not of Israel only but of mankind; when Moses led his people into the desert, the result was not two peoples in political co-existence under different gods but one historical dispensation with its center in the Chosen People. In spite of appearances, that new spiritual

order established by Moses was not abolished by the Davidic kingship. The Yahwist order of history in the Mosaic sense, as well as the relations between Yahweh and his people remained intact, when Israel, under the pressure of necessities, had to acquire a king like the other nations. One can speak of no more than a deformation of the original theopolity through the intrusion of a royal Son of God into the system of symbols.

Again, however, restraint is indicated. The order of the theopolity, of the free existence of the people under Yahweh, to be sure, was deformed, when the Israel that already was the Son of God acquired a second Son of God as its ruler. The incongruity will appear in a different light, however, if we consider that the existence of a collective Son of God was in itself a deformation of the order of mankind under Yahweh, so strongly stressed in the legends of Exodus. Should "Egypt" be permanent, in order to provide the Chosen People, set off against the rest of mankind, with a pleasant sense of superiority? In the process of the spirit the Son of God had to become personal again, without becoming a Pharaoh, in order to break the collectivism of Israel and to release the universalist potentialities of the Yahwist order. And the Davidic kingship was indeed instrumental in this process. For the Imperial Psalms, as we noted in our analysis, were preserved and elaborated not because of nostalgic memories of the kingdom (though that factor may also have played its role) but because the royal symbolism became the vessel of Messianic hopes in the spirit of Yahweh, once the institution of kingship had disappeared under the blows of history. Moreover, the Psalm 18 at present under consideration lends itself to the double meaning so well that it is a matter of controversy whether certain sections, especially verse 43 ff., should be ascribed to the Davidic period, or rather be considered a late reworking with Messianic tendency. And it concludes on the ambiguous tone:

> For this I will extol you among the nations, Yahweh,
> and will sing praises to your name:
> Great triumphs he gives to his king,
> and shows kindness to his *mashiach*,
> to David and to his seed, forever.

The royal Son of God, far from destroying the order of Moses, served the unfolding of the universalism which it contained in its compactness.

The continuity of experiences and their symbolic expression, from the Mosaic foundation to the Messianic unfolding, will become clearer when

we compare the conclusion of Psalm 18 with a passage from Hebrews 13:20:

> The God of peace, who brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, may fit you by every blessing to do his will: working in you what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.

The Anointed of Yahweh, who first was the King of Judah and then the Messiah of the Prophets, has ultimately become the Christ in his glory for ever and ever. And from Christ a ray of light falls back over the past to illuminate Moses. For among the various allusions to the Old Testament in the passage just quoted there is one, the recall of Isaiah 63:11, that links Jesus with Moses: Jesus is the shepherd of the flock who is brought up out of the sea with his people. He is "the one who is drawn up" from the dead by God; and at the same time "the one who draws up" his people by working in them, as the divine instrument, what is pleasing to God. Through the tortuous ways of the Messianic symbolism the characteristics of Moses in the dynamics of divine order have now become the characteristics of Jesus; and conversely the characteristics of the Son of God are those of Moses.

The unique position of Moses has resisted classification by type concepts, as well as articulation through the symbols of the Biblical tradition. He moves in a peculiar empty space between the old Pharaonic and the new collective sons of God, between the Egyptian empire and the Israelite theopolity. On the obscurities surrounding the position of Moses now falls a flood rather than a ray of light, if we recognize in him the man who, in the order of revelation, prefigured, but did not figurate himself, the Son of God. It is the compactness of this intermediate position which resists articulation and makes it impossible, even in symbols of his own time, to answer the question: Who was Moses?

Once we have become aware of the problem, however, we can search the Biblical text for attempts to overcome the difficulty and to break through, however imperfectly, to a symbolization of the man who stands between the compactness of the Egyptian and the lucidity of the Christian order. One or two passages suggest themselves, more or less clearly, as such attempts.

One such attempt culminates in the designation of Moses as a god. When Moses is ordered by Yahweh to lead his people from Egypt and to plead with Pharaoh for their release, he resists obstinately—almost as obstinately as the Pharaoh himself. In a long dialogue Yahweh has to beat down one argument after another why the mission should be unsuccessful, until Moses refers to his personal incapacity as a negotiator (Exod. 4:10):

> O Lord,
> Not a man of words am I,
> neither in the past, nor recently, nor since you have spoken to your servant,
> but heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue am I.

With that argument the dialogue approaches its climax, for the "words" which Moses has to speak as a man bodily, handicapped by his heaviness of mouth and tongue, are spiritually the words of God. And Yahweh indeed points out to Moses his twofold impertinence. For in the first place, the physical handicap is part of God's creation and therefore none of Moses' business when he is faced with the divine command (4:11); and second, Yahweh will be spiritually with his mouth and instruct him what to speak (4:12). When Moses still resists, Yahweh breaks out in anger (4:14–16): Is there not Aaron, a ready speaker, in whose mouth Moses can put his words? Aaron shall speak to the people:

> He shall be to you a mouth,
> and you shall be to him a god.

A second version of the episode, in Exodus 6:28—7:5, is pointed even more clearly toward the conflict between Moses and the Pharaonic order. Again Moses pleads his "uncircumcised lips" as the obstacle to successful negotiation (6:30), but this time Yahweh answers:

> See, I give you to Pharaoh as a god,
> And Aaron your brother shall be your revealer [*nabi*—prophet].

The language of the passage must not be mistaken for genuine symbolization which authentically expresses an experience of transcendence. Moses is not ontologically, but only metaphorically, a god. In spite of its inadequacies as a symbol, however, the language admirably expresses the feeling that Moses, while not God, is something more than man. In an undefinable manner the presence of God has become historical through Moses.

The Hebrew text says literally that Moses died "at the mouth of Yahweh," a figure of speech which usually means "at the command." Perhaps the trope was used on this occasion intentionally: The man with the uncircumcised lips found his freedom at last at the lips of God.

§ 3. The God

"By a prophet Yahweh brought Israel up from Egypt." The order of Israel has its origin in Moses; and the order in the soul of Moses has its origin in the leap in being, that is, in his response to a divine revelation. Two principal sources for the understanding of the Mosaic experience are extant. The first is the prologue to the revelation, in Exodus 2; the second is the account of the revelation itself, in the thornbush episode of Exodus 3:1—4:17.

