

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRIESTS AND PROPHETS IN PRE-EXILIC ISRAEL AS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE TEACHING FUNCTIONS

By Leon James Wood

The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the relationship which existed in pre-exilic Israel between the priests and prophets in respect to their teaching positions.

Since the teaching activity of both groups was related to a method of revelation, it is necessary to examine as to their revelational procedures as well as to teaching proper. Accordingly, two chapters are devoted to the subject of revelation, and two chapters to the teaching activity itself. In an earlier chapter, the degree of dependence of Israel on adjacent countries in such matters is investigated.

The dissertation shows that priests were occupied in a major function of teaching, in addition to their ritual service. They were the regular, normal teachers in contrast to prophets who carried out special assignments. The priests inherited their positions, lived in designated cities which were evenly distributed among the tribes, and so had ready access to the people. They were free for this work for at least eleven months of the year since their ritual service required less than one month. Their subject matter was the torah, which they believed was given by Yahweh, their God, through Moses. It contained basic, moral precepts, and both

civil and ceremonial laws.

The method of revelation employed by the priests involved the Urim and Thummim, by which answers of affirmation or implied negation could be gained when consulted by the high priest. These answers supplied some additional information to be conveyed to the people, and added to the priest's authoritative standing. The priests taught with varying degrees of success: in early tribal days providing the main resistance to engulfment of Israel by Canaanite culture; but experiencing gradual decline following the kingdom division. In the northern division, Jeroboam, the first king, departed from the torah regulation in using as priests other than Levites. Accordingly, many of the Levitic priests moved to the southern kingdom, and those who remained experienced restriction in their teaching ministries.

The prophets carried out special tasks, particularly in the role of reformers. This work was necessary because either the priests did not do their work adequately, or the people, in spite of them, still did not obey the torah requirements. Thus, the prophets did not teach the torah as such, in a "line upon line" fashion as did the priests. Rather, they urged conformance to that which the priests had already taught. They did not inherit their positions, nor have designated cities of residence, but were especially called persons for particular assignments. Great ingenuity, courage, and faith were required of them since these tasks were often difficult and even dangerous. They did not have

an additional responsibility in ritual service, as did the priests, but could give themselves solely to receiving and proclaiming Yahweh's message.

As to method of revelation, the prophets experienced a "direct contact" with Yahweh. They did not employ divination instruments, nor seek loss of consciousness in ecstatic frenzy. This "direct contact" was effected by the prophet's being "filled with the Spirit," so that his natural powers were heightened and he came to know more than he had before. He proclaimed the message thus received as the "word" of Yahweh.

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By

Leon James Wood

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
Ac Or	Acta Orientalia
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
Babyl	Babyloniaca
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
DB	Dictionary of the Bible, J. Hastings (ed.)
ERE	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
ET	Expository Times
IB	Interpreter's Bible
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JR	Journal of Religion
KDC	Keil and Delitzsch Commentaries
RA	Revue d'assyriologie et d'archaeologie orientale
SHERK	Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge
ZAW	Zeitschrift fur die altestamentliche Wissenschaft

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

I. Problem of the Dissertation

Israel's main claim to importance in world history concerned her religion. She did not produce great builders, merchants, scientists, or artisans, and her political power never rivaled Egypt or Babylonia. Indeed, she would be little remembered had it not been for her outstanding contribution in religion, as revealed particularly in the Old Testament.¹ Responsible in large part for this importance were her religious functionaries, the priests and prophets. Of these two groups, the prophets are the better known. Especially the pre-exilic, literary representatives of this group stood out as unique in all the world of their day for method and message.² But the priests must not be minimized either for their highly significant role.

¹Harry Orlinsky, Ancient Israel (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 90-91; Franz Bohl, "Some Notes on Israel in the Light of Babylonian Discoveries," JBL, LIII(1934), 142; William Irwin, The Old Testament: Keystone of Human Culture (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), pp. 235-36.

²H. H. Rowley, Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 131; S. A. Cook, The Old Testament, A Reinterpretation (New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), p. 167; Martin Noth, History of Israel (2d ed.; London: A. C. Black, 1958), p. 256; G. E. Wright, The Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), pp. 107-108.

The relation between these two groups has often been framed as follows: the priest represented the people to God; and the prophet, God to the people. In part this was true, but only in part. For the priest, though indeed engaged in sacrificial intercession for the people, also had a major responsibility in communicating God's message to the people. In fact, this activity occupied much more of his time than the ceremonial.¹ What is more, he possessed an approved means for the reception of Divine revelation just as well as the prophets. Theirs came by direct contact, but his by the Urim and Thummim. Thus, both received Divine disclosure, and both communicated the Divine message to the people.

In view of these parallels, the question arises as to the relationship between them. How were they similar to each other in these functions, and how were they different? What part did each play in Israel's history? To supply an answer to these and similar questions is the purpose of this dissertation, with the inquiry being limited to the pre-exilic era.

II. Previous Study in the Field

With the rise of the Wellhausen position,² a major change in viewpoint came concerning Israel's history. Until

¹H. H. Rowley, Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 37; J. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, pp. 161-62; Aubrey Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press Board, 1944), p. 11; H. Orlinsky, op. cit., p. 142.

²Often said to have begun with suggestions by a French physician, Jean Astruc. For a history, cf. R. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), pp. 136-41.

that time, little serious question had been voiced as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch or to the historicity of the account given therein. But with the new development, the Pentateuch¹ came to be viewed as a compilation of at least four different documents, the earliest of which could not have been written earlier than the ninth century, B.C. The history recorded in these documents was thought to be highly colored by these later writers who fixed upon it theological and ethical concepts characteristic of their own day rather than that of which they wrote.

Accordingly, the viewpoint concerning Israel's priests and prophets came to be changed as well. The priesthood was seen as the product of a long development. The first priests were merely wandering "holy men" whose services were desirable, but not indispensable for cultic service. They became organized around a central sanctuary in Jerusalem during the seventh century, but still lacked any distinction in higher and lower orders of priests and Levites. This came only with the writing of the priestly document during and following the exile. The first prophets were thought to have arisen under the influence of Canaan, and so were seen as characterized by Canaanite ecstaticism. Gradual refinement in the movement was experienced, especially in the early days of the monarchy, with the final emergence of the great literary figures coming in the eighth and seventh centuries.

¹Often spoken of as the Hexateuch when including Joshua.

The relation between the priest and prophet was viewed as one of antagonism: the priest advocating sacrifice and cultic service; the prophet, ethical conduct of life.¹ Certain passages from the eighth century prophets and Jeremiah were pointed out as even demanding abolition of the sacrificial system.² Later, Sigmund Mowinckel was influential in starting a trend to an opposite extreme in which the two groups were viewed, not as opposed, but as even common cultic officials.³ Both priests and prophets had the same interests, and both engaged in much the same work, with difference only in stress. As evidence, Mesopotamian parallels were sought in baru and mahhu priests.⁴

More recently, many studies have been in reaction again. These find both the earlier "antagonistic" idea and the later "common cultic" presentation too extreme, and see the truth lying somewhere between.⁵ The prophets did criti-

¹As representative of this viewpoint may be listed J. Wellhausen, J. A. Bewer, J. G. Matthews, J. Philip Hyatt, John Skinner, W. Robertson Smith, George B. Gray, A. Guillaume, C. H. Dodd, Elmer A. Leslie.

²Amos 5:21-25; Hosea 6:6; Isa. 1:11-17; Mic. 6:6-8; Jer. 6:20; 7:21-23.

³For a good survey of this development, cf. O. Eissfeldt, "The Prophetic Literature," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. H. Rowley (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 113-61. Especially important in this viewpoint is Aubrey Johnson, op. cit.

⁴Carried the furthest by Alfred Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1945).

⁵H. H. Rowley, speaking of the "common cultic" viewpoint, gives a typical comment: "Here again there are disa-

cize the sacrificial system of their day, but not in a desire for its abolition; only its reform.¹ There probably were some prophets who were closely allied with ritual activities, but not all and, for the most part, not the great literary figures.²

There has come change also in the viewpoint of the date of much of the material in the Pentateuch. Though its final compilation is seen much as before, substantial portions of it are now thought to have been in either oral or written form considerably earlier, including even legal materials from Deuteronomy and the priestly writings.³ This in turn has issued in seeing greater reliability in the history of the records.⁴ George Mendenhall cites three reasons as

greements as to how far this should be pressed, and it is probable that we should not regard all the prophets as priestly persons or draw sharp lines of distinction within the prophetic circles"; "Trends in Old Testament Study," The Old Testament and Modern Study (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. xiii.

¹Walter Williams, The Prophets, Pioneers to Christianity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 36.

²Writes T. Meek, Hebrew Origins (2d ed.; New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), pp. 178-79, "It is questionable whether many of the canonical prophets were cult officials despite the opinions of modern scholars to the contrary."

³Walther Eichrodt is especially notable here: Theology of the Old Testament, trans. J. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 71-73. Cf. G. E. Wright, op. cit., p. 62; also John Bright, History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 137.

⁴Cyrus Gordon says, "It cannot be overemphasized that the discoveries of archaeology tend to justify the literal meaning of the text as against scholarly and traditional interpretation"; The World of the Old Testament (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Co., 1958), p. 120. In an article,

primarily responsible:

- (1) Breakdown of source analysis as the primary method of reconstructing Israelite history and religion; (2) the introduction of new methods and new data; and (3) the changes in the Zeitgeist, both in the academic and the world scene.¹

The new methods and new data Mendenhall mentions come particularly from the area of archaeology. William Albright states in this connection that the Wellhausen view, formed before this information was available, was accordingly based only on speculative, historical assumptions, and so lacked the validity of the more recent position.² Respecting the priests and prophets, this viewpoint presents a picture which is far more like the older, traditional presentation.³

The position of the present writer is nearer to that of this most recent development, only he finds himself yet more sympathetic to the historic, conservative viewpoint. He is appreciative of the valuable contributions and insights supplied by those who have represented these various positions, and believes that the conservative scholar should avail himself of them in his own conclusions.

"Higher Critics and Forbidden Fruit," Christianity Today, IV(1959), 131-34, Gordon gives a polemic against an unwarranted, continuing construction of the JEDP stratification.

¹"Biblical History in Transition," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, ed. G. E. Wright (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), pp. 31-32.

²"Archaeology Confronts Biblical Criticism," The American Scholar, IV(1938), 181.

³H. H. Rowley says in this connection, op. cit., p. xvii, "In general, it may be said that there has been a tendency towards more conservative views on many questions than were common at the opening of our period."

III. Methodology of the Dissertation

One can scarcely examine the teaching activities of Israel's priests and prophets without first giving attention to the means of Divine disclosure by which some, if not much, of the information they taught was first communicated to them. In other words, revelational media are much involved in this type of study. Accordingly, two basic tasks must be undertaken: (1) a comparison of the Divine disclosure means for both groups; and (2) the same for the teaching activities proper. Two chapters will be devoted to each comparison. As a preliminary concern, it will be necessary to devote a chapter also to possible influence from adjacent cultures; and at the close a chapter for the purpose of summation.

Quotations used from the Bible will be either original translation or else taken from the American Standard Version. In either case, the form, Yahweh, rather than, Jehovah, will be used for the Hebrew tetragrammaton, yhwh.

Chapter II

THE BEARING OF ADJACENT CULTURES

The first concern is Israel's relation to her neighbors. How much was she influenced by them? Did her religion result from a combination of foreign elements along with her own? This question has long been seriously studied by scholars.¹ Some believe that outside influence was very extensive,² while others see it as having pertained only to the less significant features of the culture.³ The question

¹G. W. Anderson, "Hebrew Religion," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. H. Rowley (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p. 291, says, "How far that borrowing went and how much of it became part of the officially recognized religious system, is one of the most strenuously debated problems of Old Testament study today."

²J. M. P. Smith, "Semitic Prophecy," reprint from The Biblical World, XXXV(1910), 223, writes, "It is now generally recognized that not a single institution of Israel's life was exclusively Hebraic." W. C. Graham in "The Religion of the Hebrews," JR, XI(1931), 244, states, "Little by little, in the long process of settlement, they became in all but name Canaanites." And T. J. Meek in "The Interpretation of Cultures as Illustrated by the Character of the Old Testament Literature," JR, VII(1927), 244, suggests that it was "just because the Hebrew people" did borrow so largely from others "that they so far outdistanced their contemporaries in real cultural development." However, he does not amplify this thought.

³G. E. Wright, The Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 74, declares, "What Israel borrowed was the least significant." William Albright, "Recent Progress in North Canaanite Research," BASOR, LXX(1938), 24, states, "Every fresh publication of Canaanite mythologi-

here is quite specific in this regard, asking mainly as to this influence in respect to religious personnel. Were the concepts regarding characterization and function of prophets and priests borrowed from surrounding nations? The question carries importance for this discussion principally in two respects: first, as a means by which to gain background in which to view Israel's own religious persons; and second, as a means by which to determine the degree to which evidence may be taken from adjacent cultures for describing these offices in Israel.

The answer to the question will be sought in three steps: first, a survey of the parallels existent between Israel's religious persons and those of adjacent countries; second, a consideration of the opportunity by which borrowing could have transpired; and third, in view of these findings, an evaluation proper of the extent of influence thus shown.

I. Existent Parallels

Two countries come to mind as the most obvious in which to look for parallels to Israel's culture: Egypt, from where the tribes migrated, and which continued to be a close neighbor after the conquest; and Canaan where they settled. However, a third country is equally, if not more, important, and that is Babylonia. The reason is that Babylonian culture

cal texts makes the gulf between the religion of Canaan and of Israel increasingly clear." Y. Kaufmann backs up similar observations with convincing arguments in his The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine, trans. M. Dagut (Jerusalem: Hebrew Univ. Press, 1953), pp. 87-91.

influenced all the ancient Near East,¹ including Canaan, and so, when Canaan in turn influenced Israel, she acted in large part as a medium.² This is not to say, of course, that Canaan did not have distinctions of her own, or that she did not supply variation to what she mediated. Thus, both Babylonia and Canaan must be considered; in addition, of course, to Egypt. Then too, some attention should be given to ancient Mari, half way up the Euphrates, for some highly significant documents were discovered there; and the same is true for the Hittite region to the north.

A. Babylonia

Though the principal interest is in comparing religious personnel, still there is reason to give some attention also to religious concepts. This will enlarge the basis of comparison so that a more accurate judgment can be made as to the extent of the influence, and also broaden the religious picture in view of which the personnel can be better understood.

1. Religious personnel

Religion was of great importance to early Babylonians.

¹Back of the Babylonian culture was the Sumerian, and A. Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 1, says of it: "The religion of all but a comparatively small fraction of the Semites was influenced and moulded by that great ancient Mesopotamian people the Sumerians."

²As Elmer Leslie puts it, The Psalms (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 25, "To a great extent Canaan was simply the cultural medium through which both Egyptian and Babylonian influences reached Israel."

People lived in constant fear of the unknown and were willing to expend great effort to obtain divine favor.¹ Hence, temples were central in villages, and priests were numerous and powerful.²

Four basic types of priests served: the ashipu who were exorcists and whose main function was to relieve persons of demons who had assaulted them;³ the kalu whose special responsibility was temple music; the gadishtu, priestesses, whose main function was serving as temple prostitutes; and the oracular priests, in which the interest of this inquiry centers, called by four different names, baru, sha'ilu, shabru, and mahhu.⁴

The special province of these last was divination.⁵ They interpreted omens for the people by which it was thought the gods communicated their will. Omens were of two general types, the unarranged and the arranged. The first type con-

¹Guillaume, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

²Guillaume, ibid, p. 40, says the priests exercised "an enormous influence" and later, p. 42, states that "the power of the baru priests must have been incalculable." Cf. Henri Frankfort, The Birth of Civilization in the Near East (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Co., 1956), pp. 54-77.

³Guillaume, op. cit., p. 18.

⁴For a description of these different classes, cf. S. H. Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian Religion (London: Hutchinson's Univ. Library, 1953), pp. 51-52.

⁵E. O. James, in his The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1959), p. 61, says divination in at least two forms (hepatoscopy and astrology) can be traced back to 3000 B.C. Its founder was the legendary Enmemduranna (or Enmemduranki), an early Sumerian king.

sisted in natural occurrences which were thought to be in some way unusual; the second, particularly in hepatoscopy (observation of animal liver) and hydromancy (observation of oil on water).¹ An extensive literature arose as observations were catalogued through the years, and a detailed science evolved which young priests had to learn.

Of all these means, hepatoscopy was the most common. The animal, usually a sheep, was slain and his stomach laid open. The baru priest then

inspected the liver, gall, and attached entrails as they lay in the opened stomach of the sheep; then with his left hand he lifted them up for closer inspection; then the entrails were drawn out in order to expose completely the organs lying behind them. It then became possible to distinguish the favourable and unfavourable aspects of the liver itself.²

Every line of the liver carried meaning. Manuals existed explaining each, and even clay models of the liver were employed on which young priests could practice.³

Astrology, an unarranged type, was also practiced widely. The moon, sun, stars, cloud formations, storm portents—all could portray omens. Dreams were studied carefully and even induced by a process called incubation.⁴ In this process, the priest, normally the sha'biru, would shut himself in a

¹S. H. Hooke describes these means; op. cit., p. 62. E. O. James gives yet greater detail; op. cit., p. 37.

²Hooke, op. cit., p. 89.

³At Mari alone 32 such models were found; cf. Mendenhall, "Mari," BA, XI(1948), 18.

⁴That Nebuchadnezzar, then, should have wanted his dreams interpreted was not unusual; cf. ANET, p. 450 for pertinent texts.

special chamber. The baru would give the interpretation when the dream came.

The place which divination held in the lives of the people, including the rulers, was of the greatest significance.¹ The building of a temple, the appointment of an official, or the waging of a war would not be undertaken without due consultation. Unfavorable omens would set the project aside, or at least postpone it until favorable ones would be obtained. It is easy to see that unprincipled priests could have exercised strong influence in the operation of the government.²

Divination was unable to provide any descriptive message for the inquirer. It was limited to merely an affirmation or negation. However, by careful and repeated questioning a certain amount of information could be obtained.³ The

¹Recognized in Ezek. 21:21 when the king of Babylon is said to have used divination, mentioning particularly arrows, images, and the liver. Cf. ANET, p. 84.

²Guillaume, op. cit., p. 42, says that the types of questions asked by the inquiring ruler "must have lent themselves to intrigue and counter-intrigue to which the priests must have been a party, unless they differed from the priesthood of all other countries in the orient."

³Morris Jastrow illustrates this in his Religion of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1898), p. 329 as he gives the questions which Esarhaddon asked when a Bartatua, king of Ishkuza, desired to marry his daughter. He wanted to know if this person "is to be trusted, will he fulfill his promises, will he observe the decrees of Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, and execute them in good faith?" He gives also the same king's questions when he desires to appoint his own son in the government: "Is the entrance of Siniddinabal, the son of Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, whose name is written on this tablet, into the government in accord with the command of thy great divinity? Is it to come to pass?" Ibid.

priests followed strict rules in the framing of all such questions; as indeed they did in all matters of preparation for giving them, including the sacrificing of the sheep, which itself had to be without blemish, and their own proper dress and ritualistic purity.¹

To find a parallel to Israelite prophets in Babylonia, scholars have referred especially to the mahhu priests. However, there are difficulties in making the desired comparisons, one of which is that no text of a "prophetic" nature has been found from them. A few texts of this kind from other sources have been found, however, and these should be noted. These consist of the "Oracles of Arbela" and a few catastrophic texts of which the "Myth of Irra" is the best known. The former are a series of eight oracles addressed to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, as coming from the goddess Ishtar. They contain factual information besides encouragements for the ruler.² The latter tells how the plague-god, Irra, was to destroy the whole world including Babylon.³ Thus, there is more than a mere Yes or No type of communica-

¹Cf. ibid., p. 335 for good explanation.

²Guillaume, op. cit., pp. 42-43, finds parallels to Hebrew prophecy in these oracles as follows: "Like the Hebrew prophets, the priestesses employed the first person in speaking on behalf of Ishtar. The frequent injunction to 'fear not,' the promise of help, and of the overthrow of the king's enemies, and the assertion of the goddess's greatness, are all suggestive of Hebrew prophecy."

³Guillaume, ibid., pp. 52-53, however, rejects the view of Gressman that this Irra story influenced Isaiah in his prophetic word against the sins of Jerusalem which were to bring punishment upon the city.

tion here and in some measure a parallel with Old Testament prophecy.

2. Religious concepts

There is need here to notice only a few of the more basic religious concepts, since, as observed, this is not the main interest. The first to consider is sin. Babylonians thought of sin mainly in terms of cultic infraction. The person had omitted some required ceremony, or else performed it inadequately. E. O. James believes that sin was "always within the sphere of ritual holiness";¹ though S. H. Hooke, while stating that this was normally the case, says that the suppliant was also "conscious of having committed moral offences," including such as "untruthfulness and lack of clemency."²

The concept of punishment for sin is evidenced by many texts recording prayers for forgiveness. The priests acted as intercessors for the guilty. The idea, holiness, too played a part. When the priest drew near for cultic ceremony, he had to purify himself.³ This involved mainly ritual washings. But again this holiness pertained almost exclusively to ritual sanctity and not moral.

¹Origins of Sacrifice (London, 1933), pp. 193-94.

²Op. cit., p. 99.

³A. Halдар, Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1945), p. 2, writes that "in order to approach the deity, the priests had to be pure, ellu (i.e. holy) and this qualification was not required once and for all by initiation, but had to be renewed every time the priests were to officiate."

The Babylonian ideas relative to "substitution" in cultic ceremony are also pertinent. Hooke describes three basic aspects:

First, the animal which served as a substitute for a sick person, since all sickness was regarded as the result of the anger of the gods or the hostility of evil demons, was sent away alive into a desert place, like the Hebrew scape-goat, carrying the sins of defilement of the person for whom it was the substitute. Second, the substitute animal, usually a kid, was regarded as the symbol of Tammuz, and by the act of slaying this victim the sick man was thought of as being identified with the god in his death and subsequent resurrection, and thus delivered from the consequences of whatever he had done to cause his sickness. Thirdly, at certain grave crises in the history of the kingship, a human substitute might take the place of the king, and possibly even undergo death to avert evil consequences to the state.¹

As to the Babylonian view of life after death, two points stand out. The first is "the inseparableness of the living and the dead."² That is, though the dead person was no longer visible, still it was felt somehow that his soul communed with the living in solemn moments, and that guilt would be incurred if offense was given to him. The second is that their view of the dead's existence was gloomy and foreboding, a sort of empty void. Reward for good and punishment for wrong were dispensed solely in this life.

B. Mari and Anatolia

Mari, halfway between Babylonia and Canaan, and capital of the ancient middle Euphrates' region, shows the same

¹Op. cit., p. 70

²S. Langdon, "Babylonian Eschatology," Babyloniaca, VI(1912), 213, gives good discussion of this matter.

basic religious culture as Babylonia.¹ For instance, that divination occupied the same prominent place is indicated in a letter from an ambassador of Mari's king, Zimri-Lim, to Hammurabi saying that in the Mari army there was a diviner for every section of the troops.²

But the item of greatest significance concerns prophecy. For among the many texts found there, one contains a "prophecy" of remarkable parallels to that found in Israel. A. Lods gives the class name of the "prophet" concerned as a-pi-lum, which he translates as repondant, "one who responds."³ This a-pi-lum communicates a message to the king, using the words of the god, Adad, himself, in which the king is reminded that he had been raised on Adad's knees and been placed by Adad on his throne. He then tells him that as Adad had instated him there, so he could take nihlatum out of his hand if he did not make "the libation," indeed he could take all he had given him, the throne, the territory (?) and the city. However, if on the contrary, the king should fulfill Adad's desires, then he would be given "thrones on thrones, houses on houses, territories (?) on territories (?), cities on cities and the country from the east to the west."

¹Mari was excavated by Andre Parrot whose work brought to light more than 20,000 tablets from the royal palace.

²Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 18.

³Lods gives the entire text, both in transliteration and translation, on which the account here is based, in his "Untablette inedite de Mari, interessante pour l'histoire ancienne du prophetisme Semitique," Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), pp. 103-110.

Two parallels to Old Testament prophecy especially stand out. First, the very words of the deity are employed. And second, there is reminder to the king of his dependence on his god, and then promise of blessing if he does well along with warning of difficulty if he does not. However, a marked contrast also exists: the doing well for the Mari king concerns only cultic "libation," whereas Israel's kings were enjoined to moral obedience.

Anatolia, during the Hittite regime, is also well known today and portrays again basic similarity to Babylonia. Religion was of paramount importance. H. Guterbock states, "The thousands of religious texts contained in the royal archives of the Hittite capital at Boghaz-Koy . . . is a vivid manifestation of the religious character of the Hittite kingship."¹ Divination was widely practiced and shows the same common forms, with a corresponding large omen literature.² The concept of sin was once more ritualistic in kind. It had to be confessed and sacrifice made for it if misfortune from the gods was to be averted.³ A man might be quite ignorant of his error, and then various inquiries of the deity would have to be made in order to identify the wrong.⁴

¹"Hittite Religion," reprint from Forgotten Religions (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 83.

²Ibid., p. 96.

³For a good discussion, cf. O. R. Gurney, The Hittites (2d ed.; Hammondsorth: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 158.

⁴Gutterbock, op. cit., p. 97, describes as follows: "The system of questioning consisted in putting a question

C. Canaan

Coming now to Canaan proper, it is well to look first at the pantheon represented, which carried similarity to that of Babylonia, but also had its own unique stamp. The chief god was El, a solar deity. At his side was his feminine counterpart, Asherat-of-the-sea, the mother of the gods. Next in importance was Baal who was represented in various localized manifestations, so that the Old Testament rightly speaks of Baal Peor, Baal Herman, Baal Meon, etc.¹ Baal was the god of rain and fertility, and, in the Canaanite mythology, struggled annually with the death god, Mot, who defeated him; after which the goddess Anath, sister and lover of Baal, restored him to life in representation of spring resurrection in nature.² In southern Canaan, Anath appears to have been replaced by Ashera as Baal's consort, with her wooden pole serving as an emblem along with his altar.³

Surprisingly enough, only a few indications are given

which could be answered "yes" or "no." The procedure by which the answer was secured--observation of the entrails of an animal or of the flight of birds or throwing dice--and the result were registered together with the question."

¹Cf. Num. 25:3; Jud. 3:3; Num. 32:28.

²Cf. P. K. Hitti, History of Syria (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 116f; A. S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen: Gad, 1952); C. H. Gordon, Ugaritic Literature (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949); Claude Schaffer, The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939).

³According to Jud. 6:25-26, Gideon "cut" (karath) down such a pole and then used the wood for fuel. These poles stood beside the Baal altar and were likely carved in some obscene representation. Cf. I Kgs. 18:19.

in Canaanite texts as to divination. Bird watching is mentioned¹ and also dream interpretation,² but there is no reference to hepatoscopy. Cyrus Gordon affirms that the divination priest would go with the army to battle, however.³

There was prophecy of a kind. Zakir, king of Hamath, under enemy attack received encouragement from his god: "Fear not, for I have made thee (king, and I will) stand at thy side and I will save thee from all these (kings . . .)"⁴ And an ecstatic state is indicated for a noble youth of Byblos in the story of the Egyptian, Wenamon.⁵ It seems also to have been evident in the behavior of the Baal prophets on Mt. Carmel.⁶

The Old Testament calls the Canaanite places of worship bamoth, "high places." These were numerous in the land,

¹One text from Ras Shamra so implies, cf. Haldar, op. cit., p. 80; also an Amarna Letter, ibid., p. 15; and a statement from a young ruler, Idrimi, exiled from Alalakh, which Albright translates as, "I interpreted (the flight of) birds," in his "Some Important Recent Discoveries: Alphabetic Origins and the Idrimi Statue," BASOR, CXVIII(1950), 11-20.

²I. Engnell quotes from the Ras Shamra text, I Krt, 11. 31b-37a, which speaks of a dream interpretation, and the setting suggests a dream which had been induced, in his Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1943), p. 151.

³Introduction to Old Testament Times, p. 82, now re-edited as The World of the Old Testament (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Co., 1958).

⁴Quoted by Haldar, op. cit., p. 75.

⁵For text and discussion, cf. John Wilson's treatment in ANET, p. 26.

⁶I Kgs. 18:26-29. There is no indication of any prophetic oracle at this time, however.

but archaeology has revealed little about them.¹ They were likely enclosed, though uncovered, places which housed both an altar and the "Asherah" pole. A list of sacrifices offered at them reveals many names familiar to the Old Testament student:

The perfect offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the sacrifice intended to secure justice, the sacrifice of thanksgiving for the rain, the whole burnt offering, the sacrifice of expiation, the offering made by fire, and the sacrifice of communion.²

Doubtless similarity of this kind would have encouraged borrowing on Israel's part.³

The Canaanites also had their regular feast occasions. The most important was the autumnal celebration in which the king was annually re-enthroned. It was likely a direct transfer of the Babylonian Akitu festival which long held a central place in the parent culture. An important aspect of the Babylonian feast was the marriage of the king to the mother-goddess, Ishtar, which was supposed to insure good crops for the ensuing year.⁴

¹C. C. McCown deals with this matter in his "Hebrew High Places and Cult Remains," JBL LXIX(1950), 205.

²E. Leslie, Old Testament Religion in the Light of Its Canaanite Background (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 45. He also lists the animals used: "Bulls, castrated sheep, heavy and fat rams, calves one year old, and sucking lambs. In addition to these the Phoenician tariffs included bulls, he-goats, kids, cocks, and pullets"; ibid.

³Canaanite influence on Israel is indicated in Jud. 6:25; 8:33; 10:6; I Sam. 7:4; 12:10; I Kgs. 16:31; 18:18; 19:18; 22:53; etc.

⁴Cf. E. Leslie, The Psalms (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 56.

Again sin pertained only to ritual infraction. The moral degradation of the Canaanites is revealed in their mythology. For instance, El dethroned his own father, murdered his son, and decapitated his daughter. Passion and lust characterized his life, and Albright states that the description of his seduction of two unnamed women is the most senuous in Near Eastern literature.¹ Both male and female prostitutes, called "holy men" and "holy women," played a prominent cultic role. Child sacrifice too was observed and even snake worship with all its revolting aspects.²

D. Egypt

Egypt again reveals the same stress on religion. Here priests not only controlled the people, but they owned much of the land as well.³ Divination held a prominent place. As in Babylonia, signs were taken from nature objects, such as the stars or the wind; and even greater place was given to dreams. Egypt did little with hepatoscopy and omen study, however. Instead statues with moveable parts were employed. A mouth might open or a head nod in reply to the question,

¹Cf. his Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (3d ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), p. 73f. for a discussion of these matters.

²Amplified by E. Leslie, Old Testament Religion in the Light of Its Canaanite Background (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 45; also by M. Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. Co., 1954), p. 175.

³E. O. James states that "by the time of Rameses III (c. 1198 B.C.) more than a tenth of the entire country was owned by Theban priesthoods"; op. cit., p. 281.

when put by the priest.¹ Also actions of sacred animals were thought significant.²

From Egypt too have come "prophetic" texts, which some scholars have compared favorably with the Old Testament,³ though their date is much earlier.⁴ One is from an Ipu-wer who, standing before the king, denounces him, points out social deficiencies, and recommends improvements.⁵ Another is from a Nefer-rohu who predicts the downfall of the current regime and even names the next.⁶

A temporary emergence of monotheism in the reign of Amenhotep IV (Akhnaton) did not last long enough for consideration here.⁷ The concept of sin, even of ritualistic kind,

¹In the Oriental Institute in Chicago is an original statue of the falcon god, Horus, which has two holes running the length of the body presumably for cords which could be manipulated by hidden priests to make the head and beak work in answer to the question. For other materials, cf. John Wilson, ANET, p. 448.

²For instance, at Memphis, the bull Apis would be observed as to which of two chambers provided for him he would enter, each indicating a different meaning.

³J. M. P. Smith does in his "Southern Influence upon Hebrew Prophecy," JBL, XXXV(1918-19), 8.

⁴At the close of the third millennium B.C.; cf. ANET, p. 441.

⁵James Breasted gives a good description in his The Dawn of Conscience (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp. 197-98; also J. M. P. Smith, "Semitic Prophecy," reprint from The Biblical World, XXXV(1910), 227.

⁶Cf. John Wilson, op. cit., pp. 444-46.

⁷Breasted gives a good discussion, op. cit., pp. 272-75, also citing a similar tendency as having emerged as early as the Pyramid age.

did not play as great a part in Egyptian thinking as in Babylonian. Errors were not thought sinful, but foolish for they brought unhappiness.¹ Of much greater importance was their strong emphasis on the after life, in which the idea of reward and punishment for life behavior was involved.²

II. Opportunity for Influence

The interest now is in viewing the contacts Israel had with these cultures that could have made borrowing possible.

The contact with Babylonia, through the medium of Canaan,³ was made possible by early migrations of sizable groups of people from the east, as well as by general interplay in trade for the whole Fertile Crescent region. One important migration was that of the Amorites. Their origin is somewhat clouded, but it is certain that they lived in the regions of both Mari and Babylonia shortly after 2000 B.C. From there large numbers of them moved to the Syria-Palestine area in the early centuries of the second millennium. They would of course have brought their eastern culture with them.⁴

¹Cf. Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1948), p. 73.

²Breasted discusses, op. cit., pp. 250-51.

³Abraham of course provided an early direct contact.

⁴Albright gives a good discussion in his "The Babylonian Matter in the Predeuteronomistic Primeval History (JE) in Gen. 1-11," JBL, LVIII(1939), 101; also in his "The Old Testament World," IB, I, pp. 248-50.

The Hurrians, slightly later, served to the same end. Discoveries at Nuzi, east of the Tigris, reveal an established Hurrian occupancy during the Old Babylonian period, and other texts have shown Hurrian names later scattered all across Mesopotamia and again into the Syria-Palestine sector. Apparently they wandered freely, with colonies developing in many places.¹ The Old Testament speaks of them as Horites.²

That Babylonian influence did spread by these and other ways is indicated signally by the wide usage of the Babylonian language. Particularly important is the fact that it was even used for correspondence between Canaan and Egypt, and this when Canaan was under Egyptian jurisdiction; as the Amarna letters clearly show.³ The same time saw "religious lyrics, modelled on the Accadian" existent in Canaan;⁴ and, further still, reason exists to believe that Babylonian gods were worshipped in Canaan in view of such a city name as Beth-shemesh, after the god, Shamash.⁵

The Hebrew contact with Canaan is of course obvious.

¹Cf. E. A. Speiser, "Ethnic Movements in the Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.," AASOR, XIII(1931-32), 16.

²For instance, Gen. 14:6; 36:20-29; Deut. 2:12,22.

³For listing of pertinent literature as well as the most recent translation of several of the letters, cf. ANET, pp. 483-90. Albright, op. cit., pp. 257-59, discusses the language aspect.

⁴George Widengren, The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents (Stockholm: Bokforlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937), p. 5.

⁵E. Leslie, op. cit., pp. 21-22, discusses this matter; also S. H. Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian Religion (London: Hutchinson's Univ. Library, 1953), p. vii.

And there are several factors which would have encouraged borrowing from these neighbors so close at hand. The most important would have been the Canaanite advance over the invaders in material culture to which the incoming Hebrews would have been attracted, especially in agricultural techniques.¹ There was also some similarity in cultic observance as shown by the terminology from Ras Shamra.² Then there was the common Philistine menace which would have encouraged mutual assistance between Hebrews and Canaanites.³ And some scholars have also mentioned the similarity in the language which, of course, would have been true if the migrants used the Hebrew at that time, which is likely.⁴

The Old Testament itself indicates that borrowing in some measure did occur. In Gideon's day, for instance, his neighbors wished to take his life for daring to destroy the local Baal altar.⁵ Samuel proclaimed the need of putting away the "Baal and Ashtaroth" observances.⁶ Later, the Phoenician, Jezebel, made work of importing the Baal cult

¹Cf. M. Noth, The History of Israel (2d ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1958), pp. 141-44; also J. Pedersen, "Canaanite and Israelite Culture," Ac Or, XVIII(1939), 1.

²Cf. A. Welch, Prophet and Priest in Old Israel (London: Lutterworth Press, 1936), p. 57.

³Cf. E. Leslie, op. cit., p. 106; also N. K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 166.

⁴So John Peters, The Religion of the Hebrews (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1914), p. 111.

⁵Jud. 6:24-30.