The firm circumscription of the object of inquiry as well as of the sources is necessary in order to prevent derailment into the innumerable side issues which inevitably have accrued in the literature about an event of world-historic importance. We are not concerned, for instance, with pre-Mosaic Yahwism, except to the extent to which it reaches into the Mosaic experience itself. The Yahweh who revealed himself to Moses was known to him, as the Biblical narrative relates, as a tribal god of one or more Hebrew clans. Yahweh was perhaps the god of the Midianites or Kenites with whom Moses found refuge in the desert—though it should be understood that the formerly favored assumption, the so-called Kenite hypothesis, is today badly shaken; and he certainly was the god of the fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He stood, furthermore, probably in a closer relationship to the family of Moses, for twice he is designated as the god of his father (in the singular: Exod. 3:6; 18:4); and the name of Moses' mother was Jochebed (Exod. 6:20), the only theophorous name composed with Yahweh before the Sinaitic Berith. The fact that Yahweh was a well-known divinity is important, however, only in so far as it attests the continuity of symbols; it has no bearing on the contents of the revelation. God, when he revealed himself to Moses, could be identified by him as a familiar divinity; and especially he could be so identified by the Hebrews whom Moses had to bring up from Egypt, or they would hardly have followed him. Nevertheless, while the continuity of the symbol could engender trust, the Yahweh of Moses was God in the mode of his revelation to Moses; no pre-Mosaic Yahweh has anything to do with the constitution of Israel as the Son of God in history. Hence, we must also exclude all speculations which try to reduce Yahweh to the primitivity that befits a god of the second millennium B.C. in the progressive order of things—whether he was, for instance, a "mountain god" (because he appeared on Mount Sinai), or a "fire god," a "*jinn*" (because the Sinai of the narrative seems to have indulged in volcanic eruptions, throwing up fiery clouds most suitable as seat for a god), or a "tree god" (because he revealed himself in a thornbush). All such speculations are impermissible in face of the Biblical information that Yahweh "descended" to the thornbush (Exod. 3:8) and Mount Sinai (19:11) from somewhere "up" where the cry of his people reached him (2:23). He was a *deus absconditus*, hidden in heavenly regions, and manifested himself in such places and forms as the occasion required. He appeared to Moses on Horeb; he accompanied him on the way and even tried to kill him; he was with him in Egypt to help his heavy mouth; and he descended on the Egyptians to slay their first-born. The mobility of Yahweh, it is true, varied in the course of Israelite history; in the seventh century B.C., for instance, when he became increasingly associated with Jerusalem, it was low; but it never completely disappeared, and the exiles gratefully discovered that Yahweh was still with them in Babylon.

Our first source, the prologue of Exodus 2, is a unit of literary work, composed from various traditions by an artist of considerable psychological and dramatic skill. Of the subsections, 2:1–10 is usually attributed to the E source, 11–22 to J, and 23–25 to P, unless one prefers an even more subtle distinction of sources. We mention the attributions, not to pursue them any further, but on the contrary because we want to stress that the meaning of the composition cannot be found through tracing the component sources. The increase of spiritual tension in Moses conveyed by Exodus 2 does not stem from the distinguishable J, E, and P sources, but has an independent origin which defies dating. The literary form, to be sure, is late, as it has absorbed the datable sources, but the contents, the growth of Moses toward his encounter with God, is an undatable description of a spiritual process. When the tradition that ultimately received the literary form of Exodus 2 started we do not know, but there is nothing in it that would not fit the time of Moses.[13]

[13] For a very minute distinction of sources in Exodus 2 cf. Simpson, *The Early Traditions of Israel*, 160–63, as well as the page references for Exodus 2 in the Index of Scriptural Passages.

The unknown author proceeds by chaining together a number of paradigmatically heightened episodes so that by their mere sequence, with a minimum of commentary, they communicate the growing tension. Moses is first the infant between the races, an exposed Hebrew child brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (2:1–10). He then is the young man, Egyptianized but not ignorant of his origin, who feels himself strangely drawn toward his Hebrew brethren. Various incidents provoke interventions, which reveal his character as much as they bend it toward its destiny. On one occasion, when an Egyptian kills a Hebrew, Moses takes matters in his own hands and kills the Egyptian. On another occasion, he observes a fight between two Hebrews and points out their wrong to them. This time, however, his intervention takes an unpleasant turn, as one of the Hebrews asks him pointedly who had set him as a foreman and judge over them, and whether he would perhaps want to kill him as he did the Egyptian. Suddenly Moses awakens to his situation: He has assumed authority in rivalry with the Egyptian administration; by an unreflected sense of responsibility he has set himself as judge in affairs of his people; and his people, far from accepting his authority, threatens him with betrayal to the Egyptians. The danger is real; and Moses must flee into the desert, in order to escape execution as a rebellious Hebrew leader (2:11–15). Moses is now a fugitive in the desert into which later he will lead his people, but he is still the man of authority. When he sits at a well in Midian, a group of shepherds want to drive off the daughters of a neighboring priest who have come there to water their father's flock. Again he intervenes and helps the women; and thereupon he is invited to stay with the priest and is given a daughter in marriage. Nevertheless, he remains keenly aware of his being a stranger, a man who is not with his people. In Egypt he could not be quite Egyptian because he was a Hebrew; in Midian he is the Egyptian stranger, with status of a resident (*ger*). When a son is born to him, he calls him Gershom, "for I am a resident stranger [*ger*] in a foreign land" (2:16–22). Years have passed, the former Pharaoh has died, and the unfortunate incidents of Moses' youth are forgotten. The old man who once assumed authority as a Hebrew over Hebrews is now ripe in God's own time to assume authority over Israel as the servant of Yahweh. The last episode introduces the God to whom

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For other subdivisions of sources cf. Auerbach, *Moses*, 13–29—very illuminating for the destruction of the meaning of the integral text. Buber, *Moses*, does not discuss Exodus 2 as an integral text.

of God for three reasons: (a) because it signifies God according to his essence, that is, as being itself; (b) because it is universal and does not more closely determine the divine essence which is inaccessible to human intellect in this life; and (c) because it signifies being in the present which is appropriate to God, whose being has not past or future. Thomas, however, goes beyond the implications which the *ehyeh* has for a philosophy of being and brings the other components of meaning into play. While the name HE WHO IS is the most appropriate one with regard to the mode of signifying the divine essence, the name *God* is more appropriate with regard to the object intended to be signified by the name; and even more appropriate is the name *tetragrammaton* for the purpose of signifying the singular, incommunicable substance of God. The three names which occur in the last section of the thornbush episode—*ehyeh, elohim, YHWH*—are co-ordinated by St. Thomas with the structure of the divine being in depth, leading from the philosophically communicable essence, through the proper name of the object, into the depth of the incommunicable substance.

If now we place the issue of the "philosophical proposition" in the context of the Thomist analysis, the *ehyeh* will no longer appear as an incomprehensible philosophical outburst, but rather as an effort to articulate a compact experience of divine presence so as to express the essential omnipresence with man of a substantially hidden God. The "I will be with you," we may say, does not reveal the substance of God but the frontier of his presence with man; and precisely when the frontier of divine presence has become luminous through revelation, man will become sensitive to the abyss extending beyond into the incommunicable substance of the Tetragrammaton. As a matter of fact, the revelation of the thornbush episode, once the divine presence had become an historical experience of the people through the Berith, had no noteworthy sequel in the history of Israelite symbols and certainly no philosophical consequences. The unrevealed depth, however, that was implied in the revelation, has caused the name of God to become the unpronounceable Tetragrammaton YHWH. Philosophy can touch no more than the being of the substance whose order flows through the world.