⁶For instance, I Sam. 7:3-4.

after her marriage to Ahab.¹ Canaanite type "high places" became common in the land,² and even the degraded practice of sacred prostitution all too prevalent.³ It is significant, however, that never is this borrowing approved by the Old Testament writers.

The opportunity for Israel to borrow from Egypt is self-evident also. The tribes migrated from there and certainly carried memories with them of the former associations.⁴ Further, they were never far away from Egypt when settled in Canaan, and trade was continuous between the two regions. For this reason some scholars believe the influence of Egypt was as great as of Babylonia.⁵

III. Evaluation

It is the task now to make a judgment as to the extent of Israel's borrowing. The question is: how far does Israel's religious culture, as revealed in the Old Testament, show similarity to the cultures now described so as to sug-

¹I Kgs. 16:31-33; 18:4,19.

²I Kgs. 3:2; 11:7; 14:23; 15:14; etc.

³I Kgs. 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; II Kgs. 23:7; cf. Beatrice Goff, "Syncretism in the Religion of Israel," JBL, LVIII (1939), 151-56.

⁴From this point of view, note Jeroboam's words when establishing the new worship at Dan and Bethel: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"; I Kgs. 12:28.

⁵J. M. P. Smith, "Southern Influence upon Hebrew Prophecy," AJSL, XXXV(1918-19), 3; also A. C. Mace, "The Influence of Egypt on Hebrew Literature," AAA, IX(1922), 3-5.

gest borrowing on her part.¹ The task, then, is mainly to make comparisons. It is well to do this in relation first to the religious concepts and then to the more pertinent personnel.

A. Comparison of Religious Concepts

The following concepts have been described and so constitute appropriate points to compare.

1. Deity concept

It is well to begin with deity concept, for this is fundamental. And, doing so, it is contrast rather than similarity that appears. As to number of gods worshipped, adjacent cultures had many, while Israel held to only one. As to ethical level, neighboring gods lacked moral quality themselves and did not make moral demands of their people, while Yahweh always acted in keeping with His own moral law and did require conformity also on the part of His worshippers. As to fundamental character, other gods represented aspects of nature, but Yahweh was supreme over nature and worked His purposes through it. As to sex distinctions, gods of other countries played either male or female roles and both sexes were represented, while Yahweh, though implied as male, was never presented as having sex.² And as to images of the

¹Irving F. Wood, writing of this matter in his "Borrowing Between Religions," JBL, XLVI(1927), 98, stresses that more than mere likeness of a general nature is necessary to prove borrowing, but in addition "some likeness of detail."

²Cf. H. H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 132.

gods, adjacent lands abounded in them, but these were prohibited in Israel.¹

2. Sin concept

It is contrast that appears also in respect to the concept of sin. Sin was spoken of in adjacent lands, but not in a way that could "be rendered 'sin' in the Biblical sense of the term."² For sin elsewhere was only ritual infraction. The gods were interested only in ceremonial due: the people might live as they pleased otherwise. In contrast, for Israel the good life consisted in "doing the will of God."³ Men were to live right and observe justice. Also, sin was thought of in Israel, not only as individual in scope, but corporate. Daily sacrifices were made to atone for the sin of the people collectively.⁴ And a principal message of the writing prophets was that the nation as a whole would be punished due to her sin.⁵ But in other lands, sin was seen only as an individual matter, and ideas of expiation and scope of punishment were governed accordingly.⁶

¹John Bright treats all these distinctions, History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 137-42.

²G. E. Wright, The Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 105.

³Rowley, op. cit., p. 124.

⁴Burnt offerings, meal and drink offerings, and most peace and sin offerings were corporate in scope. Cf. "Sacrificial Offerings," Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), pp. 945-52.

⁵Infra, chap. VI, pp. 238-40.

⁶Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961, p. 166.

Similar contrast shows also in sin confession; for, as G. E. Wright states, in Babylonia the "penitential psalms abound in confessions of guilt but ignore the sense of sin; they are vibrant with despair but not with contrition--with regret but not with repentance."¹ Ritual washing was observed for priestly purification in Babylonia as well as in Israel, but again, in Babylonia the material (usually water) worked of itself, while in Israel it could only symbolize a necessary repentant heart.²

3. Substitution concept

More similarity with Babylonia exists in respect to the idea of substitution. Indeed, that both countries should have had this distinctive idea in their religious thinking is noteworthy. Two of the three aspects cited by Hooke, as quoted, are pertinent: that of the "scapegoat" idea, and that of the slaying of a kid as symbolic of Tammuz. However, again there are some basic differences. For one thing, when the animal in Babylonia was either sent into a desert place, or else killed, as a substitute, it was only in reference to someone who was sick, and so carried out in order that the person might be made well. But in Israel the sin had to be removed for its own sake, whether any person was suffering from it or not. And for another, as Eichrodt points out,

¹Op. cit., p. 278.

²E. O. James discusses the matter, citing other purification means in Babylonia as "blood or fire, or carried away by an animal or bird"; The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1959), p. 178.

the Babylonian idea did not involve the concept of sin "as a state of personal guilt." Rather, the sick person was thought to be "overpowered and enchanted by evil spirits" which somehow had to be appeased. "Hence, every expiatory rite" had to "conclude with an expulsion of the demons."¹

4. Life after death concept

Relative to the concept of life after death, both Babylonia and Egypt had a viewpoint requiring notice. The former saw that time as only a foreboding mystery and believed that rewards or punishments were received only in this life. The latter, in contrast, placed stress on the after life; seeing it as a time when at least some rewards and punishments were dispensed, and especially as requiring extensive preparation for it of a material nature. For this reason, embalming was practiced and also the storing of the grave with physical comforts.

The Old Testament does not dwell at length on this subject, but what it says points to contrasts with both positions. It agrees with Babylonia that this life holds rewards and punishments, but it disagrees in that the next life contains those of yet more serious nature.² Like Egypt, a resurrection experience was anticipated, but unlike her there was no physical preparation either needed or possible in view of it, since everything material must be left be-

¹Eichrodt, op. cit.

²Dan. 12:2; Ps. 1:5,6; 49:14,15.

hind at death.¹ Unlike Babylonia, that time was visualized as one of joy for the righteous; and unlike Egypt, this joy was not viewed in physical pleasures but in seeing God.²

5. Prophecy concept

As to the matter of prophecy, some parallels between the "prophetic" texts of Babylonia, Mari, and Egypt and those of the Old Testament have been indicated: the Babylonian texts particularly in providing encouragement for the king; the Mari text in quoting the very words of the deity admonishing the king to proper conduct; and the Egyptian texts in urging social reform and promising improvement with even "messianic" overtones.³

However, here too the contrasts appear more significant. For one thing, these other instances show no condemnation of moral wrong. A. B. Mace says that the Egyptian samples show a "passionate zeal for reform" in "the existing order of society,"⁴ but the social decay had not been due to sin. Again, "intimacy between God and prophet, which is the outstanding characteristic of Hebrew prophecy, is almost en-

¹Ps. 49:16-18.

²Job 19:23-27; Ps. 16:8-11; 17:15.

³For "messianic" aspects, cf. Breasted, Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 213; also Alan H. Gardiner, "New Literary Works from Ancient Egypt," JEA, I(1914), 100.

⁴"The Influence of Egypt on Hebrew Literature," AAA, IX(1922), 23. Comments Eichrodt in reference to the Mari text, "The distinction of Old Testament prophecy lies in the reference of everything to a divine will which applies to a whole people"; op. cit., p. 322.

tirely lacking in" these adjacent areas.¹ Further, "in contrast with the higher aspects of prophecy in Israel, the prophets of Babylon never succeeded in disengaging themselves from the meshes of sorcery, witchcraft, magic, and necromancy."² And further still, Franz Bohl rightly indicates a contrast as to degree of punishment foreseen. He says it was "the typically Israelite idea that God can and will destroy His own chosen people as a punishment for their sins," which thought adjacent prophets never came close to mentioning, for this would have meant the end of their own power as well.³

The "messianic" element in the Egyptian samples carries interesting parallels, but their date is too early for seeing any real connection. Indeed, the Mari text too antedates any prophetic text of the Old Testament by a substantial margin. And finally as to amount, the Old Testament carries an extensive prophetic section, while scholars have scanned scores of texts elsewhere to find even these few examples.

6. Conclusion

In view of these observations, it is easily seen that little real similarity existed between the religious concepts of Israel and the adjacent countries. There were some

¹A. Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p. 59.

²J. M. P. Smith, "Semitic Prophecy," reprint from The Biblical World, XXXV(1910), 226.

³"Some Notes on Israel in the Light of Babylonian Discoveries," JBL, LIII(1934), 142.

general likenesses, and these should not be minimized. But as Irving Wood points out, as quoted, more than general likeness is necessary to evidence borrowing. There must be some specific details. And of these there were very few. Thus, it may be said that, if Israel borrowed at all on the score of religious concepts, it was only in a small way.¹

B. Comparison of Religious Personnel

The comparison now as to religious personnel is of greater pertinence for this study, as noted. The former has been only anticipatory to it. For if substantial borrowing on this count should be evidenced, then, as observed, it would be possible and necessary in the following chapters to draw descriptive materials relative to Israel's priests and prophets from sources outside Israel as well as the Old Testament.

To make this comparison, it is unnecessary to consider more than the representatives of Babylonia. These are much better known than those of Canaan or Egypt, and by general agreement, provide the closest parallels. Alfred Haldar has done the most in showing these parallels, seeking particularly to demonstrate similarity between the Babylonian baru and the Israelite kohen, as well as the Babylonian mahhu and the Israelite nabi¹. In view of the generally recognized stand-

¹Similarities which could suggest borrowing are somewhat greater regarding certain outward forms of Israel's religion, such as, for example, the general plan of Solomon's Temple found paralleled particularly closely by the temple at Tayinat in the Amuq plain of northern Syria.

ing of his work,¹ and as a means of making this discussion as specific as possible, the comparison here will be in reference to his study. The baru-kohen relationship will be considered first; then the mahhu-nabi¹; and lastly a summary evaluation.

1. The baru-kohen comparison

a. Number of priestly groups

Halдар's first task is to show that the Babylonians thought of their baru, sha'ilu, and shebru priests as really only one basic group; which group he believes, then, constituted the parallel with the Israelite kohen. He admits that several scholars do not agree with him in this. Zimmern, Dhorme, Frank, and Contenau, for instance, say "the special function of the sha'ilu priests was" dream interpretation.²

Halдар seeks proof against this contention for the sha'ilu by showing that the baru and the mahhu groups also interpreted dreams, and that the sha'ilu was not limited to this task. He employs four arguments to sustain this last: (1) that the name, sha'ilu, comes from the verb, sha'ala,

¹Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1945). Rowley comments in his "The Nature of the Old Testament Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 105, "Halдар has pressed the theory the farthest." Cf. N. W. Porteous for similar evaluation in his "The Basis of the Ethical Teaching of the Prophets," Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), p. 144.

²Halдар, op. cit., p. 13.

which means "to ask," which then leads logically to the idea of deity inquiry, the function of the baru; (2) that at least one text¹ views the sha'ilu in parallel with the baru in receiving "word" from the deity; (3) that another text depicts the two groups in a parallel capacity; and (4) that other texts show the sha'ilu active in such divination rites as hydromancy and observation of bird flight, again like the baru.

Halдар then argues similarly regarding the shabru and, though not able to present as much evidence as with the sha'ilu, still makes a rather good case.²

b. More than a Yes or No message

Halдар seeks to prove that the baru gave more than simply Yes or No communications, which thing he recognizes was true of Israel's kohen. However, he has greater difficulty here, for the only texts he can use in evidence cannot with certainty be traced to baru authorship. He can show³ satisfactorily that the messages of these texts "are freer than the omen texts proper," i.e. more than Yes or No in content, but has only the same evidence as to their authorship which he says Franz Bohl cited before him, and which he ad-

¹Ibid., pp. 14-15. Halдар quotes this text and also those of the following two points, indicating sources.

²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³Ibid., p. 10, where he also quotes the texts concerned. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 59, disagrees on this point, saying the baru confined himself only to the omen type, Yes or No, communication.

mits was not conclusive.

c. Many forms of divination

As has been observed, the baru practiced many forms of divination. Hence, Haldar attempts to show that Israel's kohen did this also. He uses several Old Testament passages in evidence. His treatment of them is examined in the following chapter¹ and found to be seriously at fault, however.

d. Hereditary membership

On the count of hereditary membership, Haldar seeks to prove that Israel's priests were not determined by Levitic ancestry, and then gives evidence that family relationship was not necessary for the baru either. He contends that a key phrase, "son of a baru priest," only had reference "to the baru as a member of the corporation of baru status."² He appears to have adequate evidence that other qualifications besides such family lineage were necessary, and also that when they were met the person could be admitted to priesthood whether the son of another baru or not.

e. King as leader of the priests

Haldar desires also to show a parallel respecting the king as leader of the priests. As evidence that this was true in Babylonia, he quotes a text in which Esarhaddon

¹Infra, p. 47. The main passages he cites are: Ps. 5:3; Ps. 27:4; and II Kgs. 16:15, where the phrases appear, respectively, "will keep watch," "to inquire in," and "inquire by." He works also with the idea that "liver" is mentioned prominently in connection with sacrifice: Lev. 3:3f.

²Ibid., p. 38.

kneels before Shamash and Adad and then orders "the seers to enter bit mummi," which Haldar believes was a divination chamber. The seers do this and return the king answer "with a faithful yea."¹ Thus, the king held a position where he could give such orders to the priests, and so must have been leader over them. Haldar believes that Israel's king also served in such a role, though he does not seek to prove it.

f. Three-fold function of the priest

In a more general vein, Haldar further cites three main functions of the Babylonian priest, believing that in each a clear parallel with Israel's kohen is observable.

(1) They acted as physicians. This came about in that illness was considered the result of sin, and so to get rid of this illness the sin had to be propitiated, and this required the priest. (2) They acted as judges. Oracles were consulted to determine court decisions. They then preserved these legal dispositions and so became "transmitters" of legal codes. And (3) they had great influence in political affairs in that they were regularly consulted in connection with important decisions.²

2. The mahhu-nabi' comparison

In showing parallels for the mahhu-nabi' relationship, Haldar admits the evidence is much less. He has no "prophe-tic" texts as such from the mahhu; and, without them, he is

¹Ibid., pp. 47-48.

²Ibid., p. 65.

left with arguing only indirectly that the mahhu were ecstasies, which he assumes also characterized the nabi'.¹ He does this by first giving positive evidence and then considering two objections that they were not.

a. That the mahhu were ecstasies

1) Etymology of mahhu.—Haldar argues first from the etymology of mahhu, agreeing with Delitzsch and Bezold that the word comes from the verb, mahu, meaning "to rave." He then substantiates this idea as basic in the word by showing that another form of it, mahhutu, is used in the phrase, illika mahhutas, meaning "he was out of his senses."² Hence, the mahhu must have been a frenzied person, one out of his senses when in ecstasy.

2) Three ideograms.—Haldar then speaks of three ideograms used to describe the mahhu. He says the first, lu-al-e-de, "seems to have the meaning mahu, 'to be overwhelmed' or the like," which must have been by "the god," which leads him to conclude that "ecstasy does not consist merely of 'the departure of the mind'; in its place comes the 'breath' from the god."³ However, this deduction of "breath" from the idea of "overwhelm," is only by implication. Haldar is unable to give direct proof. The second is dinger-dib-ba-ra. He says

¹In chapter IV it will be shown that ecstasy of this type did not characterize the nabi'.

²Haldar, op. cit., p. 22.

³Ibid.

"Since dib means 'to enter,' 'to seize,' etc." that "thus dinger-dib-ba has the meaning 'one whom god has seized,' 'made mad.'"¹ However, again the idea, "made mad," is further implication, for Divine seizure does not necessarily mean this. And of the third, im-zu-ub, Haldar merely asserts, without evidence, that it "must refer to the 'breath'" and so "apparently has the same sense" as the other ideograms.²

3) Equation of mahhu with shehanu.—Haldar finds mahhu used in equation with shehanu. "Shehanu seems to have a synonym in sha shehi" which means "he who has shehu." One meaning for shehu is "wind" or "breath," so that the "mahhu-shehanu-sha shehi" can be "one who has a 'breath' coming from the god."³

4) Ritual dance.—Haldar argues further from the idea of the ritual dance. Such a dance, he believes, characterized the annual New Year's festival in which the mahhu engaged. Cylinder seal pictures are cited in evidence. Thus, he says, "The ritual dance was practiced in Mesopotamia" and, if so, "it must have had the same import as elsewhere," namely, ecstatic frenzy.⁴

5) Use of stimulants.—Lastly, Haldar shows that the mahhu

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴Ibid., p. 61.

used various stimulants, particularly kash, an intoxicating drink, in their functions. Thus, since similar stimulants were commonly used elsewhere to induce ecstasy, he believes the same was true here in Babylonia. One difficulty arises for him, however, and that is that these stimulants were also used by the baru. Thus he must admit, "It would seem difficult to deny that the barus could also participate in the ecstatic rites. . . . If the mahhus are ecstatics, then so to some extent are the barus."¹

b. Two objections considered

Haldar properly brings into his treatment also two matters which serve to counter his position. He gives reply to both, but one is not impressed that he does so with great success.

1) Contrary opinion of others.—The first he observes is that Holscher and other scholars deny that ecstasy was known in Babylonia. Haldar only replies, "Holscher must be wrong in maintaining that the complete absence of these phenomena in the cuneiform material has its cause 'in Wesen der ganzen babylonische-assrischen Religion and Kultur.'"² He seeks support for this by repeating the last two points given above, as to the ritual dance and use of stimulants, upon which he appears to place considerable reliance. Then he

¹Ibid., p. 63.

²Ibid., p. 25. He quotes here from Holscher's Die Profeten, p. 140.

adds further that this Babylonian ecstasy may not have been as violent in form as existed in Asia Minor to which Holscher has special reference.¹

2) No mention by Greek writers.—The second is the fact that Greek writers never mention ecstasy among Babylonians. To this Haldar only says, "The fact that ecstasy is not mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus is not definite evidence to the contrary, for neither of these Greek writers are infallible authorities on Mesopotamian religion."² In this, of course, Haldar is right, but still the fact remains that they do not mention it.

3. Summary evaluation

a. The baru-kohen relationship

It is evident that Haldar shows some definite parallels between the baru and the kohen. There are also some important differences.

The parallels are the following. (1) Though the kohen did not act as a physician as such, and certainly not in the sense of propitiating sin as a direct means of healing one who was sick, as the baru, still he did pass judgment respectively on leprosy cases, and so carried some relation to this function.³ (2) As to the function of the judge, the kohen did

¹It is generally agreed that ecstasy for the Near East had its home in Asia Minor.

²Haldar, op. cit., p. 25.

³Lev. 13:1-46; 14:1-9.

give advice in court cases.¹ (3) The kohen was also politically important. Joshua was instructed to consult the high priest who, through the Urim and Thummim, would tell the Divine decision in important matters.² And (4) as to inquiry means, the kohen, particularly the high kohen, employed the Urim and Thummim which, as shall appear in the next chapter, was limited to a somewhat parallel, affirmation type of communication.

The differences, however, again appear more significant. (1) As to divination, though the high kohen did use the Urim and Thummim, the employment was limited to him, and he does not appear to have used it with great frequency; whereas divination for the baru was of several types, was used by all the baru priests, and constituted their principal activity. (2) Whereas the baru office was evidently not hereditary, the kohen had to be a descendant of Levi.³ (3) The Babylonian king seems to have been the head of the baru, but Israel's king was not for the kohen.⁴ And (4) particularly pertinent for this discussion is it that Haldar does not find the baru having had any extensive teaching respon-

¹Deut. 17:8-12; 19:17; cf. chapter V, p. 183

²Num. 27:21.

³Cf. chapter V, pp. 146-50.

⁴J. Morgenstern agrees with Haldar, "A Chapter in the History of the High-Priesthood," AJSL, LV(1938), 5; but H. Frankfort does not, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 339; nor does G. E. Wright, The Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 65f. These last have the better evidence.

sibility, whereas, as shall be seen at length, this was a major function for the kohen.

b. The mahhu-nabi' relationship

In regard to the mahhu-nabi' relationship, it is apparent that Haldar is much less successful. Indeed, it may be said that he shows no significant parallel between the two groups. For, granting his contention that the mahhu was an ecstatic, contrary to Holscher and the Greek writers, there is still the decisive difference that Israel's nabi' was not so characterized, as shall be demonstrated. The one place where he comes the closest concerns his assertion that the mahhu was "overwhelmed" by the "spirit." For it will appear that Israel's nabi' in some manner did experience a Spirit possession. However, to Haldar, this experience means ecstaticism of a frenzied type, whereas this was not so in Israel. And moreover, as was observed, he has difficulty in proving that this "spirit" aspect was involved in the overwhelming of the mahhu; only being able to imply it.

c. The baru-mahhu relationship

It is also in order to notice that Haldar does not really show great difference between the baru and the mahhu in Babylonia. It will be shown in the ensuing treatment that great difference did exist between Israel's kohen and nabi', with almost no areas of overlapping. But this was not true of the baru and mahhu. Two factors in what has been observed from Haldar are particularly significant in

this respect. The first is that the mahhu practiced divination as well as the baru; and the second is that the baru used stimulants as well as the mahhu, and so must also have been an ecstatic if the mahhu was. Other scholars agree with Haldar that there was likely more difference between the baru and the mahhu, than between the baru and either the sha'ilu or the shabru,¹ but this does not place them in categories as distinct and separate as the kohen and nabi'. They both had specialties, but either seems at times to have performed the functions of the other.

d. Conclusion

In view of these observations, G. W. Anderson seems right when he says of Haldar: "In spite of the great learning with which he presents his case, Haldar all too often gives the impression of fitting the evidence into a Procrustean bed."² He simply does not have the evidence to prove his case. The parallels he is able to show for the baru and kohen are no more than should exist between priests of any culture. The decisive point is to demonstrate similarities for the mahhu and nabi', and here he is unable to prove any for sure.³ Thus, a conclusion similar to that drawn regard-

¹As shown, for instance, in that Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian Religion (London: Hutchinson's Univ. Library, 1953), p. 92, and James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1959), p. 37, both agree with him.

²"Hebrew Religion," The Old Testament and Modern Study (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 301.

³With this agrees Guillaume as he says in his op. cit.,

ing religious concepts appears necessary: if Israel borrowed at all in respect to her priests and prophets, it was only in minor aspects.

Accordingly, the ensuing discussion will not find frequent cause to draw upon the adjacent cultures for evidence in respect to the problem at hand. Israel's priests and prophets will have to be studied as her own, using as evidence almost solely what is found in the Old Testament. The over-all picture that has been seen will be helpful for general comparison and contrast, but specific matters will have to be determined within the compass of Israel's own literature.

p. 108, "With the diviners of Babylon and Assyria, the Hebrew prophets have nothing, or very little, in common."

Chapter III

THE PRIEST AND THE DIVINE DISCLOSURE

The concern of this chapter and the next is revelational media. Here that concern pertains to the priests. Did the priests possess a means of Divine disclosure? If so, what was it?

Haldar believes that they not only had one, but several, after the pattern of the Babylonian baru.¹ As noted in the prior chapter, he uses as evidence the phrases, "will keep watch" (Ps. 5:3), "to inquire in" (Ps. 27:4), and "to inquire by" (II Kgs. 16:15). Inquiry, as thus referred to, he believes must have been by divination. And, taken by themselves, these phrases could have this reference; but if that was what was meant, then their context should imply divination as well. However, this is clearly not the case with at least two of them, Ps. 5:3 and 27:4. In the first, the "watching" indicated is for an answer to prayer, with the Psalm giving no hint that this answer was looked for in terms of omens. Rather, the request given concerned the destruction of the wicked (vss. 5,6,10), and so the answer anticipated would, of course, have been in accordance. In the sec-

¹Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1945), pp. 121-22. R. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944), pp. 7-8, shows agreement.

ond, the "inquiring" is better taken as the writer's desire to learn religious information from an attendant priest, probably out of the torah. As will appear, priests had an important function in such instruction.

There is greater possibility of divination with the third instance (II Kgs. 16:15), for Ahaz, given to an affinity for foreign influence, had just copied an altar of Damascus, and so may have copied also some form of divination. But if so, it was only an importation and not an observance characteristic of Israel.¹

Halдар also finds evidence in the prominent mention of the "liver" in connection with some of the Hebrew sacrifices, saying that this "can hardly have any other significance than divination."² However, this conclusion must be read into the text, for it is not stated, nor is there any hint in the context of hepatoscopy. All that the text concerns is the proper preparation of the sacrificial animal, and, to that end, certain specifications are given regarding the liver, kidneys, etc.³

¹C. F. Keil, however, in "The Books of the Kings," KDC, p. 406, takes the passage to mean that Ahaz wanted to maintain both the old altar along with the new one, at least for a time, "about which he would consider" as to which he would keep permanently. He thus avoids any idea of divination.

²Op. cit., p. 212.

³R. K. Yerkes, quite oppositely to Halдар, says in his Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 31, "The repeated prescription to burn 'the caul above the liver' voices direct opposition to hepatoscopy."

R. Scott sees significance for divination in Gideon's "fleece" incident and also the sign of the balsam trees with David.¹ Both occasions did yield Divine guidance for the persons concerned, and so could be said to have been instances of a sort of divination. However, neither appears to have been a part to any divination pattern in Israel, not having been repeated at any time in Israel's history. They were unique, one-time events only. Moreover, neither occasion shows any priest present to manipulate or interpret, which was the normal rule for divination in other countries. Scott thinks too that the presence of a "divining" cup in Joseph's sack is significant, but of course the cup was Egyptian, not Hebrew.² Divination, as has been observed, was practiced in Egypt.

In opposition to this viewpoint, now, it may be pointed out that the Old Testament itself gives clear statements against divination. Deut. 18:9-22, for example, is particularly pertinent. Israel is to dispossess the Canaanites because they "hearken unto them that practice augury, and unto diviners" (vs. 14). In contrast, Israel is to do away with "one that useth divination" because these are "an abomination unto Yahweh" (vss. 10-12). Also, Lev. 20:6 requires that the "soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards" shall be cut off "from among

¹Op. cit., p. 7. These incidents are found in Jud. 6:36-40 and II Sam. 5:24.

²Gen. 44:5.

his people." And the reason cited is that Israel is to be different from her neighbors.¹ Thus, G. E. Wright in a treatment of the matter concludes, "We imply from this that the whole pagan world of magic and divination is simply incompatible with the worship of Yahweh."² And R. H. Pfeiffer states, "Omens interpreted by professional diviners, played an insignificant role in Israel. Divination, . . . may be disregarded here."³

This, of course, does not mean that Israel had no forms of Divine disclosure. In fact she had several. But these cannot be called divination. A decisive distinction separates them from this category: namely, the matter of coercion. In every form of divination, the priest coerced an answer. There was always either a Yes or No, but never a "no reply." The science of omenology was simply set up that way. But in Israel this was not so. The Old Testament presents Yahweh as the one who controls all revelation. As G. E. Wright says,

He will make known his will when, where, and how he chooses. He cannot be tricked or coerced into revelation. He will make himself known, not by the hidden

¹Cf. Lev. 20:23,27; Ex. 22:18; Jer. 27:9,10; Isa. 47:12-15.

²The Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 86.

³Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 32. For similar views, cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 302-303; T. C. Foote, "The Ephod," JBL, XXI(1902), 19; and M. Jastrow, "Ro'eh and Hoze'eh in the Old Testament," JBL, XXVIII(1909), 48.



world of the occult, but by the means which he himself chooses.¹

Of these several means of revelation in Israel, one was assigned to the priests as theirs alone.² That was the Urim and Thummim. To it, then, the attention of this chapter is directed. Two principal matters must be considered: first, the nature of the Urim and Thummim; and second, the place it maintained in the priestly experience. The initial task is to assemble the evidence with which to work.

I. The Evidence

There are no contemporary references outside the Old Testament to the Urim and Thummim, nor have any divination means really similar to it been found in adjacent countries. Thus, the evidence bearing upon it is limited to the Old Testament. The pertinent passages found there may be divided into two classes: first, those in which either or both names, Urim and Thummim, are used; and second, those in which the employment of this revelation means is only implied though with sufficient clarity to make them also usable.

A. Passages Naming the Urim and Thummim

1. Ex. 28:30

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before Yahweh: and Aaron shall

¹Op. cit.

²Evidence to this end will appear in the discussion following.

bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Yahweh continually.

This mention occurs in directions for the high priest's clothing. The "ephod," a covering garment for both the front and back of the high priest, and the "breastplate" (hosen, from an uncertain root) of judgment, made of linen, a span square, and attached to the ephod, are described; and then these explanations are given in respect to the Urim and Thummim.

2. Lev. 8:8

And he placed the breastplate upon him: and in the breastplate he put the Urim and the Thummim.

In this mention, the directions, laid down in the prior verse, are being carried out as the high priest is clothed for the first time with the prescribed items.

3. Deut. 33:8

And of Levi he said,
Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy godly one,
Whom thou didst prove at Massah,
With whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

Here is found the principal aspect in the blessing of Levi pronounced by Moses just prior to his death. In the same chapter, parallel blessings are pronounced also for the other tribes. The "godly one" mentioned is the high priest, in the light of Ex. 28:30, just quoted. Levi's Thummim and Urim thus dwelt with him, whom, in the person of Aaron and in company with Moses, the people had vexed severely at Massah (Ex. 17:7) and later at Meribah (Num. 20:7-13), both times in connection with water from the rock.



4. Num. 27:21

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Yahweh: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

This verse constitutes a part in the Divine instruction at the time of Joshua's induction to office.

5. I Sam. 28:6

And when Saul inquired of Yahweh, Yahweh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

In this instance, Saul, the king, was facing what proved to be his final battle with the Philistines. Samuel, his former source of Divine communication, was dead. He wanted to know what to expect in the impending conflict, but God did not tell him, neither by dreams, nor Urim, nor prophets.

6. Ezra 2:63 (identical with Neh. 7:65)

And the governor said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

Here many centuries had elapsed, with the people having been taken captive and now returned to their own land once again. Some of the priests had lost their credentials, and Zerubbabel, the governor, was here stating that they could not be fully instated as priests, along with the others, until a Divine decision could be determined by the Urim and Thummim.

B. Passages Implying the Urim and Thummim

There are nine passages which may safely be said to imply the use of the Urim and Thummim,¹ and these may be divided into two groups. The first group concerns five occasions which fall chronologically together early in the history and show a common means of implying the Urim and Thummim: first, in that each instance did require a definite Divine communication; second, each passage recording an instance lacks any mention of any other type of communication being involved, such as a dream or prophet's message; and third, the kind of communication required was a type for which the Urim and Thummim was capable.² The passages are: Josh. 7:14-18, where need existed to identify Achan whose sin had cost Israel a victory at Ai; Josh. 9:14, where the people were reprimanded for not having asked counsel of God respecting the Gibeonites; Jud. 1:1-2, where there was need to select the tribe first to strike against the Canaanites; Jud. 20:18-23, where a similar decision was needed as to which tribe should first attack Benjamin; and I Sam. 10:20-22, where an identification of the new king was in issue.

The second group concerns four incidents which fall together later in the history and again show a common means

¹Besides these nine, some scholars also include II Sam. 2:1; 5:19,23f; and 21:1. However, none of these instances mentions the presence of the high priest or the ephod. Moreover, both Gad and Nathan were then active through whom David may well have made the inquiries involved. It is safer, then, not to include them.

²The nature of this capability will be studied later.

of implying the Urim and Thummim: namely, the presence each time of the ephod to which was attached the breastplate containing the Urim and Thummim. The first is I Sam. 14:37-42, where Saul needed Divine communication, first as to a possible attack by the Philistines, and then as to who had eaten food contrary to his order; and it is mentioned in vss. 3 and 36 that the high priest was in the camp with the ephod. The second is I Sam. 22:10-15, where David is said to have inquired often of the high priest at Nob where the ephod was located, I Sam. 21:9. The third is I Sam. 23:9-12, where David needed to know as to a possible action by the "men of Keilah," and vs. 6 preceding states that Abiathar, the high priest, had just arrived with the ephod. And the fourth is I Sam. 30:7-8, where David inquired whether to pursue the raiding Amalekites, and again he called Abiathar with the ephod for that purpose.

II. The Nature of the Urim and the Thummim

With these sources of evidence identified, it is possible to ask now the first main question: what sort of disclosure means was the Urim and Thummim?

A. Various Answers

Views have been numerous relative to the Urim and Thummim, and it is well to look at some of them before beginning this study. This will show the type of answer to which others have been led.

W. Muss-Arnolt wrote a well known article on the sub-

ject at the turn of the century, and in it he summarized positions then existent as follows:

In general we may summarize that the Urim and Tummim have been identified with (a) stones in the high priest's breastplate, (b) sacred dice, (c) little images of 'truth' and 'justice,' such as hung round the neck of an Egyptian's priest's mummy.¹

He rejected all three himself and found instead a parallel with the Tablets of Destiny in the Babylonian creation story.² Few, in turn, have followed him in this, however.³

Today, many agree on the idea of "sacred dice," the second viewpoint he indicated, but discussion continues as to how these may have been manipulated. B. D. Eerdmans, for instance, says,

The priest put his hand into the pouch and took out of it one of these stones. In this simple way they got an answer to a question in the nature of Yes⁴ or No, like the modern practice of tossing up a coin.

However, if the matter was this simple, a problem arises as to how a "no answer" could have been given, such as in the case of Saul in I Sam. 14:37 and 28:6. Accordingly, Rowley describes the procedure a little differently:

The view which seems to me most probable is that they

¹"The Urim and Thummim," AJSL, XVI(1899-1900), 204.

²Ibid.

³Cf. remarks by E. Kautzsch, "Urim and Thummim," SHERK, XII, p. 109; and A. Kennedy, "Urim and Thummim," DB, IV, p. 840, both of whom reject his viewpoint and tell why.

⁴The Religion of Israel (Leiden: Univ. Pers. Leiden, 1947), p. 52. Eichrodt has a similar view: "According to which little sticks jumped out when the container of the lots was shaken, the answer of the deity was taken to be 'Yes' or 'No'; Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 113.



were two flat stones, one side of which was the auspicious side and one the inauspicious, so that if they both fell with the same side upward, the answer was given, while if they revealed different sides there was no answer.¹

However, on this basis, the "no reply" would have appeared no less than half of the time, and this seems very frequent if the people were to remain satisfied. Another view reduces the chance to one-third by positing a third stone in the pouch for this "no reply." But this would still have yielded a high percentage, and, further, there are reasons for rejecting the idea of a third stone.²

Thus, viewpoints have indeed been numerous, and not altogether satisfactory. But it is unnecessary to consider them further. The one to be developed herein awaits attention.

B. Pertinent Matters

1. Meaning of the names

Several matters bear upon the answer to this inquiry, one of which concerns the meaning of the names, Urim and Thummim. There are four main opinions to notice and then the significance of the correct one.

a. Four main viewpoints

1) The most common viewpoint, and that held by the present writer, is that Urim is the plural of the verb, 'ur, meaning

¹The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 29.

²Infra., pp. 62-63.

"light," and that Thummim comes from thamah, meaning "complete, perfect." Thus, the noun forms would mean "lights and perfections."

2) A view espoused by Wellhausen¹ and later by others, including Paul Haupt,² is "that 'urim must be combined with 'rr 'to curse,' while thumim means 'blamelessness, acquittal.'" ³ Thus, the one was the curse stone, giving the No, and the other the acquittal stone, giving the Yes.

3) More recently A. Johnson has held that Urim comes from 'rr with Wellhausen, but that Thummim comes from thamah with the first view.⁴ The No and Yes indications would be the same.

4) W. Muss-Arnolt, in the article quoted, found Urim coming from the Babylonian urtu, meaning "command," and Thummim from tamitu, meaning "oracular decision."⁵

b. Significance of the correct view

It is generally admitted that the first view cited has the most to commend it on the basis of etymology alone. What has mainly motivated scholars to look for other meanings is that this first one does not give two opposing ideas.

¹But A. Kennedy states, "In his later works, however, Wellhausen has given up this etymology," op. cit., p. 838.

²As indicated in Haupt's "Babylonian Elements in the Levitic Ritual," JBL, XIX(1900), 58.

³Haupt, ibid.

⁴The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press Board, 1944), p. 9.

⁵Op. cit., p. 219.