The great issue of the "philosophical proposition" has given way to the insight that a metaphysics of being can be differentiated from Exodus 3:14, but is not the meaning of the compact symbol itself; and the sum-

tributed to Moses himself. An affirmative answer can be based on the close relation between the thornbush symbol and the Amon Hymns of Dynasty XIX (*ca.* 1320–1205 B.C.). We shall briefly establish the parallel:

(1) In the framing passages of the thornbush episode, 3:12 and 4:12, the *ehyeh* has the meaning "I will be with you"; and the Chicago translation justly paraphrases the *ehyeh* in 4:12 as "I will help you"—though the paraphrase destroys the structure of the text. The meaning that God will be present as the helper, furthermore, is confirmed by the instruction to Moses to tell the people: "*Ehyeh* has sent me to you" (3:14). The passage would have to be paraphrased: "The one who is present as your helper has sent me to you." In the light of this meaning, supported by the prophecy of Hosea, must be understood the central *ehyeh asher ehyeh,* usually translated as I AM WHO I AM. Unless we introduce extraneous "philosophical" categories, the text can only mean that God reveals himself as the one who is present as the helper. While the God himself is hidden (the first *ehyeh*) and, therefore, must reveal himself, he will be manifest whenever, and in whatever form, he chooses (the second *ehyeh*).

(2) This conception of divinity as a being hidden in his depth and, at the same time, manifest in many forms of his choice, however, is precisely the conception of divine being that we have found in the Amon Hymns of Dynasty XIX. Let us recall some of the characteristic passages:

> The first to come into being in the earliest times,
> Amon, who came into being at the beginning,
> so that his mysterious nature is unknown . . .
>
> His image is not displayed in writing;
> no one bears witness to him. . . .
> He is too mysterious that his majesty be disclosed,
> he is too great that men should ask about him,
> too powerful that he might be known.
>
> Mysterious of form, glistening of appearance,
> the marvelous god of many forms.
>
> "Hidden" [*amen*] is his name as Amon,
> he is Re in face,
> and his body is Ptah.[25]

Moreover, even within the cosmological form there become apparent the motives which tend to transform the highest empire god into the God who is present to man in his needs:

[25] Translated by Wilson, in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* 368 ff.

the clumsiness of a second-rate redactor, but are carefully considered elaborations which fit the original episode into the larger context of the conflict of orders. The added retardations in the story of Moses are calculated to balance the series of Pharaonic retardations and of the plagues, which in their turn are assembled from various independent legends about the disasters inflicted on the Egyptians. Moreover, the parallel is accentuated through the climactic episodes: The declaration of Israel as the Son of God balances the destruction of the first-born of Egypt; the enigmatic night scene, in which Moses is almost killed by Yahweh, balances the Red Sea disaster in which the strength of the Egyptian Son of God is actually engulfed. Only through the overlaying construction of the whole narrative can we find the great issue—that would disappear if the component episodes were taken in isolation—that is, the transition of historical order from the Empire to the Chosen People. The elaborate presentation of the individual protagonists in their resistance to God is, furthermore, calculated to bring into proportion the resistance of the collective protagonist, of the people of Israel. The new dispensation will after all be the order neither of Moses nor of the Pharaoh but of the people under God; and the people resists, from the first treachery against Moses, through the grumbling against his liberating action and the reproaches when the Egyptian pursuers draw near, to the moods of despondency and the acts of mutiny and defection in the desert. Moses and the Pharaoh are representatives of mankind in their resistance to the order foreknown by God. And the climax of the Exodus, the actual establishment of the new dispensation through the Berith, is not at all a happy ending but the very beginning of the perpetual rhythm of defection from, and return to, the order of human existence in the present under God. Hence, while the action that began with the revelation to Moses indeed ends with the revelation to the people, the resistance to the order continues within the new historical form. History, in the sense of the perpetual task to regain the order under God from the pressure of mundane existence, has only begun.

The last act of the drama is the constitution of Israel as the people under God through the Berith. The problems of literary stratification in this part of the narrative resemble those of the thornbush episode, except that now they occur on a quantitatively larger scale. There is again a basis of materials which can be attributed to the J and E sources. With the J

and Moses ascends to the Mountain in order to receive the stone tablets, he is presented instead with elaborate instructions for the building of a "Tent," as well as for its equipment and ritual (Exod. 25–31). Only at the end, as an afterthought, God hands him the tablets, though we do not learn what is inscribed on them (Exod. 31:18). Then follows the episode of the golden calf (Exod. 32–33), which induces Moses to smash the tablets, their contents still unrevealed (32:19). Again he has to ascend, for a second set of tables (Exod. 34), and at last we get them down to safety and learn that they contain the cultic decalogue of Exodus 34:10–26. It is obvious that law collections of various periods were clustered around the Sinaitic Berith in order to let them partake of the dignity of the original foundation. As the thornbush episode had been inflated to make it balance the story of the plagues, so the drama of the Berith was inflated to let originate in it as many legal developments as possible.

The Berith drama has been seriously affected through the interpolations in that the rules of the theopolity, which were to be inscribed on the tablets, have disappeared from what must have been their original place, that is, the end of Exodus 24. Moreover, the rules and commandments that were supposed to be issued in pursuance of the Berith now not only follow but also precede its conclusion. As a consequence, it is today a matter of controversy whether the Berith was concluded on the basis of the Decalogue, or whether the Decalogue was issued on the basis of the Berith. The confusion has its specific origin in the interpolation of the Book of the Covenant before the conclusion of the Berith, a procedure which has forced a double meaning on certain terms of the cultic act of Exodus 24:3–8. For in 24:8 the Berith is concluded "according to all these words [*debharim*]"; and as the text stands today, the term *debharim* can refer back either to the *debharim* of the Message in Exodus 19:4–6 or to the decalogic *debharim* of Exodus 20. In the first case, the Berith would be concluded on the basis of the divine Message and its acceptance by the people; in the second case, on the basis of the Decalogue, which, according to the drama, should be inscribed on the tablets afterwards. The interpolating historians have made the second interpretation their own, for in Exodus 34 we find the meaning of the Covenant identified not with the Message but with the Decalogue itself (34:27–28). And finally, since the words inscribed on the tablets have disappeared from their proper place, we must decide which of the various decalogues, if any of them, could be the fugitive one. With regard to this question we favor the Deca-

drank" is the perfect formula for an event in which divine order becomes established in history, while externally happens nothing at all.