That is, "lights and perfections" are close together in thought, and what is needed, according to the usual viewpoint, is a pair in contrast, so that one could have indicated the No and the other the Yes. However, it is thought by the present writer to be a more logical procedure to keep the "difficult" but more natural meanings and work from there. Doing so, three significances appear. (a) Since the names are not opposites, the idea of a No and Yes for them should be dropped. Neither "lights" nor "perfections" gives any suggestion of a negative reply. (b) What they do signify should be established on the basis of their meanings elsewhere in the Old Testament. "Light" regularly points to mental illumination,¹ and "perfection" comes by derivation from the idea of completeness and finality. Hence, "lights" could well speak of the mental illumination received because of this revelation medium, and "perfections" of its finality and accuracy.² (c) Since "lights" seems to have been the more basic of the two terms,³ it may give the clue also as to how these objects worked in the revelation; i.e. somehow in connection with giving light, of which possibility more will be seen presently.

¹Cf. e.g., Ps. 119:105; Isa. 9:2.

²Writes Oehler in his Theology of the Old Testament, ed. G. E. Day (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p. 218, "The term 'urim' refers to the divine illumination, the thummim to the unimpeachable correctness of the divine decision."

³"Urim" is almost always given first, and sometimes alone: Num. 27:21; I Sam. 28:6.



2. Objects in a pouch

Some have held that the Urim and Thummim objects were fastened in some manner to the outside of the breastplate. Quite often, in fact, they have been identified with the twelve precious stones located there (Ex. 28:17-21).¹ However, the following factors indicate they were placed in the pouch formed by the breastplate. (a) They were distinct from the breastplate. In Ex. 28, the breastplate is first described, including the identification and location of the twelve precious stones set in it (vss. 15-29), and then follows the adding to it in some manner the Urim and Thummim (vs. 30). Also in Lev. 8:8, the same division is implied when Aaron first puts the articles on. (b) In both of these pertinent verses, the preposition used as to how the Urim and Thummim were added to the breastplate is 'el, meaning "unto," not 'al, meaning "upon." The latter would be expected if they were fastened outside; as is true, for instance, when both the chains and the two attaching rings are thus indicated to have been fastened to the breastplate (Ex. 28:22-23; cf. vss. 26-27). And (c) the breastplate seems to have been constructed in the form of such a pouch. Ex. 28:16 describes it as "foursquare . . . and double." "Double" is the passive participle of kaphal meaning "to double." Since there is no apparent need for added strength for this doubling, it

¹So Josephus and the Talmud, cf. N. Isaacs, "Urim and Thummim," ISBE, V, p. 3014.

is likely that it was to form such a pouch.

3. Two precious stones

The evidence suggests that these objects were precious stones and that they were two in number.

a. They were not images

Some scholars have held that these objects were small images. Evidence has been sought in a parallel with the images which were hung around the neck of the mummy of the Egyptian priest;¹ and also from certain mentions regarding "teraphim" in the Old Testament where these are associated with an ephod.² However, several factors militate strongly against this viewpoint. (1) Israel's religion was aniconic; images were forbidden.³ Archaeology has substantiated this fact: G. E. Wright, for instance, stating, "No where can we place our hands on a figure of Yahweh among the excavated ruins in Palestine."⁴ (2) Images would have been too large to fit easily into the breastplate pouch which measured only nine inches square.⁵ For this reason it has been suggested that they may have hung about the priest's neck, after the

¹Referred to by Muss-Arnolt in the quotation given above. Cf. E. Kautzsch, op. cit., for further description.

²Jud. 17:5; 18:14; Hos. 3:4; also according to Ezek. 21:21, the king of Babylon used teraphim for divination.

³For instance, in the Decalogue, Ex. 20:4.

⁴"How Did Early Israel Differ from Her Neighbors?" BA, VI(Feb., 1943), 16.

⁵Teraphim evidently varied in size: I Sam. 19:13-16 indicates they were large; but Gen. 31:34 shows them small.

Egyptian usage; but it has already been observed that they were placed in the pouch.¹ And (3), respecting the teraphim in particular, they are never cast in a favorable light in the Old Testament,² while the Urim and Thummim always are. It is not likely, then, that the two were identical.

b. They were likely precious stones

The evidence is not conclusive, but it favors the idea that the Urim and Thummim objects were precious stones. (1) These objects had to be small enough to fit readily into the pouch. (2) They must have held high intrinsic value to be in keeping with their importance and also the ornate character of the ephod and breastplate which held them. (3) The breastplate itself was set with precious stones, and so a common motif would have been maintained. Likely the Urim and Thummim would have been yet more valuable in size and kind. And (4) the name Urim, "lights," is in keeping, since precious stones reflect light unusually, and so the physical character would have matched the spiritual meaning.

c. They were likely two in number

The evidence again is not conclusive, but it favors the idea of two objects. (1) The small size of the pouch argues for fewness in number. Two stones would have been

¹To do this easily, as would have been necessary, even the teraphim Rachel was able to hide in the chair (Gen. 31:34) would probably not have been small enough.

²Even directly disapproved in I Sam. 15:23; and directly outlawed by Josiah, II Kgs. 23:24.

enough to fit readily into a flat pouch only nine inches square, for they must have had some size to them for ease of handling by the priest. (2) The fact that two names were used, of course, argues for two. And in the two key verses, Ex. 28:30 and Lev. 8:8, both the article and sign of the direct object ('eth) are used with each name as if they were two separate items. Both names are plural in form, but this is commonly held to be due only to their importance. And (3), as a rationale for having two objects, rather than one (when both gave the same indication), two would have provided a double signal for certainty, as well as an object for each hand of the priest to hold.

4. Limited to employment by the high priest

The use of the Urim and Thummim was limited, not only to priests, but specifically to the high priest. (1) Two passages particularly signify that it was limited at least to the house of Levi: Deut. 33:8, where the principal aspect in Levi's blessing concerns this fact; and I Sam. 2:28, where God is said to have chosen the house of Eli's father "out of all the tribes of Israel to be" His "priest, . . . to wear an ephod before" Him. (2) Then Ex. 28:30 and Lev. 8:8 show that it was limited to the high priest in that the garments there described, as associated with it, are the high priest's alone. (3) Further, in Num. 27:21, Joshua, newly coming to leadership, is told to make a practice of consulting Eleazar, then high priest, who would inquire for him by the Urim and Thummim. Never does Joshua make such an inquiry for himself.

And (4), in every Old Testament passage where the person is identified who employed the Urim and Thummim, he is the high priest: Ahiah (probably same as Ahimelech), I Sam. 14; Ahimelech, I Sam. 22; Abiathar, I Sam. 23; and Abiathar, I Sam. 30.

5. To be used only "before Yahweh"

The phrase, "before Yahweh," appears in certain of the Urim and Thummim passages in a way to suggest particular significance. For instance, Eleazar was to inquire "by the judgment of the Urim before Yahweh."¹ (*italics mine.*) It is safely conjectured that the reason for this insertion was to divest the people of ever thinking that the high priest himself was in any way self-sufficient in this revelation. Yahweh did the revealing. As to what this meant practically for the manner of inquiry, a consideration of the instances gives the answer. It is that this inquiry had to be made only when the Ark of Yahweh was at hand; or, if that should be impossible, then at least when the Divinely prescribed ephod was present. The following observations bear this out. (a) In the instance when the other tribes were to make war on Benjamin,² they made inquiry of the Urim and Thummim as to who should attack first; and, to do so, they went to where "the ark of the covenant of God was," where Phinehas, the high priest, "stood before it."³ It would, of course, have

¹Num. 27:21; cf. Ex. 28:30 for two other instances.

²Jud. 20:18-27.

³The place to which they went is called Beth-el, which

been more convenient for them simply to have called Phinehas out to their battle area, but they did not do this: they went to him where the Ark was. (b) Following the Philistine capture of the Ark,¹ when it became no longer possible to inquire in this normal manner, it is significantly stated each time, with one possible exception, that the high priest was present with the ephod. And in the one exception the likelihood of his presence is very strong.² (c) The reason why Zerubbabel could not at the time consult the Urim and Thummim as to the qualification of the unpedigreed priests, following the return from captivity,³ was doubtless that the Ark had not yet been established in the Temple about to be built. The high priest, Jeshua, the son of Jozedak, was on hand,⁴ and certainly he would have had an ephod; hence, it must have concerned the Ark that Zerubbabel felt it necessary to wait.

6. The method of communication

could be either the city, Bethel, or the "house of God," which would have meant Shiloh. If it was the city, Bethel, then the Ark for some reason had been temporarily moved. It makes little difference for the point here, for the people went to wherever the Ark was.

¹I Sam. 4. They seemingly destroyed Shiloh also.

²I Sam. 10:20-22, where the people had been called to Mizpah to inquire as to the identity of the new king. At such an important time, it is likely that the high priest, with the ephod, would have been on hand.

³Ezra 2:63 (Neh. 7:65). These returned priests somehow had lost their credentials.

⁴Cf. Ezra 2:2; 3:2; 4:3; etc.

The last question here is also the most important: what method was used by which it was believed Yahweh communicated through these stones? The evidence favors the answer that the stones were seen to glow with added light when an affirmative reply was being given. It has been seen that the name, Urim, meaning "lights," is in keeping with this explanation, as is also the likelihood that these objects were precious stones. Other factors also bear on the matter and these must now be considered. The first two are negative in force and concern two functions for which the stones did not have to be characterized.

a. Not a Yes and No respectively

It has been observed that likely the two stones did not indicate a Yes and a No respectively, in that the names, Urim and Thummim, do not themselves carry such contrasting meanings. It is necessary now to investigate this point a little further, particularly in reference to I Sam. 14:41-42, for to this passage adherents of the Yes and No idea repeatedly refer. The passage concerns the time when Jonathan was identified as the one guilty of eating on the day when Saul had forbidden it.

The first and more pertinent portion of the passage reads, according to the massoretic text, "Therefore Saul said unto Yahweh, the God of Israel, Show the right."¹ Ad-

¹Vs. 41a. The two vss. continue: "And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. And Saul said, let cause to fall between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken."

herents of the view amend this text, however, and commonly follow S. R. Driver's rendition,¹ which in turn is patterned after the Septuagint.² This rendition is: "Therefore Saul said unto Yahweh, the God of Israel, If this fault be in me or in Jonathan, my son, give Urim, and if it be in thy people Israel, give Thummim." It is then pointed out that the text, thus "restored" and much extended, depicts a drawing of lots: one favorable from the king's viewpoint, and one unfavorable; that is, Thummim (favorable) if the people are guilty, and Urim (unfavorable) if he or Jonathan is. And so it is argued that indeed the "lot" idea of Yes or No was practiced in the employment of the Urim and Thummim.

This argument hangs entirely on the change of the text, however; and a change which is so extensive as to be subject to challenge. For the science of textual criticism has repeatedly shown the care with which the Old Testament was transcribed. Occasionally a letter, and sometimes a word or phrase, has been found impaired, but seldom an entire sentence as here. Driver's justification for it is based mainly on what he considers a difficult phrase in the massoretic text, habah thamim, meaning literally, "give perfectly," or as translated above, "Show the right." He says, thamim "is 'perfect,' i.e. in a physical sense, of an animal, unblemished; in a moral sense, innocent, blameless,"³ and so is

¹Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 117.

²Driver does not follow the Septuagint exactly either.

³Op. cit.

not applicable here. However, in this he does not take account of such an instance as Job 36:4, where thamim means "accurate": "One that is perfect in knowledge." (*italics mine.*) The context shows the thought to be in opposition to "false."¹ And using this sense in the phrase, the meaningful idea presents itself that Saul was thus asking Yahweh to "give accurately" in connection with this decision. There is no difficulty with the phrase on this basis. Hence, Driver's reason is removed for making this extensive change of text, and that in turn takes away the evidential value of this passage for the respective Yes and No explanation.

b. No descriptive message

The second negative point counters a suggestion from quite a different quarter,² namely that the Urim and Thummim could bring descriptive messages of more than Yes or No content. However, evidence of two kinds does not favor this idea.

1) The first is that none of the passages where it is used³ shows that it ever gave more than this limited type of com-

¹The whole verse reads, "For truly my words are not false: One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." (*italics mine.*) For other meanings too, cf. Lev. 23:15; 25:30; Josh. 10:13; Jud. 9:16; II Sam. 22:31.

²For instance, Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, KDC, p. 146; also C. Eerdmans, who quotes Keil favorably, The Books of Samuel, trans. & ed. C. H. Toy and J. A. Broadus (Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1877), p. 197.

³Listed, supra, pp. 51-55.

munication. The one which is nearest is I Sam. 10:22, where the reply is: "Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage." The occasion concerned the location of the newly identified king, Saul. However, even this much information could have been given by the question method. A few questions would have been needed to obtain the Yes reply, but the possible alternatives of which to ask would not have been so many as to make the inquiry impractical. Saul would have either left the area entirely, or else been secluded near at hand; and if the latter, then either among the people, or the "baggage," or some other such general category.

2) The other is that, at the same time as these invariably brief, question-type communications were being employed, another disclosure means was being used, just as invariably, for the descriptive type of message. This other means was what may be called the "direct contact" type. Moses experienced it, as one reads so often, "And Yahweh said unto him."¹ Joshua received it also; Josh. 1:1 stating, "Yahweh spake unto Joshua, . . . saying," with the message then occupying the next eight verses.² The same was true of Gideon (Jud. 6:25) and with Samuel (I Sam. 3:11); also with the prophets. Always the same basic formula begins these sections, as "And Yahweh said," and always some descriptive message is then

¹Ex. 4:2,4,6,11,14, etc.

²Other Joshua instances occur at 3:7; 4:1,15; 5:2; 6:2; 7:10; 8:1,18; 10:8; 11:6; 13:1; 20:1.

related. From this it follows that this "direct contact" type of disclosure was the normal means for the longer, descriptive communications; which then leaves the Urim and Thummim as having been limited to the brief type message.

c. Answers to questions

Having observed the above two functions as not having been a part to the operation of the Urim and Thummim, it is now in order to move on to note those which were. And, doing so, it will appear that the "light" explanation fully meets the requirements for each.

The first to observe is that the Urim and Thummim had to give answers to questions. Both Ex. 28:30 and Num. 27:21 speak of the communication as a mishpat, meaning "judgment" or "decision." And one type of such decision was this of giving reply to direct questions. Illustration may be taken from I Sam. 23:9-12, where David asks two such questions: first, as to the possibility of Saul coming against him at Keilah; and second, as to whether the Keilah inhabitants would betray him. He also asks two in I Sam. 30:7-8: first, as to whether he should pursue the invading Amalekites; and second, as to whether he would be successful if he did. All four questions receive the Yes. To such questions, of course, only an affirmative indication would have been necessary to give the answer. The No would have been implied so long as the Yes was not indicated. Hence, a glowing of the stones would have suited well for this aspect of inquiry.

d. Identifications

Another type of decision concerned identifications. Some one tribe or some particular person had to be selected. And here the "light" explanation not only meets the requirements, but it does so much better than the Yes or No idea. The latter would have suited the need as well in the former function, but not here. For in the identifications, a large number of decisions had to be made, and mostly No, as the various identifies had to be refused until the right one was presented. The instance of Achan's identification probably was the most extreme. At that time there was need first to pick the right tribe, then the right family, then the household, and finally the person.¹ The Yes or No explanation would have required a drawing of one of the stones for each refusal of an identity as well as an approval. This would have been highly impractical, if not impossible, in view of the high No requirements. But on the "light" basis, the high priest would merely have had to hold out the stones, having drawn them from the pouch, while either the names were repeated, or the persons passed by, until the identifying "light" was seen.

e. "No reply"

It has been observed that in I Sam. 14:37 and 28:6 Saul received no answer to his inquiry of the Urim and Thum-

¹Other identifications would have also required many decisions: Jud. 20:18; I Sam. 10:21; I Sam. 14:41-42; and also Jud. 1:1-2 where not only an identification but also a direct question was involved.

mim, and that the Yes or No explanation has difficulty in accounting for this possibility. H. H. Rowley's position was shown to yield in "no reply" answers no less than half of the time, and the idea of three stones in the pouch no less than one-third of the time.¹ Either would have been a high percentage. However, again the "light" explanation has no difficulty. For in such an instance, there would merely have had to be no affirmation indicated to any question asked.

f. Agreement with tradition

The "light" explanation also finds advantage in the testimony of tradition. Tradition varies as to details, but it revolves around the idea of glowing light. Josephus, for instance, who identifies the Urim and Thummim with the precious stones of the breastplate, says that a "splendor shown forth from them."² And the Talmud, arguing for a message type of communication, states that certain letters from words printed on the outside of the breastplate would glow to make the signification.³ The several requirements noticed above indicate the impossibility of both positions except for the common kernel of glowing light. But, being thus common, it could well be the historically true kernel from which both

¹Supra, p. 57.

²Antiquities, III, viii, 9

³N. Isaacs cites this from Yoma 73 a,b, "Urim and Thummim," ISBE, V, p. 3041.

grew. And with this kernel, of course, the "light" explanation agrees very well.

7. Summary

The evidence observed thus favors the view that the Urim and Thummim was an inquiry means employing two precious stones, bearing these names which meant "lights" and "perfections," signifying, respectively, "mental (and physical) illumination," and "perfect accuracy." The stones were kept in a pouch formed by the doubled, linen breastplate on the front of the ephod. At the time of inquiry, the high priest, who alone could thus officiate, took one stone in each hand from the pouch and made both visible, probably to the inquirer as well as himself. When, and if, an increased light was seen in them in response to the question, the Divine affirmation became known. The inquiry had to be made in the vicinity of the Ark if at all possible, and at least with the employment of the ephod if not; this to insure the people's realization that the answer indeed came from Yahweh.

This construction, of course, involves the idea of miracle in connection with the glowing of the stones. Some scholars hesitate in accepting a conclusion of this kind. However, the evidence has led to it, and other alternative explanations have been found incapable of meeting the requirements. For this reason the present writer believes this position warranted and necessary.¹

¹It should be observed in anticipation that miracle will be found involved also in respect to the Divine disclo-

III. History of the Urim and Thummim

The second main question is now to be considered.

That concerns the place this priestly means of revelation maintained in the history of Israel. Two aspects will be treated: first, the place of this disclosure means in Israel; and second, the duration of time in which it maintained that place.

A. Place of the Urim and Thummim

1. An official means of revelation

It has been pointed out that the Urim and Thummim was limited as a disclosure means to a mere affirmation or implied negation. Content messages were reserved for the "direct contact" means. There was also limitation in that only official matters were to be brought before it, not private concerns. This is evidenced, for instance, by Ex. 28:30 where the high priest was to wear "the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart," (*italics mine*) not the judgment of individuals. Also, according to Num. 27:21, the af-

sure of the prophets, and occasionally also elsewhere. In this connection generally, the words of H. H. Rowley in his Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 58, seem well taken: "If miracle be defined as divine activity within the world, a belief in its possibility would seem to be fundamental to a belief in God. He cannot be excluded from the world he has made, or reduced to the position of a spectator on the interplay of forces which he had once set in motion. . . . that there is a truly miraculous element in the story I am fully persuaded. We have not merely the working out of human impulses and the chance interplay of natural forces. We have the activity of God in inspiration and revelation, and the evidence of his presence in nature and history."

fairs of both Joshua "and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation" were to be regulated thereby. And then the examples of its employment invariably show a group concern being settled, not something individual: a man must be identified whose sin had caused the nation to suffer; the tribe should be selected who should make an initial military attack; the king must know who had disobeyed in the army.

However, within these two limitations, the Urim and Thummim was the officially recognized means of Divine disclosure in Israel. Several factors so indicate. First, this revelation means was alone established as such by the Mosaic law. Prophecy, dreams, and the casting of lots were all recognized there, but none were commanded or described; only the Urim and Thummim. Second, this means was actually made a part to the high priest's dress. In fact, it was made central there in being located on the breast area, the most conspicuous place. Third, the language of Ex. 28:30 implies that the wearing of the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate was indispensable to the high priest's acceptability before Yahweh as he performed his duties. And fourth, Joshua was specifically instructed, at his induction to office, that he should regularly consult the high priest who would in turn inquire of the Urim and Thummim. This last is highly significant for it would show that all official questions, within the limitations observed, were to be decided in this manner.

2. Its actual use limited

From this official position held by the Urim and Thum-

mim, one could expect that it would have been used extensively. However, the evidence suggests that it was somewhat less than this. This evidence should be noted; then that there was an apparent increase of use with David; and lastly what the reason may have been why this employment was not as great as one would expect.

a. Evidence of two kinds

1) One aspect of this evidence is that the number of recorded times of Urim and Thummim employment are very few. For instance, from the conquest until Samuel, a period of over 300 years,¹ only three occasions are cited.² Of course, there is no reason to believe that every instance was recorded. In fact, probably the most were not, since minor decisions would not have been thought sufficiently important. Yet the fact remains that only three are reported in this long period. One would think there would have been more instances than this calling for mention had the Urim and Thummim been used extensively.

2) A second aspect of evidence comes from a direct indication that the Urim and Thummim inquiry was omitted in at least one instance when it should have been made. That involved the Gibeonite league, of which occasion it is stated that the people "asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh."³ If

¹This is on the basis of the early date of the Exodus.

²Josh. 7:14-18 (Achan); Jud. 1:1-2 (Judah first to occupy their land); and Jud. 20:18 (Judah again first to attack the Benjaminites).

³Josh. 9:14.

there was one such time, there likely were more. Indeed, such an instance as when the people took the Ark into battle without making inquiry is suggestive of the same type of default.¹

b. An increase with David

However, there appears to have been an increase in the use of the Urim and Thummim with David.² Especially two passages so indicate.

1) I Sam. 22:10-15.--This passage records the instance when King Saul investigated Doeg's charge that Ahimelech, the high priest, had aided the fleeing David; having, among other things, "inquired of Yahweh for him." In reply, Ahimelech says significantly, "Have I today begun to inquire of God for him?" (*italics mine.*) In other words, this recent inquiry had not at all been the first one. Thus, David had been consulting Ahimelech rather often before this.

2) I Sam. 23:11-12.--In this passage David appears first in the forest of Haroth (22:5) in his continued flight from Saul, and the prophet, Gad, is with him (22:4). He learns that the Philistines are oppressing the people of Keilah and so inquires of Yahweh whether he should help them. The answer is that he should, and that he would be successful. He

¹I Sam. 4:3-5. This action was contrary to the Hebrew law. The people should have not even considered it, and, if so, at least to have made inquiry first.

²The evidence here given concerns only David personally, but he would have likely encouraged the same with others.

complies with the indication, and then while he is thus at Keilah, Abiathar, the new high priest,¹ arrives bearing the ephod. At this point David learns that Saul plans to attack him in Keilah and so again makes inquiry, but this time by asking Abiathar to "bring higher the ephod." Apparently, then, the first inquiry had been made through the prophet, Gad; but now that Abiathar was on hand with the ephod, he changed to him that he might use the Urim and Thummim. There is no reason to think either that Gad had left the camp. Hence, David must have considered the Urim and Thummim as the normal means for such inquiry, and so changed to it in this instance as soon as it became available.

c. The reason for this lesser employment

A reason for this employment having been less than one would expect is suggested by the tenor of the Book of Judges. In brief it is that, following the death of the strong leaders, Moses and Joshua, a religious declension set in among the people. No one arose to replace them in leading the people on in faithfulness to Yahweh; and also most of the people lived at some distance from the central sanctuary and its influence. Even more, of course, there was the powerful pull of Canaanite culture which urged allegiance to Baal. The picture in the Book of Judges may be blacker than the average situation of the time,² but there is no question

¹Saul had now killed his father, I Sam. 22:16-20.

²The intention of the Book is to present this defection, and so stresses it; cf. infra, Chapter V, p. 165.

but what the people's sense of loyalty to Yahweh became greatly reduced during these tribal years.

And that this included the area of ceremonial observance is indicated by the Micah story (Jud. 17 & 18), where this man first made his own private sanctuary, then established a wandering Levite as his private priest, and finally saw both taken by migrating Danites. Then still worse, that this spirit reached even to the central sanctuary is shown by the sorry story of Hophni and Phinehas who were priests there and perverted the sacrificial system to such an extent.¹ Thus it follows that, if the Mosaic requirements were disregarded to this degree even at the Tabernacle, regulations as to the Urim and Thummim could easily have been neglected as well. It probably had been consulted with regularity while Joshua lived,² but then gradually less, as the declension spirit grew, until finally it reached its lowest point with these two degenerate priests. In this light too, it is understandable that there should have been renewed interest on David's part. He is always portrayed as one faithful to Yahweh, and so would have desired to make frequent use of the official disclosure means set forth in Yahweh's law.

3. Relation to other revelational media

The Old Testament speaks of three other approved reve-

¹I Sam. 2:12-17,22, where their conduct is called "trampling" the sacrifices and offerings (2:29).

²Though it was during Joshua's time that the neglect concerning the Gibeonites had occurred (Josh. 9:14).

lational media besides the Urim and Thummim: namely, "direct contact," casting of lots, and dreams. None of these was given the same standing by law as the Urim and Thummim, but still each was used many times with approval. This gives reason for making comparisons with the Urim and Thummim.

a. "Direct contact"

The "direct contact" form has already been discussed in some part and will be considered at length in the following chapter; and so need not be enlarged upon here. It employed no material instrument, such as with the Urim and Thummim and the casting of lots; and it was used for the longer, descriptive type of message.

b. Casting of lots

In casting of lots, Israel shared a means with many other nations.¹ Israelites used it throughout the Old Tes-

¹The Bible itself indicates this: for instance, regarding Persians, Esther 3:7; 9:24; the heathen sailors, Jonah 1:7; and cf. Obad. 11; Joel 3:3; Nah. 3:10; Matt. 27:35. Homer even indicates the gods themselves cast lots, *Iliad.*, xxii, 209. Indeed, when scholars find parallels with Israel's Urim and Thummim, what they really find are parallels with the lot. Ezekiel (21:21) describes the king of Babylon as employing arrows in divination, which was a form of lot casting. A. B. Davidson comments on this reference with a general description: "Then arrows (among the Arabs they were pointless and unfeathered), inscribed with the names of things between which a decision was sought from the god, were cast into a vessel or bag; these were shaken and brought before the god from whom the decision was sought; one was then drawn, and the inscription it bore was the answer of the god. . . . This method of divination by arrows was common among the Arabs (cf. Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, III, p. 127), and apparently also in Chaldea (Lenormant, *La Divination chez les Chaldeens*, ch. II. IV)"; *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Cambridge: At the Univ. Press, 1892), p. 156.

tament time and even into the new.¹ In that it was used so generally elsewhere in the world, it is pertinent first to ask whether this indeed was an approved means in Israel; then to note the areas in which Israel employed it; and last to observe its relation to the Urim and Thummim.

1) Approved means of revelation.--Two passages in particular indicate approval for the casting of lots. Prov. 16:33 states, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Yahweh." In other words, Yahweh controls the casting of lots. And In Josh. 18:6-10, Joshua tells the people that he will cast lots "before Yahweh our God" as to the respective land inheritances of each tribe. He would not have spoken in this way if lot casting were not approved. Then there are also the many instances, as shall be seen next, where important matters were decided by lot, and always in an approval atmosphere.

2) Types of decisions made by lot.--The following five points give either an instance or a subject area in which the lot was used: (a) the selection of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:8-10); (b) the division of the land among the tribes and selection of the Levite cities (Num. 26:55-56; 33:54f; cf. Josh. 14:2; 15:1; 16:1; etc); (c) the division of the priesthood into its 24 orders (I Chr. 24:5,7,31) in David's reign; (d) the assignment of tasks to Levites (I Chr.

¹The early church used it in the selection of Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:26).

26:13-14; Neh. 10:34); and (e) the selection of those who were to move to Jerusalem from outlying areas in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 11:1).

3) Relation to the Urim and Thummim.—The relation in general between the lot and the Urim and Thummim was that it was a less formal means of revelation, with less safeguards involved to insure it as Yahweh's decision, and so used normally for matters of lesser importance. The following observations lend evidence to this end or else provide further explanation. (a) Whereas the employment of the Urim and Thummim is regularly described as "making inquiry of Yahweh," the casting of lots never is. The indication regarding the lot is only that it either was, or should be, cast.¹ (b) There is no indication that the lot had to be cast only "before Yahweh," i.e. where the Ark was, as with the Urim and Thummim. It could be used more freely.² (c) The lot could be cast by other than the high priest, or even a regular priest. For priests are never mentioned as required, other than with the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, which was priestly in function for other reasons. And Neh. 11:1 clearly states that "the rest of the people cast lots" as to who of them should move to Jerusalem. (d) Whereas the Urim and

¹The following verbs are used: tul, "to throw down"; shalak, "to cast or throw"; arah, "to cast"; arah, "to go down"; and naphal, "to fall."

²Though Joshua does speak of casting lots "before Yahweh" in one instance (Josh. 18:6-8), the context shows that he had no reference to the presence of the Ark.

Thummim had two prescribed objects for manipulation, evidently always the same, the lot casting did not, and probably used different objects for different types of decisions.

For instance, a determination between only two alternatives would not have required as complex a device as, for instance, selecting what families should move to Jerusalem. For this last, perhaps objects with names on them were drawn from a receptacle. (e) The determination of relative importance for different decisions is not easily objectified. The observation above that the lot was used normally for less important matters than the Urim and Thummim is based mainly on the considerations just listed. However, it is not difficult to see that the choice between which of two goats should die on the Day of Atonement, or which families should move to Jerusalem is hardly as crucial as that regarding which man should die for a sin against his nation,¹ or who was to be the new king over Israel.²

c. Dreams

According to I Sam. 28:6, dreams were considered legitimate as a disclosure means along with the Urim and Thummim and the prophets.³ Thus, here again the Israelites

¹Achan, Josh. 7:14-18.

²Saul, I Sam. 10:19-21.

³The text reads, "And when Saul enquired of Yahweh, Yahweh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." Two other passages are also pertinent. The first is Deut. 13:1f where the people are warned against a "dreamer of dreams" urging them to follow strange gods;

shared a means with other nations, for, as observed in the prior chapter, dreams were high on the divination list of all the adjacent regions.

However, judging from the number of recorded instances when dreams were received by Israelites, this means was seldom used. Only three people received them:¹ Jacob,² Joseph,³ and Solomon.⁴ On the other hand, when Yahweh desired to communicate with non-Israelites, this was the only means He did employ; and several times: to Abimelech regarding Sarah (Gen. 20:3-6); to Laban regarding Jacob (Gen. 40:5-16); to Pharaoh regarding the famine (Gen. 41:7-32); to the Midianite regarding Gideon (Jud. 7:13); and twice to Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Daniel (Dan. 2 & 4). G. Vos finds reason for this use of the dream with non-Israelites in that, in this form of revelation, the unfit personality of the heathen was "to some extent neutralized, and the mind

which is not a criticism of dreams as such, but only their wrong employment. The other is Num. 12:6 where Yahweh says, "If there be a prophet among you, I Yahweh will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream." Here, of course, the dream is again put in a favorable context.

¹The reference, of course, is only to dreams which were interpreted as revelation.

²Jacob received two dreams: one at Bethel (Gen. 28:12f), and one while with Laban (Gen. 31:10-11).

³Joseph also received two: one concerning the bowing sheaves (Gen. 37:5-7) and the other concerning the sun, moon, and stars which made obeisance (Gen. 37:9-10); however, these came close together.

⁴Solomon's dream concerned Yahweh's promise of wisdom, riches, and honor (I Kgs. 3:5f).

was a mere receptacle of the message."¹

In these respects, dreams contrasted, of course, with the Urim and Thummim, which was used normally in Israel, and never outside. There was contrast also in that dreams, like the "direct contact" means, brought the longer, descriptive type of message, whereas the Urim and Thummim gave only the limited affirmation.

B. Duration of the Urim and Thummim

The question yet remains as to how long the employment of the Urim and Thummim continued in Israel. The facts of the matter should be observed first and then an accounting for one unexpected feature.

1. The facts

Grouping the occasions of Urim and Thummim employment in Israel's history, the following picture appears: no instances before Joshua; one in his day (Josh. 7:14-18); two in the Judges' period (Jud. 1:1-2; 20:18-23); one with Samuel (I Sam. 10:20-21); two with Saul (I Sam. 14:37-42; 28:6); three definite, with several implied, with David (I Sam. 22:10-15; 23:9-12; 30:7-8); but none at all following David's time until after the captivity.² Following David's day, then, over five centuries elapsed with no mention of the

¹Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), p. 85.

²As noted, supra, p. 54, note 1, some scholars also believe that II Sam. 2:1; 5:19, 23f; and 21:1 are instances, but reasons were there given for rejecting these. If they should be included, they still would fall no later than David's time.

Urim and Thummim, which has caused many to believe that it fell into complete neglect.

Without question it did suffer neglect, and it is this fact for which an accounting must be given. However, this neglect does not appear to have been complete in view of the one mention following the captivity (Ezra 2:63). The situation then was that certain priests had lost their credentials. Zerubbabel ruled that they should not be instated to full priestly rights until a Divine disclosure was received. And the means he named for receiving such was the Urim and Thummim. Haggai the prophet must have been on hand too, but Zerubbabel did not speak of him.¹ The significance seems obvious. Zerubbabel would not have thought thus readily of the Urim and Thummim if it had fallen into complete disuse during the prior years. It must, then, have continued in some degree, though without mention. However, that it did suffer considerable neglect is also apparent, and the reason for it must now be considered.

2. Reason for the neglect

The reason most commonly cited for the decline of the Urim and Thummim is that prophecy came in to take its place.² There is doubtless some truth in this. For certainly with the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, and then of the great

¹He was older than Zechariah. Both urged the people to resume building the Temple in 520 B.C., the second year of Darius (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1), which was only some 16 or 17 years after this.

²Cf. A. Kennedy, "Urim and Thummim," DB, IV, p. 840.

eight and seventh century prophets, there was a strong impact upon Israel. Consequently, the attention of the people would have been drawn to these spokesmen for Yahweh, and so, at least in some measure, away from the priests. They could thus have come to depend more on them for Divine communication and less on the priestly Urim and Thummim.

However, there are certain factors for which this explanation does not account. For one thing, there were prophets too before the decline set in, and they were also important individuals. Moses acted as a prophet.¹ Joshua is not so called, but he often acted in this capacity.² Samuel of course was an outstanding prophet. And in David's day, when the Urim and Thummim was used the most, there were the two prominent prophets, Nathan and Gad. And, as will be pointed out more in chapter VI, these were likely only the better known of a rather large group during these years. Hence, if the Urim and Thummim existed during their ministry, why should it have suffered so much more when the later prophets appeared? They were, on the average, greater personalities, but hardly so much so as to account alone for this marked change in the Urim and Thummim employment.

A second factor is that the decline set in too soon for the later prophets to have been solely responsible for it. The mentions cease with David, and it was more than a

¹Deut. 18:5.

²Joshua received numerous communications from Yahweh, and often relayed them to the people: 3:7f; 4:1f; 4:15f; etc.

century yet until Elijah, and another until Amos.¹ Thus, these great prophets could not at least have started the decline.

And a third factor is that the prophetic function did not carry the intention of replacing the priestly activity; nor the prophetic Divine disclosure, the Urim and Thummim. This fact has already been noted in some part, and will be more later on. The prophets were basically reformers, seeking to bring people back to what they should have already learned from the priests; and their "direct contact" means of revelation only continued what had paralleled the Urim and Thummim from the first. Both means had been necessary before; both should have continued to be with the later prophets. Thus, there was no real reason for the people changing to the prophets, and so away from the Urim and Thummim, just because these prophets now became better known and carried greater impact in their message.

Consequently, there must have been some other reason beside this for the marked Urim and Thummim decline. And that reason was the increasing disloyalty to Yahweh on the part of the people. This disloyalty, indeed, had called for the prophets themselves and motivated their messages. The people were quite unique in the world for this unfaithfulness to their God,² but that they certainly were is be-

¹David died about 971 B.C. and Elijah about 852 B.C. Amos began his ministry around 770 B.C.

²Jeremiah has a significant statement to that end: "For pass over the isles of Kittim, and see: and send unto Kedar,

yond all doubt. The prophets preached in view of this sin, and warned of its consequences continually.

This same lawless spirit is what had led to Urim and Thummim neglect already in the Judges period, as has been observed. When the people, and even the priests themselves, lost interest in their God, a concomitant loss of interest in what He might reveal followed naturally. With David, interest revived. David loved Yahweh and held the law in high esteem.¹ Accordingly, he made frequent use of the Urim and Thummim. But with Solomon, it was again declension that set in. And following him came the kingdom separation, with the northern nation even establishing a substitute worship. Occasional resurges of Yahweh loyalty came to the southern division, but also there serious defection was more the rule. Josiah's reforms brought to light the most flagrant violations: Baal vessels, an Asherah pole, sacred prostitutes! And the prophets tell us that the priests themselves were leaders in it all.