While nothing happens externally when man beholds God and the leap in being occurs in his soul, a good deal happens afterwards in the practice of conduct. The Hebrew clans who concluded the Covenant with God, even though under considerable persuasion on the part of Moses and the elders, became a new people in history through their response to revelation. They became Israel, in so far as their existence was now ordered as a theopolity under fundamental rules emanating from their God. These rules, supposedly to be inscribed on the tablets, are now missing from the context of the drama; and we have expressed our inclination to recognize the Decalogue of Exodus 20:1–17 as the body of the missing rules for reasons of contents, as well as of formal and spiritual quality. With regard to the textual quality of the source certain reservations have to be made. The motivations attached to the commands in 20:5b–6, 7b, 11, and 12b look like additions and should be eliminated. The specifications of commands in 9–10 and 17b could be later elaborations. The "thou shalt not carve an image . . . ," which today is counted as one command, actually contains three commands, each beginning with *lo;* perhaps the three commands, related by their subject matter, were contracted into one, in order to satisfy the desire for decalogic form; otherwise the ten commandments would be twelve.[37]

[37] We can accept the Decalogue of Exodus 20 as a legitimate source without difficulty because we are only interested in the question whether by substance and form it fits into the Berith drama that we are analyzing at present. Historians who raise the question whether it is the "original" Decalogue written by Moses himself confront a more complex situation. Our analysis is based on the assumption that the Berith drama has extracted a paradigmatic essence from the traditions, so that the question of originality in a pragmatic sense becomes secondary. We do not know, of course, whether the Berith drama is a reliable report or whether the Decalogue has not undergone transformations in the process of clarifying its essential contents to paradigmatic purity. Nevertheless, we should like to stress that in this particular case we know of no reason why the substance of the Decalogue should not have Moses as its author. On this point, however, the best authorities disagree widely. Lods, for instance, says: "The Decalogue of Exodus xx. and Deuteronomy v. is wholly occupied with moral and social responsibilities. We have no proof that such an attitude was ever characteristic of early Israel, whereas it is one of the distinguishing features of the prophetic movement, especially in its beginnings: Jahweh desires justice and mercy, not sacrifices (Amos v. 21–5; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 1–8). The Decalogue is, like Deuteronomy, a faint echo of the message of the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries" (*Israel*, 316). For his view Lods can find strong support from Mowinckel, *Le décalogue*, especially p. 60. Oesterley and Robinson are more cautious: "While there is nothing in [the commandments] which prohibits a wilderness origin, the evidence is hardly strong enough to justify us in being dogmatic either for or against their Mosaic authorship.—This much, however, we can say. Whether these commandments are the work of Moses or not, they do represent very fairly the general moral standard

CHAPTER 13

The Prophets

§ 1. The Prophetic Effort

Without the revelations from the Thornbush to Moses and from the Sinai to the people, there would have been no messengers of the Covenant; but without the messengers we would probably know little about Moses and the events of his time. The great question of the "historical Moses," which agitates the moderns, must be considered of secondary importance compared with the real issue, that is, the prophetic effort to regain, for the Chosen People, a presence under God that was on the point of being lost. It was in order to re-establish its meaning, as constituted by the Sinaitic events, that unknown authors elaborated such traditions as were preserved in cult legends, poems, and prose accounts into the paradigmatically heightened dramas that we have studied in the preceding Chapter. From those scenes of the "middle stratum" of the Biblical narrative emerges the Moses who lived, in historical continuity, in the medium of prophetic experience in Israel. The Moses of the prophets is not a figure of the past through whose mediation Israel was established once for all as the people under Yahweh the King, but the first of a line of prophets who in the present, under the revelatory word of Yahweh, continued to bring Israel up from Egypt into existence under God.

If we distinguish, thus, between the "historical" and the living Moses and, furthermore, define the prophetic experience as the medium of his life, the problems of the prophetic movement, from the crisis of the ninth to the exile of the sixth century, will come more clearly into focus:

(1) When prophetic authors recalled the work of Moses and heightened it paradigmatically in dramatic scenes, their work was not an end in itself. It served the purpose of awakening the consciousness of the Chosen People for the mode of its existence in historical form. The people had to be reminded, first, of its origin in the response of the fathers to Yahweh's revelation through Moses and, second, of the fact that its

continued existence depended on its continued response to Yahweh's revelation through the prophets. The recall of the past blends, therefore, into the call in the present. They both belong to the same continuum of revelation, which creates historical form when it meets with the continuum of the people's response. The historical form of the people unfolds in time; but it remains historical form only as long as the people, while lasting in time, lives in the tension of response to the timeless, eternal revelation of God.

(2) The prophetic blending of past and present in a continuum of living tension between time and eternity, however, has its dangers. For precisely when the defection of the people has reached such proportions that repeated, energetic reminders of the conditions of existence in historical form become necessary, the recall of the past may have effects as unexpected as they are undesired. We have studied such an unwanted effect in the chapter on the Deuteronomic Torah, when we traced the line that led from the recall of the origins to the Myth of Moses. Far from resulting in a new response of the people to the living word of Yahweh as pronounced by the messengers, the prophetic effort derailed into a constitution for the Kingdom of Judah which pretended to emanate from the "historical" Moses. The past that was meant to be revitalized in a continuous present now became really a dead past; and the living word to which the heart was supposed to respond became the body of the law to which the conduct could conform.

(3) This evolution toward the mythical Moses and the Torah, although caused by the persistent recall of Israel's theopolitical constitution and at times perhaps even favored by prophetic circles, was certainly not their ultimate intention. Hence, as the first symptoms of the derailment became noticeable, that is, as early as the eighth century, the recall of the origins was accompanied by warnings against the misapprehension that Yahweh would be satisfied with ritual observances and a conformity which disregarded the spirit of the law. As a consequence, the struggle of the prophets for the historical form of Israel had to cope with two evils at the same time: On the one hand, the prophets had to bring Israel back from its defections to Canaanite and Mesopotamian gods, to the obedience of Yahweh; on the other hand, when in the first respect they were successful, they had to convert Israel from its chauvinism and reliance on external performance, to a communal life in the spirit of the Covenant.

prophets. The first section will treat the unfolding of the problems, contained in a compact form in the older symbols, under the pressure of new experiences. For this section the prophecies of Jeremiah will be our guide. For at this late hour, in the last period of the Kingdom of Judah, the two and a half centuries of resistance to defection and chauvinism, as well as of continuous occupation with the meaning of the Sinaitic foundation, had differentiated the experiences to the point where new symbols for their adequate expression, though not always found, were clearly required. The second section will deal with the search for new means of expression. Beyond Jeremiah, with his clarity of issues and the veil yet drawn over the solutions, lead the prophecies of the unknown genius of the sixth century to whom philological convention refers as Deutero-Isaiah. His symbol of the Suffering Servant stands on the borderline between Prophetism and Christianity.

§ 2. The Unfolding of the Problem

The creation of Israel as the people under God begins with the Message of Yahweh to Moses, proceeds to the Covenant, and concludes with the constitution of the people under the Decalogue. Since the violations of the decalogic constitution are massively the occasions on which the problem of Israelite order becomes tangible, it will be convenient to reverse the sequence of the Berith drama in an analysis of Jeremiah's concern with Israel's theopolitical existence.