The situation was probably this, then. In times of revival,² the Urim and Thummim was employed in varying degrees of frequency. But with the times of defection, it was again set aside, as indeed were other prescribed, but more peripheral, ceremonial functions. The revivals came often

and consider diligently; . . . Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are not gods?" (2:10,11)

¹Cf. his psalm 19:7-10.

²As with Asa and Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

enough to keep the memory of the Urim and Thummim alive; and the last one helpfully appeared shortly before the captivity with Josiah. Then, during the captivity, and so until the return under Zerubbabel when the last notice appears, the serious reflection of the people served to maintain it. And so a knowledge of it was kept alive for those returning to the land. Accordingly, Zerubbabel, in his desire to please Yahweh, naturally turned to it as the proper means of inquiry following the return.

Chapter IV

THE PROPHET AND THE DIVINE DISCLOSURE

The interest now turns to the prophets and their means of Divine disclosure. This means has already been described in general terms as a "direct contact" type, but it is necessary to give a closer examination.

I. Meaning of "to Prophecy"

The first item which needs to be determined concerns the meaning of "to prophecy." More than one word is used in the Old Testament for the idea, and not always in the same way. Thus, it is well to begin by considering the meaning of the three words used.

A. The Terms, ro'eh, hozeh, and nabi'

1. Meaning of ro'eh and hozeh

The name, nabi', is much the more important, being used in the Old Testament nearly 300 times in its noun form alone. In contrast, ro'eh is used only 12 times, and hozeh only 18. But these last two also make their contribution to the total picture, and so must be studied as well.

Both of them mean the same thing; namely, "seer."¹ And

¹Their roots are respectively ra'ah and hazah, both meaning "to see."

the question quickly rises as to why, then, both names should have been used. M. Jastrow suggests that the ro'eh may have been a "seer" for anyone, while the hozeh was "more specifically the official diviner of the court."¹ There may be some truth to this, but a more basic distinction may be found in respect to the period of time in which each was used. For both have their respective periods of popularity: ro'eh in the time of Samuel, with eight of the twelve occurrences coming then;² and hozeh in the day of David, with five of the eight persons so designated living in his time.³ Both appear occasionally otherwise, but with nothing like the concentration that comes at these two periods.

A note in I Sam. 9:9 regarding ro'eh also lends evidence in this regard. The verse reads,

Before time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.

The exact meaning of this verse has been cause for contro-

¹"Ro'eh and Hozeh in the Old Testament," JBL, XXVIII (1909), 52.

²All eight are applied to Samuel himself. After him Zadok is once so called (II Sam. 15:27), Hanani twice (II Chr. 16:7,10, Asa's reign), and once used generally (Isa. 30:10).

³Gad (II Sam. 24:11), sons of Heman (I Chr. 25:5), Heman himself and Jeduthan (II Chr. 35:15), and Asaph (II Chr. 29:30). Later Iddo (II Chr. 12:15, Rehoboam's reign), Hanani (II Chr. 19:2, Asa's reign) and Amos (Am. 7:12) also receive the term. Johannes Pedersen speaks similarly of a time distinction for the two words, in his Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, p. 111.

versy, but its indication that the name seer (ro'eh), came to die out is very clear.¹ The time involved here is that of Samuel which fits this explanation exactly.

And in keeping yet further is the fact that at least one person is called by both names: Hanani, during the reign of Asa.² This would be difficult to understand on the basis of a difference in meaning, such as suggested by Jastrow; but not if the difference pertained rather to periods of popularity, for then sufficient overlapping in usage could nicely account for this type of duplication.

A word is also in order here as to an alleged relationship between the ro'eh-hozeh and the Babylonian baru. The baru, as was shown in chapter II, was also by etymology a "seer." M. Jastrow, who along with Haldar believes that the Israelite ro'eh-hozeh was basically the same in function as the baru, holds that the "seeing" of the Israelite representatives must have been originally the same as that of the baru: namely, of inspecting "something with a view of obtaining an answer to a given question."³ For this position,

¹Some have sought evidence in this verse for a marked distinction between the nabi' and the ro'eh-hozeh, e.g. A. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press Board, 1944), p. 313. But Rowley remarks, The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 99, "In any case the text could not of itself establish that originally the seer and the nabhi were two distinct types." And J. Pedersen comments, op. cit., that the text is only the "sign of an altered usus loquendi."

²Called a ro'eh in II Chr. 16:7, and a hozeh in II Chr. 19:2. Rowley also mentions this point, op. cit.

³Op. cit., pp. 46-47.

however, there is no evidence in the Old Testament outside of the similarity of names. On the contrary, in the instance of Saul and his servant coming to ask Samuel as to the lost asses,¹ Samuel not only did not consult any physical instrument, but he is said to have received his information regarding Saul directly from Yahweh.² Hence, the term, seer, did not connote divination inspection. Rather, its employment depicts the idea of mental discernment. The men so named were considered discerners of Yahweh's will, who then could relay that information to people.

It is worthy of note too that high respect was accorded these individuals. Thinking again of Saul's inquiry of Samuel, Saul hesitated from going to him for the lack of a gift to bring, which suggests respect on his part. And when Saul later returned home, his uncle, learning where he had been, quickly said, "Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you" (I Sam. 10:15). There was urgency on his part too. One factor so indicating is the employment of the emphatic imperative to express "Tell me"; and another, the additional use of the enclitic particle for stress, "I pray thee." Since Saul had not related the nature of Samuel's communication, it could not have been this which caused this interest. Thus, it must be ascribed solely to a general curiosity in

¹I Sam. 9. This is the main instance in which those, who believe the nabi' and ro'eh differed basically in function, find evidence for typical ro'eh activity.

²Vss. 15 and 17.

whatever such a seer said.

2. Meaning of nabi'

Nabi', as observed, is used much more than both ro'eh and hozeh combined. It occurs throughout the Old Testament, and also supplies the verb by which the activity of prophets was designated.

This importance is commensurate with the effort that has been expended to discover its etymology. Gesenius finds it in naba', meaning "to cause to bubble up."¹ He sees this concept in keeping with the ecstatic behavior which he believes characterized the prophets. A. Johnson says it should be linked to the Accadian nabu, meaning in its active sense, "to speak," thus giving the idea of "speaker."² Albright thinks this word is right, but takes its passive sense of "one spoken to" or "called," thus stressing the person's call to service.³ Others have made the relation to the Arabic naba'a, meaning "to announce," or to the Assyrian god, Nebo, who is then thought of as speaker, or even the Hebrew root, bo', meaning "to come" or "to enter in."⁴

It thus becomes apparent that etymology alone is not conclusive here. But arguing from the basic function of the

¹Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, trans. Tregelles, p. 525.

²Op. cit., p. 24.

³From the Stone Age to Christianity (2d ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 231.

⁴Cr. Rowley, op. cit., p. 97; also G. Vos, Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), pp. 209-210.

prophet, as shall be indicated presently, the idea of "speaker" should be favored.

No real distinction in office need be made between the ro'eh-hozeh and the nabi'. Many have done so seeing the former as non-ecstatic diviners, the latter as frenzied ecstasies; the former as working alone, the latter in groups; the former as waiting for consultations, and the latter as speaking readily wherever opportunity came.¹ But "all these neat divisions break down," says Rowley, when the passages are studied.² One way he shows this is by noting that some persons are even called by both names, nabi' and hozeh, including the important representatives, Gad, Iddo, and especially Amos.³

These distinctions are also based on insufficient evidence. Regarding the ro'eh-hozeh using divination, evidence has already been found lacking. Respecting the contrast of working alone or in groups, the argument rests mainly on the groups of prophets of Samuel's day as over against himself who was alone when consulted by Saul. However, it is clearly stated that Samuel was himself the head of these groups

¹For instance, T. H. Robinson, Prophecy and the Prophets (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 28-29; also M. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 56.

²The Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 137.

³Gad (I Sam. 22:5; II Sam. 24:11; I Chr. 21:9; 21:29; II Chr. 29:25); Iddo (II Chr. 13:22; 9:29; 12:15); Amos is called hozeh (7:12); and Jehu, the son of Hanani, who is himself called both a ro'eh and a hozeh, is called a nabi'.

(I Sam. 19:20), and thus in so far identified with them. Indeed, he is himself called a nabi' (I Sam. 3:20). Then regarding the third contrast of the ro'eh waiting for consultation and the nabi' not, this thought is taken again from Samuel being consulted by Saul. But elsewhere it is stated that Samuel also moved about in his work; for instance, leading in the Mizpah revival (I Sam. 7:1-14); making a regular circuit (I Sam. 7:15-17); anointing and later counselling Saul (I Sam. 10:1,20-25; 13:10f; 15:1f; etc.); anointing David (I Sam. 16:1-13); etc.

B. Speaker for God

The inquiry thus far had been basic as to the meaning of "to prophecy," but it is more important to see how the concept was used. Several areas of evidence show the principal idea involved was that of being a speaker for God.

First, one of the most significant indications is found in Ex. 7:1. The background to the mention there comes in Ex. 4:1-16, where Moses has objected to God's call to return to Egypt, claiming, among other things, incapability of speech. To this God has answered that He would provide Aaron to speak in his place, even being a mouth for Moses. And then in 7:1, God speaks of Aaron, in this capacity, as Moses' nabi'. Thus, a nabi' was one who spoke in the place of another.¹

¹N. K. Gottwald, in his A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 277, after commenting on this verse, concludes, "The pith of Hebrew prophecy is not prediction or social reform but the declaration of divine will."

Second, Deut. 18:15-22 carries significance. Here, Moses has just promised that God would raise up for the people a prophet like unto himself. And in vs. 18, Yahweh adds that He will put His words in this prophet's mouth so that he would "speak unto them all that" He, Yahweh, would command him. Thus, his task clearly was to be God's spokesman.

Third, indication is found also in the nature of the assignment given to the prophets at the time of their call. Isaiah was instructed to "Go, and tell this people" (Isa. 6:9). God told Jeremiah to "Go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak" (Jer. 1:7). And to Ezekiel the command was, "I send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them" (Ezek. 2:3-4). Each, thus, was commissioned to speak God's message.

Fourth, the well-known text in Amos (7:12-16) is highly pertinent. Amos is at Bethel, speaking against the false worship there and against the king, Jeroboam II. Amaziah, the Bethel priest, rebukes the prophet, saying,

O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.

To this Amos replies,

I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees: And Yahweh took me from following the flock, and Yahweh said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

The point concerns the significant usage here of the verb, prophesy. Amaziah urges Amos not to "prophesy" any more at Bethel, but to do so in Judah; and Amos in turn says

that Yahweh had sent him to Israel to "prophesy." Thus, what he had been doing before, and which motivated Amaziah's rebuke, was prophesying. And what this had been, of course, was simply speaking God's message.¹

And fifth, it is of real significance too that whenever prophets are depicted, either being given assignments, or else in action carrying them out, the thought is always centered in speaking God's message.

C. Three Minor Meanings for nabi'

The principal idea in the concept, nabi', is thus established. And the great bulk of its occurrences in the Old Testament are in this vein. However, there are a few occasions when it carries other connotations, and these too must be examined. Two of the connotations seem well established, while one (the second to be noticed) appears less so. All three will be considered and then a summation of significance given.

1. Ecstatic raving

The first is that of ecstatic raving, where self con-

¹The question has long been debated whether Amos here was saying that he had not been in the past a prophet, but now was in that God had recently called him; or whether he was disclaiming all connection with prophets, either past or present. The latter viewpoint normally holds also to the idea of ecstaticism among the professional prophets of the day, and that it was this especially to which Amos was objecting. Cf. J. M. P. Smith, The Prophets and Their Times (2d ed. rev. W. Irwin; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 1; or H. Knight, The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), p. 70. The present writer agrees with the first position. However, for the point here, this difference really has no bearing.

trol is all but lost. Two occasions indicate this connotation. The first involves the initial time that Saul became angry at David (I Sam. 18:10). In this anger, in which he threw a javelin at David, it is stated that Saul "prophesied (yithnabbe') in the midst of the house." No message from God was concerned. Hence, the meaning must be in reference only to the angry raving at the young attendant. The other occasion concerns the frenzied activity of the Baal prophets on Mt. Carmel (I Kgs. 18:29). This activity had involved leaping, loud crying, and even the cutting of their own bodies. And they are said thus to have "prophesied" (yithnabbe'u) until the offering of the evening sacrifice.

One other occasion (I Kgs. 22:10-12) has also been included in this category by some. It was when Ahab's 400 prophets are said to have "prophesied" (mithnabbe'im) before Ahab and his guest, Jehoshaphat. This may have been by the same type of ecstatic behavior, but there is one marked difference from the instance of the Baal prophets. That is that a message was given in this instance. Thus, the meaning may be merely that all were in some way involved in conveying this word.

2. Mental abnormalcy

The second, variant connotation concerns mental abnormalcy. Three instances occur which show that at least to some people, the concept, nabi', could include the thought of one who is mentally unbalanced (meshugga'). It is well

here first to cite the instances and then make a judgment as to their significances, for the evidence this time is not so clear.

a. The instances cited

The first regards a young prophet whom Elisha sent to anoint Jehu as king of Israel (II Kgs. 9:1-12). After he had performed the mission and departed, one of the men present asked Jehu, "Is all well? Wherefore came this mad (meshugga') fellow to thee?" The young prophet's actions had been proper for the occasion, and so this "mad" characterization can hardly have been other than something this man customarily assigned to prophets. And that he had recognized the man as a prophet is suggested by vs. 11.

The second appears when Jeremiah (29:26) quotes a certain Shemaiah, then in Babylon, as having used the parallel phrases in a letter to Jerusalem: "Every man that is mad (meshugga'), and maketh himself a prophet," thus equating such a mad man with a prophet.

And the third is seen as Hosea (9:7), again in parallelism, characterizes a point in Israel's thinking: "The prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad (meshugga')." The context shows that this was Israel's thinking in her iniquitous state, but, in that state, she did think of prophets as fools and madmen.

b. Significance of these instances

It is necessary to make an evaluation regarding the

significance of these instances, for it is not nearly so conclusive as with those of the other two connotations. Scholars regularly appeal also to these,¹ but they may indicate nothing more than that certain persons, opposed to prophets, were given to characterizing them derogatorily as mentally unbalanced. Three observations give evidence to this end.

The first is that none of these instances indicates definitely that the word, nabi', itself meant "mad." Each can well be taken otherwise as only the employment of an epithet. The second is that in each instance the atmosphere is one of derision, in which such an uncomplimentary epithet might be expected. And the third is that, at least in the last instance, the characterization is clearly unapproved by the writer, and the same could easily have been true for the other two had they lent themselves to such an indication.

3. Praise to Yahweh

The third, variant connotation concerns praise to Yahweh. Three passages are again involved, all of which have been used often as evidence of ecstaticism among Israel's prophets.² The position to be set forth here, however, is that they rather depict instances of praise-giving to Yahweh, which is still a variation, of course, from "speaking" for Him. Due to their importance, it is necessary to discuss

¹For instance, J. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, p. 111.

²For instance, Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 254-55.

them at some length. The instances will first be cited; then the arguments for ecstaticism will be reviewed; third, the argumentation will be refuted; and finally positive arguments against ecstaticism and for the "praise" explanation will be presented. None of the instances involve a spoken message of any kind.

a. The three instances

The first instance (Num. 11:25-29) concerns the "prophesying" of the seventy in the wilderness. Moses had just appointed this group to assist him in administrative duties (vss. 16-17), and Yahweh had then taken "of the Spirit that was upon" Moses and placed it upon these seventy, ostensibly to enable them for the new work. Then, "when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied (yithnabbe'u).\" Two of their number, Eldad and Medad, continued thus to prophesy longer than the others, which brought a complaint to Moses, but Moses rebuked the complainer saying he wished all the people were also prophets.

The second instance (I Sam. 10:1-13) concerns a similar prophesying by Saul following Samuel's indication to him that he would be Israel's new king. Samuel also told him what would occur to him on his homeward journey. Among other things, he would meet a "band of prophets" coming down from "the high place with" a number of musical instruments, and they would "prophesy (mithnabbe'im)"; also that "the Spirit of Yahweh" would then "come mightily upon" him so that he

would also prophesy (hithnabbitha) with them, and be "turned into another man." These events occurred as predicted.

The third instance (I Sam. 19:18-24) also concerns prophesying by Saul. He had sent three different groups of messengers to bring David who was visiting Samuel at Ramah.¹ All three times the messengers had met Samuel standing head over a group of prophets, who were prophesying, and the result was that the messengers did likewise. Finally Saul himself went. While yet on the way, the "Spirit of God came upon him also" and he "prophesied (yithnabbe').\" Later, he "stripped off his clothes" and "lay down naked all that day and all that night."

b. Arguments for ecstaticism

Many scholars hold that the prophesying portrayed in these instances was a frenzied, ecstatic, demonstration similar to that among the Canaanites.² Their argumentation to that end may be divided into five points.³

1) The first is an a priori argument: namely, that in view

¹The text says that they were at "Naioth in Ramah." Naioth means "dwelling," and so, since the group of prophets was also there, it is likely that this was the dwelling of the school over which Samuel was head.

²Cf. H. Knight, op. cit., pp. 80-81; C. T. Francisco, Introducing the Old Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950), pp. 85-86; John Bright, History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 166; H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), pp. 37-39; A. C. Welch, Kings and Prophets of Israel (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 70.

³This five-fold division of the argumentation is that of the present writer.

of the probability of Canaanite influence in this respect, in view of the ideas, "raving" and "madness," being associated with the concept, nabi!, in the passages already considered, and in view of the fact that these instances did not involve any spoken message, this prophesying could only be expected to have been ecstatic in type, especially at this comparatively early stage in Israel's history.

2) The second concerns the fact that in one of the instances the prophesying group was coming down from a "high place (bamah)" (I Sam. 10:1-13). Such high places were themselves Canaanite in origin, and so the type of persons associated with them could well have been characterized similarly.

3) The third relates to the fact that persons of this same group were playing musical instruments. Since music was a common means in other countries by which to induce the ecstatic state, it likely was being used to that same end here.