1. The Decalogue

We shall begin with "the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh" to stand at the gate of the Temple and to address the people, because the Temple Address (Jer. 7) refers directly to the text of the Decalogue. According to the information of Jeremiah 26 the Address was delivered in 609/8 B.C.

Yahweh, through Jeremiah, warns the people as they enter the Temple to mend their ways, or he will not make their home in this place (7:3). They must not trust: "The Temple of Yahweh is this!" For it will not be their home unless they practice strict justice among themselves, do not oppress the resident stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, do not shed innocent blood nor follow other gods to their hurt (7:4–8). As it is, they "steal, murder, and commit adultery, offer sacrifices to

And to his question "How long, O Lord, how long?" he hears the answer (6:11–13): until the cities lie waste, and the inhabitants have fled, and the land is a desolation.

> And though a tenth remain in it,
> this will be burned again,
> like a terebinth or an oak,
> whose stump remains when it is felled.

The living fire that has burned Isaiah clean will also have to burn the people. As they are, they hear and will not understand, they see and will not perceive. And whatever emerges from the ordeal, the imagery of destruction makes it clear that the Kingdom of Judah will no longer be recognizable in it. The old Israel, as it was constituted by the Covenant, is unclean to death, and a new one will arise from the fire.

If we pursue Isaiah's revelation to this point, however, the question must be asked: What has this new Israel to do with the old one? The continuity seems to be broken by an epoch as incisive as the Sinaitic revelation. Is the old Covenant not dead when the people with whom it was made has died? And is "Israel" not about to become the name of whatever human society lives in historical form, in the presence under God? We seem to have reached the limits of the Covenant symbol.

2. *The Covenant*

Since the Decalogue was accepted as Israel's fundamental law, the prophetic criticism not only could but had to judge the people's conduct by its standards. Nevertheless, while the complaints, reproaches, and admonitions of the prophets construed reprehensible conduct as violation of the Commandments, obviously more was at stake than an interpretation of legal rules. One might even say the prophets weakened their case, when they involved themselves in arguments about offenses against decalogic injunctions, for a man could well plead that he had not committed murder or theft when he used his business acumen to increase his property at the expense of an unwise peasant who had gone into debt too deeply. Once the expansion of the Decalogue into codes like the Book of the Covenant or the Deuteronomic Torah had been admitted at all as the adequate unfolding of its meaning, an alternative interpretation, even if it was not meant as legal argument, could be understood as such for the purpose of misunderstanding. While the appeal to decalogic standards lent authority to prophetic criticism, it obscured rather than

losopher who wants to dissolve superstition through information, lurks a problem which even a Jeremiah hesitated to articulate plainly.

The argument, to be sure, is not insincere, but it certainly is devious. Jeremiah knew, of course, that the alien gods were false gods because Yahweh had revealed himself as the true God, and not that Yahweh was the true God because of somebody's discovery that images of gods were no more than pieces of woodwork; and he knew, furthermore, quite well that the carving of a god was prohibited precisely because it was not as innocuous an action as carpentering a piece of furniture. Moreover, as early as the eighth century, Hosea had said of the Bull of Samaria (8:6):

> A workman made it;
> and it is not God.

Hence, by the time of Jeremiah the argument must have been a prophetic staple that impressed nobody, because it was too obviously wrong. More than once must he have heard the answer to his expostulations which he puts himself in the mouth of the people (2:25):

> "It is hopeless! for I love alien gods,
> and after them will I go!"

The texts of Jeremiah should therefore not be considered an argument calculated to persuade anybody, but rather as a desperate attempt to veil the true reasons, that will not give way to argument, of Israel's defection by the pretense that argument will overcome them.

The true reasons of defection did not escape Jeremiah: The people went after alien gods, there could be no doubt, because it loved them; it preferred the manifestations of divine force within the world to the world-transcendent, invisible God. With grief he noted the unheard-of spectacle of a nation abandoning its gods (2:11–12):

> Has ever a nation changed its gods,
> even though they are no gods?
> Yet my people have changed their glory,
> for that which is useless.

And it has changed so thoroughly that "as many as your cities are your gods, O Judah" (2:28). Jeremiah had made the discovery (today it would be called an insight of cultural anthropology) that peoples, as a rule, don't change their gods; hence, if they change them nevertheless, the reason would have to be as extraordinary as the event. He had,

furthermore, discovered, that they don't change their gods as long as they are false gods; and that in the one, extraordinary instance of change the god was "God in Truth." Could it be that the nature of the "God in Truth" was the cause of the singular defection? It became clear, in brief, that Israel, while it did not mind being a Chosen People, did not care to be chosen at the price of ceasing to be a people like the others. If Jeremiah rejected the cosmic gods as useless, the people rejected, if not as useless, at least as defective, a world-transcendent God in Truth; the gods who were false to Jeremiah were not so false to an Israel that wanted to be both a Chosen People and a people like the others. The time was drawing critically near when the God of the prophets, in order to establish his Kingdom, would have to separate from a people that understood its chosenness as no more than an agreeable premium put on its unregenerate cosmological existence.

The deviousness of the Jeremiah texts thus veils the insight that Israel's defections had something to do with the construction of the theopolity as an embodiment of the Kingdom of God in a concrete people with its institutions, and that they would cease only with the theopolity under the Covenant itself. In the history of prophetism from the eighth century to the fall of Jerusalem we must distinguish, therefore, between (1) the prophets' complaints about Israel's misconduct and (2) the varying degree of their awareness that admonitions were not only hopeless, but perhaps even pointless. We shall first deal with the complaints.

The complaints, though variegated in form, were remarkably constant with regard to substance. Every prophet from Amos and Hosea to Jeremiah recognized the symptoms of the trouble. That substance we find most clearly expressed in Hosea's plain indictment (8:4):

> They made kings, but not from me;
> they set up princes, and I knew it not.
> With their silver and gold they made idols,
> for their own destruction.

The kings and gods of the people, thus, were the representative symptoms of Israel's fall. The frequently made suggestion that Hosea condemned only the institutions of the Northern Kingdom, but not the national kingship of Saul or the Davidic monarchy can hardly be maintained in face of 13:9–11:

> That will be to your destruction, O Israel,
> that it is with me you find your help.
> Where is now your King, that he may deliver you in your cities,
> where are your judges, to whom you said:
> "Give me a King and Princes!"
> I have given you a King in my anger,
> and I have taken him away in my wrath!

The kingship as it existed in Israel from Saul to the present was to Hosea the great defection (10:13–15):

> You have plowed iniquity, you have reaped injustice,
> You have eaten the fruit of lies,
> in that you trusted in your chariots,
> and the multitude of your warriors.
>
> But a revolt shall arise among your people,
> and all your fortresses shall be destroyed . . .
> And at that dawn shall be cut off, cut off
> the King of Israel.

From the institutional nucleus of the kings, the gods, and the army the condemnation of the prophets, then, ranges widely over the phenomena of a people's civilization. In Hosea 8:14 we read:

> For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces;
> and Judah has multiplied fortified cities.

Jeremiah warns (9:23):

> Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom,
> Nor the strong man boast of his strength,
> Nor the rich man boast of his riches.

Isaiah displays a remarkable circumspection in spotting phenomena of rebellious pride against Yahweh (2:12–17):

> For Yahweh of the hosts has a day
> Against all that is proud and high,
> and against all that is lofty and tall:
> Against all the cedars of Lebanon, high and lofty,
> and against all the oaks of Bashan;
> Against all the high mountains,
> and against all the lofty hills;
> Against every tall tower,
> and against every fortified wall;
> Against all the ships of Tarshish,
> and against all the gallant craft.

the sympathetic magic of the Elisha legend and the utilitarian flattening of faith in Chronicles. On the one hand, the severe repression of human synergism, the reduction of man's role in the drama of history to a trusting abnegation of action, is definitely not magic in the sense of human action that intends to compel favorable action of divine forces. On the other hand, the formula "If you do not trust, you will not last," carries the implication that you will last, if you trust. Isaiah's counsel does not originate in an ethics of nonviolence; it is not calculated to lose the war in order to gain something more important than earthly victory but on the contrary to win the war by means more certain than an army. In the counsel of Isaiah, we may say, the element of faith in a transcendent God (which is also contained in the compactness of magic) has differentiated so far that a practice of sympathetic magic, as in the Elisha legend, has become impossible; and the sensitiveness for the gulf between divine plan and human action has even become so acute that all pragmatic assistance in the execution of the plan is considered a display of distrust. And yet, an aura of magic undeniably surrounds the counsel: It is due to the fact that the divine plan itself has been brought within the knowledge of man, in as much as Isaiah knows that God wants the survival of Judah as an organized people in pragmatic history. With that knowledge is given the trust, not in the inscrutable will of God that must be accepted however bitter it tastes when it does not agree with the plans of man, but in the knowable will of God that conforms with the policies of Isaiah and the Chosen People. That knowledge of the divine plan casts its paralyzing spell on the necessity of action in the world; for if the concrete human action will achieve nothing but what God intends to do himself, it may be indeed considered a distrustful officiousness on the part of man. This is a subtlety of experience beyond magic in the ordinary sense. What can be observed here in the making rather reminds of the later phenomena of Gnosis. With regard to the more immediate setting of the experience one may say: The infusion of society with cosmic-divine order through the cult and myth of the cosmological empires has become, in Israel, the cultic presence of the Kingdom of God in the annual festivals; and it now becomes, in the prophetism of Isaiah, a pragmatically effective presence in the history of the Chosen People. The knowable divine plan, that requires for its embodiment in pragmatic history nothing but the unbounded trust of the "House of Judah," is the cosmic-divine order of the empires, in an

The constitution of being is what it is, and cannot be affected by human fancies. Hence, the metastatic denial of the order of mundane existence is neither a true proposition in philosophy, nor a program of action that could be executed. The will to transform reality into something which by essence it is not is the rebellion against the nature of things as ordained by God. And while the rebellion has become sublime in Isaiah's trust that God himself will change the order of the world and let Judah win its victories without battle, the danger of derailment in various directions is obvious. This metastatic faith, now, though it became articulate in the prophets, did not originate with them but was inherent, from the very beginnings of the Mosaic foundation, in the conception of the theopolity as the Kingdom of God incarnate in a concrete people and its institutions. It could rest dormant or remain comparatively innocuous, deeply embedded as it was in the compactness of early experiences and symbols, for centuries, but it had to become virulent when under the pressure of historical events it became obvious that the reality of Israel was not exactly a Kingdom of God and showed no inclination to become one. The growing realization of the conflict aroused a whole series of attempts to bring the obstreperous reality of the world, through metastatic imagination and action, to conformity with the demands of the Kingdom. These operations can best be classified by the time dimension, as symbolic actions concerning the future, the present, and the past of true order:

(1) *Pro futuro:* a. Israel will suffer punishment at the hands of Yahweh, because its misconduct is the cause of the conflict. The obstreperous reality will be destroyed altogether. That is the response represented by Amos' terrible Day of Yahweh. In this context (Amos 2:13–16) occurs significantly the numinous terror of the Holy War as the mode of punishment inflicted on Israel. b. Israel will emerge from its present and future miseries into a true Kingdom of God, in which the conditions of existence have given way to something like a Golden Age. The date of the numerous prophecies of this type (*e.g.*, Amos 9:13–15;

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particular to Professor Nahum N. Glatzer (Boston), Professor Gerhard von Rad (Heidelberg), and Professor Rudolf Bultmann (Marburg) for a sympathetic resistance that forced me to resume the analysis. The ontological implications of the prophetic symbolism have attracted little attention. As far as I know, the problem has never been formally treated. The literature on the metastatic class of experiences in detail, however, is enormous. Especially since the discovery of the Psalms as cult hymns and rituals, the transition from the cultic to the eschatological meaning of the Psalms has become the subject of a far-flung inquiry. On these problems cf. Chapter 9.5.

Isa. 2:2–4; Mic. 4:1–5; Joel 3:18–21) is a matter of controversy. They do perhaps not always belong to the pre-exilic prophets to whom they are ascribed. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the type itself, as in the cases of Hosea 2:16–25 or Isaiah 9:1–7, goes back at least to the eighth century.

(2) *Pro praesente:* a. The Kingdom of God will be forced into the present reality through myth and constitutional enactment, as in the Deuteronomic Torah. b. The Kingdom of God will be forced into the present reality through metastatic trust, as in the Isaiah case.

(3) *Pro praeterito:* Reality will be metastically transformed in retrospect through the rewriting of history, as in the case of the Chronicler.

In the variety of symbolic forms is recognizable the common substance of the metastatic will to transform reality by means of eschatological, mythical, or historiographic phantasy, or by perverting faith into an instrument of pragmatic action. This metastatic component became so predominant in the complex phenomenon of prophetism that in late Judaism it created its specific symbolic form in the apocalyptic literature. As the decline of Israel and Judah was accompanied by the forms of prophetism, so the Judaism of the new imperial age was accompanied by the symbolism of the apocalypse. Moreover, the recognition of the metastatic experience is of importance for the understanding not only of Israelite and Jewish order but of the history of Western Civilization to this day. While in the main development of Christianity, to be sure, the metastatic symbols were transformed into the eschatological events beyond history, so that the order of the world regained its autonomy, the continuum of metastatic movements has never been broken. It massively surrounds, rivals, and penetrates Christianity in Gnosis and Marcionism, and in a host of gnostic and antinomian heresies; and it has been absorbed into the symbolism of Christianity itself through the Old Testament, as well as through the Revelation of St. John. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Church was occupied with the struggle against heresies of a metastatic complexion; and with the Reformation this underground stream has come to the surface again in a massive flood—first, in the left wing of the sectarian movements and then in the secular political creed movements which purport to exact the metastasis by revolutionary action.

but he cannot abolish the order by which his conduct will be judged. Modern symbolic expressions of the crisis, as Hegel's dictum "God is dead" or Nietzsche's even stronger "He has been murdered," which betray the degree to which their authors were impressed by massive events of their time, would have been inconceivable to the prophets—to say nothing of the rebellious fantasy of having the order of history originate in the will of ideological planners left and right. If the prophets, in their despair over Israel, indulged in metastatic dreams, in which the tension of historical order was abolished by a divine act of grace, at least they did not indulge in metastatic nightmares, in which the *opus* was performed by human acts of revolution. The prophets could suffer with God under the defection of Israel, but they could not doubt the order of history under the revealed will of God. And since they could not doubt, they were spared the intellectual confusion about the meaning of history. They knew that history meant existence in the order of being as it had become visible through revelation. One could not go back of revelation and play existence in cosmic-divine order, after the world-transcendent God had revealed himself. One could not pretend to live in another order of being than the one illuminated by revelation. And least of all could one think of going beyond revelation replacing the constitution of being with a man-made substitute. Man exists *within* the order of being; and there is no history *outside* the historical form under revelation. In the surrounding darkness of Israel's defection and impending political destruction—darker perhaps than the contemporary earthwide revolt against God—the prophets were burdened with the mystery of how the promises of the Message could prevail in the turmoil. They were burdened with this mystery by their faith; and history continued indeed by the word of God spoken through the prophets. There are times, when the divinely willed order is humanly realized nowhere but in the faith of solitary sufferers.

Their faith in the time of crisis forced the prophets to oppose the order of society and to find the order of their existence in the word spoken by Yahweh. Suffering in solitude meant suffering, in communion with God, under the disorder of a community to which the prophet did not cease to belong.

The participation in the conflict reached its extreme when Jeremiah enacted in his life the crisis of Israel. Both disaster and salvation, the

cities of the land, not to be overcome either by the "kingdoms of the north" or by the people and government of Judah. He was the sole representative of divine order; and whatever the inscrutable will of God might hold for the future, the meaning of the present was determined by the Word that was spoken from the divine-human omphalos in Jeremiah. The Chosen People had been replaced by the chosen man.

The symbols of the Message were not suitable to express the changed structure of the historical field. New symbols had to be found; and they were found indeed by Jeremiah, through the method of transfer, in the oracles of his call (*ca.* 626 B.C.):

(1) In the first oracle (1:5) the word of Yahweh comes to Jeremiah, saying:

> Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you;
> and before you came from the womb, I consecrated you;
> a prophet to the nations I ordained you.

The prophet is the Son of God. The child is formed by God in the mother's womb. Even before his formation he is "known" by God; and before his birth he is consecrated for the God's service as the prophet to the nations. The language is borrowed from the royal symbolism of the cosmological empires—it closely resembles an inscription of Assurbanipal, the ruler of Assur and overlord of Judah in the time of Jeremiah's youth.[7] As the Assyrian ruler, the prophet is ordained for his service by the God from distant times before the time of the world; and the "distant times" of the Assyrian inscription now blend into the eternity of the divine will that had been revealed in the Message from Sinai. The will of God is not stultified after all by the recalcitrant people, but continues, with historical effectiveness, in the ordination of Jeremiah from eternity. The sonship of God, moving from the Pharaoh to Israel, and from the people to its Davidic king, has at last reached the Prophet. While this is by far not yet the Christian revelation that only God can be the Son of God—the mystery expressed in Trinitarian theology and the Christology—it is a long step toward the insight that the order from eternity is not incarnate in a people and its rulers in pragmatic history. The transfer of the royal symbolism to the institutional outcast Jeremiah is a decisive advance in the clarification of the Messianic problem that

[7] For the Assurbanipal inscription cf. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, II, s. 765. The inscription has been quoted in Chapter 1.2.

prophet in the phrase "my servant Isaiah" (Isa. 20:3). Jeremiah does not use it for himself specifically, because with him the symbol has become the general designation of the prophets (Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15); and he uses it even for designating such nonprophetic instruments of Yahweh's will in history as the King of Babylon (Jer. 25:9; 27:6; 43:10). The wandering of the symbol reflects the wandering of authority in Israel from Moses, over the conqueror of Canaan and the founder of the Empire, to the prophets, until the concentration of authority in himself permits Jeremiah to use the symbols of the earlier carriers of authority, as far as they seem suitable, in the expression of his own prophetic existence. The fluidity of the symbols, their meandering through the process in which the meaning of authority becomes clarified, must be realized if one wants to understand the interchangeability of symbols, as in a dream play, in Deutero-Isaiah. Moreover, its recognition will make it clear why today it has become impossible to know to what extent the prophetic existence was formed by traditions of Moses, or to what extent the traditions of Moses have been formed by the prophetic experience.

(3) In the third oracle the divine authority is actually transferred to Jeremiah. Yahweh stretches forth his hand and, touching the prophet's mouth, he says (1:10):

> Behold! I put my words in your mouth.
> See! I have put you in charge, of this day, over the nations and over the kingdoms,
> to root up and to pull down,
> to destroy and to overthrow,
> to build and to plant.

This is the new message, replacing the one from Sinai to Moses. The prophet is no longer the founder and legislator of his people but something like a lord of history under God, "set over," or "put in charge of," the nations and kingdoms, for their good or their evil as they respond to the appeal. The charge is elaborated in Jeremiah 18:1–12, where the prophet is ordered to go down to the potter's house and to watch how he turns the clay in his hand into another vessel when the first one seems to be spoiled. "As the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O House of Israel" (18:6). If God intends to destroy a nation, he will repent if it turn from evil. And if he intends to plant, he will repent if the nation does what is evil in his sight (18:7–10). On principle, this

Hence, in the crisis of Israel the prophets were interested not in a Messiah but in the conduct of their kings; and when the conduct seemed to accelerate rather than to avert the disaster, they became interested in the type of ruler who would succeed the Davidic Anointed of Yahweh, as soon as some semblance of organization would rise again from the "remnant" left by the storm of history.

The terms of the prophetic problem, as well as its symbols, were set by the founder of the Empire, by David himself. In his famous "last words" he had drawn the picture of the true ruler of Israel (II Sam. 23:1–4):

> These are the last words of David:
>
> A saying of David-ben-Jesse,
> a saying of the man raised high,
> of the Anointed of the God of Jacob,
> of the favored of the songs of Israel—
> the spirit of Yahweh spoke through me,
> and his word was upon my tongue—
> said the God of Israel,
> spoke to me the Rock of Israel:
>
> "Who rules over men be righteous,
> who rules be in fear of God,
> and as light of a morning at sunrise,
> of a morning with no clouds,
> as from radiance from rain,
> as young green from the earth."

The oracle in its context breathes the spirit of imperial order in cosmological form. Here speaks the ruler who is placed as the mediator between God and the people, the man raised high to rule over man; he is a man like the others (David-ben-Jesse) and yet more than the others (the Anointed), by ontological status somewhere between God and man. The construction of the "last words" is reminiscent of nothing so much as a Babylonian proverb:

> The shadow of God is Man,
> and the shadow of Man are men,

which is accompanied in the text by the gloss: "Man, that is, the King, who is the image of God." [8] And through this image of God at the first remove, this "Man who rules over man," the *moshel* of 23:3, the *ruach*

[8] For the text and its implications cf. Franz M. Th. Boehl, "Der Babylonische Fuerstenspiegel," *Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft*, IX/3 (Leipzig, 1937), 49, 41, 46.

could prevent the imminent divine punishment. And the expectation of disaster near at hand translated itself into the urgency of the call to return. The early prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah—who had this intense experience, however, found no symptoms of a serious return in their environment; and at the same time they had to watch the disaster advancing in the form of the Assyrian invasion and the fall of the Kingdom of Israel. Hence, within the two generations of the early prophets, their call to return changed its complexion in as much as the expectation to see the institutions and mores of the concrete society reformed gave way to the faith in a metastasis of order after the present concrete society had been swallowed up by the darkness of a catastrophe. When the problem of order had gained this metastatic complexion, the prophets responded to it by developing the two distinct positions represented by Isaiah and Jeremiah:

(1) Isaiah engaged in the supreme effort of a political intervention which, if successful, was supposed to be the beginning of the metastatic order. When the King of Judah did not respond to the appeal, the prophet formed his group of disciples as the remnant of Israel beyond the present concrete society; and he entrusted the secret of the true order to his *limmudim* to be revealed only in the indeterminate future in which Yahweh would let his transfiguring *ruach* descend on the remnant's ruler. That secret had been indeed kept so well through the generations of disciples that nothing was heard of it during the remaining years of the Kingdom, nor in the early years of the Exile.

(2) A century later, Jeremiah was called to be the prophet to the nations. By the Message from Sinai Israel had been constituted as the holy center of all mankind, but the order of the Covenant and the Decalogue pertained only to the Israelite society; no order had been provided for the nations as a society of mankind. The blows of history had brought it home to Israel that there existed a mankind outside the Sinaitic order. The Philistine danger had made it necessary to supplement the theopolity by the organization of a kingdom; and the further events had shown that even the institution of kingship was no sufficient protection against Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. The "nations," which during the recession of imperial power could remain on the margin of attention, had entered into the concrete relationship of war and conquest with Israel. If the Kingdom of Israel had fallen, and the Kingdom of Judah was on the point of extinction, the existence of man in society

anybody since their time. Since neither the identity of the society nor the nature of its order can be determined, the suspicion will raise its head: Does the movement of the prophets make sense at all? If the analysis is driven against the wall of this suspicion, it will become clear that the sense of the movement can be found only if the apparent nonsense be taken as the starting point in the search for its motives.

The fact must be accepted that the questions can find no answer. The *terminus ad quem* of the movement is not a concrete society with a recognizable order. If the concern of the prophets with this apparently negative goal makes sense nevertheless, it must have been motivated by the insight, though unclear and insufficiently articulate, that there are problems of order beyond the existence of a concrete society and its institutions. The metastatic experience of Isaiah, which hitherto has been considered under the aspect of a sterile withdrawal from the realities of Israel's order, will appear in a new light if it is considered as an experience of the gulf between true order and the order realized concretely by any society, even Israel. And Jeremiah's experience of the tension between the two orders, his suffering participation in the divine suffering, is even articulate enough to make it certain that the prophet had at least a glimpse of the terrible truth: that the existence of a concrete society in a definite form will not resolve the problem of order in history, that no Chosen People in any form will be the ultimate omphalos of the true order of mankind. When Abram emigrated from Ur of the Chaldaeans, the Exodus from imperial civilization had begun. When Israel was brought forth from Egypt, by Yahweh and Moses his servant, and constituted as the people under God, the Exodus had reached the form of a people's theopolitical existence in rivalry with the cosmological form. With Isaiah's and Jeremiah's movement away from the concrete Israel begins the anguish of the third procreative act of divine order in history: The Exodus of Israel from itself.

The anguish of this last Exodus was lived through by the unknown prophet who by a modern convention is designated as Deutero-Isaiah, because he is the author of Isaiah 40–55. Since nothing is known about him except what can be inferred from his work, biographical preliminaries are not only unnecessary but hazardous, because they would prejudge the interpretation of the text. Even to speak of these Isaiah chapters as a "work" with an "author" involves commitments with

Exodus has happened in the soul of the author, and his work is the symbol of a historical event.

If this is the nature of the work, the methods most frequently used in its interpretation must be considered inadequate:

(1) The drama, to be sure, is autobiographical in substance, but the evolution of experience is mediated by the author's interpretation in retrospect. Hence, we know nothing about that experience except what the author chooses to reveal. It is reasonable to assume that the experience of the exile and the victories of Cyrus sparked the movement that reached its climax in the Fourth Song, and also that the beginning and the end were not joined in a flash of insight but were separated by a considerable number of years—but it is reasonable only because the text itself suggests this evolution over the years. Any attempt to go beyond the drama and to reconstruct the author as a "historical" person is therefore not only hazardous but contributes nothing to the understanding of the work.

(2) The meaning of the drama cannot be found by tearing an important symbol out of its context and treating it as if it were a piece of somewhat enigmatic information. There exists a library of studies on the question "Who is the Suffering Servant?" Is he the author himself, or some other suffering personage, or does the symbol prophetically envisage Christ—or is he no individual at all but Israel, and if that should be the case is he the empirical or ideal Israel, and is he the whole of Israel or a remnant? Such attempts to understand the Deutero-Isaianic work through solving the puzzle of the Servant is, on principle, not different from an attempt to understand an Aeschylean tragedy by means of a study on the question "Who is Prometheus" or "Who is Zeus?" And even when Glaucon in the *Republic* (361e) draws the figure of the just man "who will have to endure the lash, the rack, chains, the branding-iron in his eyes, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture, will be impaled," nobody will search for the historical model of the sufferer, though the allusion to the suffering of the "historical" Socrates is considerably more probable than any lines that can be drawn from the Suffering Servant to a historical figure. If such studies can be undertaken in the case of Deutero-Isaiah nevertheless with at least a measure of sense, the reason must be sought in the difference between the Israelite historical and the Hellenic mythical form of order. The Aeschylean tragedy moves, in search of order, from its compact expression in the