4) The fourth concerns the statement that Saul was "turned into another man." This would suggest loss of self-control which normally accompanied ecstaticism. This would fit also the apparent surprise on the part of those looking on, when they said, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?"

5) And the fifth relates to Saul's lying naked all day and all night following the second instance of his prophesying. This action suggests stupor on his part which again fits the idea of lost self-control in ecstasy.

c. Refutation

The observations that follow are designed either to show fallacy in the above arguments, or to account for the factors upon which they are based in a manner deemed more plausible. Each argument will be treated separately and in the same order.

1) Regarding the a priori argument, a remark is called for relative to each of the three points made. As to the probability of Canaanite influence, it was shown in chapter II that such did exist unofficially among the people, but did not cause any appreciable change in the official law, and that accordingly any results of this influence are never approved in the sacred writings. Thus, in that all three of these occasions are reported in an approval atmosphere, it is not likely that the actions described were considered the product of this influence. As to the bearing of the "raving" and "madness" ideas, the latter has already been shown to be weak as a source of evidence, and the former will be evaluated a little later. And as to the absence of a spoken message, this may be accounted for on the basis that the action involved was that of "praising" Yahweh, as shall be shown.

2) Regarding the "high places" argument, it is true that high places came into Israel as a result of Canaanite influence, and accordingly they are always disapproved; that is, always except for one period of time. That was the period following the loss of the Shiloh sanctuary until the building of

the Jerusalem Temple by Solomon, during which there was no "official" place of worship.¹ It is of course in this very period when this incident occurred. Consequently, that prophets were coming down from such a high place at this time does not necessarily imply that they were Canaanite in type. Samuel was certainly not a Canaanite-type prophet, and he, during this period, went up to such a high place to offer sacrifice (I Sam. 9:19).

3) In respect to the "music" argument, it is true that music was used in other countries to induce ecstasy, but, as Martin Buber points out, ecstasy

is not stirred up in a people of early culture by such acts as these, but by an enthusiastic singing of monotonous songs. Truly such singing is ecstatic, but it is also bound up with a strict rhythm and is accompanied by rhythmical movements of all its members.²

And this requires proper mental attitude on the part of sympathetic participants. There is nothing to suggest this was true of these few prophets coming down from the high place playing instruments, and it is indeed out of keeping for Saul who had not been among them until this moment of meeting.

4) In regard to the argument that Saul was turned into another man, two matters are pertinent. First, Samuel pre-

¹Cf. infra, chapter V, pp. 188-89.

²The Prophetic Faith, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 63. Buber here is arguing that "nebiism came from the movement of faith, . . . which demanded a militant devotion to YHWH God of Israel," and so not as a product of Canaanite influence.

dicted this change for Saul; and, in doing so, he implied approval which would be out of character for Samuel if he meant thereby a loss of self-control as in Canaanite ecstaticism. Samuel's message otherwise always centered in resistance to Canaanite influence. And second, it is logical to connect this change for Saul with the similar notice in vs. 9 that "God gave him another heart." But this notice in no way suggests any such loss of control. Rather, "a new heart" speaks of a new attitude, a new intellectual and emotional outlook. And this meaning fits very well into the story as a whole. Saul had been hesitant about going to see Samuel at the first, thus suggesting lack in self-confidence. But now Samuel has just anointed him for the kingship. Here was a great challenge for a young man. What could excite more? And if he was to become a good leader, there was indeed need for a new outlook, greater confidence, a more aggressive attitude, and just now a keen interest in these signs predicted by Samuel.

5) As to the last argument involving Saul's lying disrobed for several hours, this must indicate a lack of self-control on his part. No normal person would act in this way. However, two factors show that even so this was not the result of self-induced ecstasy. The first is that he alone, of all who prophesied here, did this. None of Samuel's group so acted, nor any of the messengers whom Saul had sent ahead of himself. Yet these all prophesied and all stripped off their

clothes.¹ Thus, if this prophesying was a self-induced ecstasy for all, why did not all lie down in the same continued stupor? And the second factor is that Saul again had had no opportunity for preparation for such induced ecstasy. Indeed, it is stated that he began to prophesy even before he arrived where the others were (vs. 23), and certainly he was a most unsympathetic subject when he had come in disgust, having previously sent three fruitless groups of messengers.

In this light, it is better to explain this incident in terms of melancholy and despair. It is clear that he was given to these emotional moods. And he had for some time been especially disturbed relative to David and his popularity with the people. He had just been ineffective too in procuring efficient service from subordinates in bringing David to him. And now, most of all, he had found David in the approving company of Samuel himself, which spelled his own rejection again in the clearest terms. All of this, coupled with the additional emotional surge of the Spirit of God having just come upon him to prophesy,² could have brought upon him both exhaustion and despair of overpowering measure.

¹That all so disrobed is made clear in vs. 24 by the element gam hu', "also he," used in reference to Saul doing what the others had done. This disrobing probably did not involve complete nudity. In such prophesying activity, like-ly ease of movement was desirable which could have been achieved by removing the cumbersome outer robe. The word, "naked" ('arom), can mean merely poorly clothed; cf. Isa. 58:7; Job 22:6; 24:7,10.

²Vs. 23. The meaning of this possession by the Spirit of God will be discussed later in the chapter.

d. Positive arguments

Not only do the arguments for ecstaticism allow for this direct refutation, but additional items may be observed which either add to the implausibility of the "ecstasy" explanation or point instead to the idea of "praise."

1) The first is an enlargement of a factor already mentioned but which calls for additional comment. It is that in self-induced ecstaticism, the subject not only has to be willing to experience this state, but also to seek it, actively, and with studied measures. Only by practiced mental control, then a participation in some rhythmic dance, or taking narcotics, or breathing some inebriating gas can this condition be attained.¹ It has been shown that Saul was not even a sympathetic subject, much less one who at these times was seeking this state.

2) The second concerns the incongruity of Samuel having been associated with a group of prophets practicing Canaanite ecstaticism. Surely he was not himself such an ecstatic, but, on the contrary, continually urged the people to resist all such outside influence.² And yet he was here the head³ of

¹E. O. James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1959), p. 31, says that "Only those who exhibit a genuine psychopathic personality, involving a high degree of auto-suggestibility, inner discipline and specialized training, can produce the abnormal psychological state required" for this type of activity.

²Cf. I Sam. 7:3-4; 8:5-6; 12:6-25; etc.

³The niphal participle nitsabh from natsabh, "to set

this group and depicted as approving this activity.¹

3) The third is an argument voiced by W. Eichrodt.² He says that there must have been a strong anti-Canaanite force in Israel to have withstood the complete engulfment of Israel by the Canaanite culture, so advanced as it was over her own. And the most likely source of that force, he says, was the prophets, who then from the earliest must have preached strongly against it.³ If Eichrodt is correct, this of course means that these prophets were not themselves the product of that which they opposed.

4) But if the prophesying was not ecstaticism, and it was not a speaking for God, then what was it? The answer is that it was a "praising" activity. This answer finds support in I Chr. 25:1-3 where the meaning, "praising," is clearly ascribed to the idea of prophesying. David there selects the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun "who should prophesy (neb-be'im) with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals." (italics mine.) A similar use of prophesying comes in vs. 2; and

or place," is used here and means "one who had been placed over" this group.

¹Elmer Leslie, Old Testament Religion in the Light of Its Canaanite Background (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 118, seeks to account for this association by Samuel by saying that Samuel "had the wisdom not to oppose" a movement that was inevitable. However, Samuel does not appear otherwise as one who would thus have compromised his convictions.

²Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 328-29.

³The following chapter will show that the priests also constituted a strong means of counter-action.

then in vs. 3 it is directly stated that these singers "prophesied in giving thanks and praising Yahweh." (*italics mine*)¹ Thus prophesying could mean "praising." And a consideration of each of the three instances here concerned shows that this idea fits well into the circumstances of each.

In the instance of the seventy in the wilderness, the meaning would be that they merely began to praise Yahweh, when the Spirit was placed upon them, perhaps in the form of some chanted song. With such praise Moses would, of course, have been pleased, and so naturally would have refused to rebuke Eldad and Medad as the story indicates.

In the first of the two instances regarding Saul, this viewpoint would see the prophet group coming down from the high place rendering praise to Yahweh, again in song, to the accompaniment of their instruments. Saul, now changed in mental and emotional outlook, could be expected to have joined with them, which must have been quite out of character for him as seen by the wonder of the people looking on. The fact of the Spirit of God coming upon him at this juncture should not be minimized either in respect to this sudden change in his manner.

And in the second instance involving Saul, the prophets would be seen doing the same, and Samuel, then, standing ap-

¹W. Eichrodt believes this prophesying indicates that prophets had now been absorbed into "the ranks of the Temple offices"; *op. cit.*, p. 337. However, it is stated elsewhere (e.g. I Chr. 15:22; II Chr. 8:14) that Levites were appointed to "praise" as well as other functions, and so this need not imply the presence of prophets. In either case, the idea of "praising" for "to prophesy" is still valid.

provingly over them. That the messengers and especially the disgruntled Saul should have also joined in this activity seems a little strange this time, but the text accounts for it again by significant mentions of the Spirit of God coming upon them (vss. 20-23). The bearing of this explanation can be seen better later after considering the nature of the Spirit possession.

D. Conclusion

A conclusion is now in order as to the full meaning of "to prophesy." The principal meaning was found to be "speaking" for Yahweh. Also two variant meanings were established: "raving" and "praising." A third, "madness," was found doubtful. Thus, the question rises as to whether a relation may exist between the two lesser meanings and the main one which might color the main one for its fullest significance.

The answer is that such a relation does exist and that the added color it gives to the idea of "speaking" is that of doing so with fervor. This follows from the fact that both "raving" and "praising" share a common area of thought in respect to wrought emotions. Both are expressions of strong emotional activity. Thus, the idea of speaking with wrought emotions logically follows. And this thought is altogether in keeping with the work of prophets. They were not merely to give a recitation; they were to bring a vital message that could change people's lives. They were to speak fervently.

Thus, the conclusion here is that "to prophesy" in its

fullest significance meant "to speak fervently for Yahweh." The "fervency" connotation could, and in the instances considered above did, receive special stress in the meanings, "to rave" and "to praise." People could use the idea, nabi', in this way, and thus say, for instance, that Saul in his anger against David "propheesied." However, since these occurrences as recorded were very few, this does not seem to have been done frequently. In contrast, the several hundred uses of the term for "speaking" show clearly the normal idea ascribed to the word; but then with importance being laid on the added, qualitative idea, fervency.

II. Ecstasy and Israel's Prophets

The matter now to be treated concerns more directly the nature of the prophetic means of Divine disclosure, the main question of the chapter. It has been necessary first, however, to clarify the meaning of "to prophesy," for those holding to the "ecstaticism" explanation believe that this of itself constituted the disclosure means; that God spoke to these persons in their state of frenzy.¹ The passages studied have long been the main source of evidence for this viewpoint, which has called for the somewhat extended consideration of them. The conclusion has shown, however, that they do not evidence ecstaticism, and so has removed the

¹For instance, E. O. James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1959), p. 80, writes "Filled with the divine afflatus (ruach) these cult prophets were moved to speak words which were interpreted as divine oracles." Cf. C. Whitley, The Exilic Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 31.

idea, "to prophesy," out of the area of Divine disclosure, and instead related it solely to the "speaking" of the message.¹

But this, then, leaves the nature of the disclosure means still unidentified. This identification must now be made. And, doing so, it will be found that an aspect of ecstaticism was involved after all, though of quite a different variety than of the viewpoint now refuted. And this being so, it is necessary, as the first concern, to look more closely at the rejected variety so that comparison can be made.

A. Frenzied Ecstasy

As has been indicated, Canaan is held to have been the source of frenzied ecstasy for Israel.² A still earlier influence on Canaan, however, came from Asia Minor³ and the

¹Reference here, of course, is only to nabi', not to either ro'eh or hozeh, the connotations of which did refer to the reception aspect of the prophetic activity. However, also these, it was observed, did not imply divination, but only that these persons had special perception concerning the Divine will.

²H. Knight makes the point that the origin of ecstasy had to be elsewhere than in Israel herself, for the "Hebrew psychology, with its stress upon the animated body as the organ of personality, is obviously unfavourable to the development of an ecstatic type of religion"; op. cit., p. 33.

³T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 155, says this movement swept through Asia Minor "toward the end of the second millennium into Greece on one side and into Syria and Palestine on the other." Oesterley and Robinson, Hebrew Religion (2d ed.; London: S. P. A. K., 1937), pp. 185-86, state that "these phenomena at a later time were spread over the whole of the Mediterranean world," though without reaching Egypt until the fifth century, B.C.

Grecian peninsula. And, of course, frenzy of a type has been identified also in many parts of the world.¹ Probably the oracle of Delphi is the most famous of ancient ecstasy centers. E. O. James describes the action there as follows:

It would appear the inspired prophetess, when an oracle was demanded, arrayed herself in long robes, a golden headdress, and a wreath of laurel leaves, and drank of the sacred spring kassotis. She then, it is said, seated herself on a tripod over a vaporous cleft in a chasm of a cave below, unless she actually entered the cave to encounter the vapour, in order to attain a state of enthusiasm. In this condition she gave counsel as the mouthpiece of Apollo.²

Certain forms of ecstasy were carried out only as a ritualistic exercise for some festal celebration,³ but the type to which prophecy is compared was motivated by a desire for revelation. The spirit world was sought. And to that end release from contact with reality was wanted. To achieve this ecstatic state, such means as a vaporous gas, a sacred dance, or even narcotics were employed. Reason needed to be set aside and the mind made open for the reception of the Divine word. Accompanying this rapport with the spirit realm was normally a physical seizure, which T. H. Robinson de-

¹E. O. James gives a list of many of the areas, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

²Ibid., p. 40.

³For instance, Herodotus, speaking of Thrace, and Lucian, of northern Syria, tell of a particular form of ecstasy related to fertility cult ritual in which, in the midst of the exotic dance, the young men would even grab swords and emasculate themselves, burying the organs to aid fertility; cited by R. Anderson, Attitudes of the Pre-Exilic Canonical Prophets Toward the Cultus (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1957, pp. 64-65.

scribes as follows:

It consists of a fit or attack which affected the whole body. Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, and wild leaping and contortions resulted. These might be more or less rhythmical and the phenomenon would present the appearance of a wild and frantic dance. At other times there was more or less complete constriction of the muscles, and the condition became almost cataleptic. The vocal chords were sometimes involved, noises and sounds were poured out which might be unrecognizable as human speech.¹

Normally some priest would be on hand to interpret such utterances, for these would be taken as the speaking of the god.

This type of ecstasy, then, is what is thought to have been shared by the Israelite prophets. E. O. James's comment is only typical: "It was this aspect of shamanistic behaviour . . . that constituted the principal role of the professional ecstasies described in Israel as nebi'ism."² Indeed, it is believed by some that, apart from ecstatic displays of this kind, the prophets would not have been accepted by the people as authentic;³ for to be capable of this experience constituted their badge of authority.⁴

B. Ecstasy of the Prophets

However, not all scholars share this viewpoint; partic-

¹Prophecy and the Prophets (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 31.

²Op. cit., p. 79.

³Some scholars believe this condition was true for the early prophets, not the later. This matter will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁴So stated by Porteous, "Prophecy," Record and Revelation, ed. H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 229, as he speaks of others, not himself.

ularly in recent years. Whitley, for instance, says, "Unanimity, however, has not been reached as to what extent 'ecstasy' or any such psychic experience was a characteristic of the true prophet."¹ And Knight counsels, "In discussing prophetic psychology, it is of the utmost importance to define the precise shade of meaning which we are to attach to the much-abused term 'ecstasy'!"²

It is in keeping with Knight's counsel that the discussion now centers. What was the degree of ecstaticism which the prophets experienced in their moment of revelation? The Old Testament gives little direct description of the event, but still, both from significant omissions and implications arising from accompanying factors, a rather clear picture appears. The following matters, of both a negative and positive nature, are evidenced.

1. There is no indication of any means of self-stimulation having been employed. The music of the band of prophets in I Sam. 10 has been found better explained otherwise. David's "sacred dance" of II Sam. 6 has received mention by scholars in this connection, and at that time David did lead others in a leaping and dancing procession before the Ark. But no revelation was then imparted. Moreover, David's rational

¹Op. cit., p. 31.

²The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), p. 91. The "precise shade of meaning" Knight himself accepts is not that of frenzy, as he says, "Prophetic inspiration means, not the absorption or dissolution of the prophet's personality, . . ."

faculties were well in hand during the occasion.¹ This was not, then, a time of self-stimulation to receive revelation.

2. There is no indication that the prophets sought to initiate the revelation experience.² God did the initiating; the prophets awaited His word.³ The pattern is illustrated graphically with Samuel while still a lad. Yahweh spoke to him and he thought it was Eli. Indeed, only after the third time did the boy finally recognize that God was speaking (I Sam. 3:4-14). Of course, prophets could, and did, pray for such communication. In I Sam. 8, Samuel asked Yahweh for counsel relative to the people's request for a king, and it was given. But still God controlled the revelation. Samuel could only wait after having given the request.⁴

3. At no time does a frenzied state appear as a badge of authority for a prophet. To the contrary, the occasion, for

¹David proceeded to make sacrifices, then blessed the people, and gave them all bread and wine, after which he left.

²In this respect is found a marked difference with the Urim and Thummim, which was a means by which the revelation occasion could be initiated. Even then, however, God did not have to answer, but at least the priests could set the stage for His disclosure.

³A. Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 294, says, "Again, the mystic is generally a seeker after ecstatic experience. . . . The prophet, on the other hand, was summoned to a definite task and given a definite message. The initiative was divine." Eichrodt states, "Israel knows nothing of the prophet's being able thus to gain mastery over God and to force his way into the divine world"; op. cit., p. 318.

⁴Cf. other instances: Ex. 5:22-6:1; 15:25; II Chr. 20:5-7.

instance, when Nathan rebuked King David for his grievous sin with Bath-sheba (II Sam. 11-12) speaks strongly against such an idea. For Nathan did not demonstrate this state before the King, nor did David demand it before accepting the rebuke. And the situation surely called for such an authentication if it had at all been in order.

4. The prophets give no indication of any loss in rational power in the moment of revelation. Moses could think quickly of objections to God's call back to Egypt when spoken to out of the burning bush (Ex. 3-4). The lad Samuel, just mentioned, could yet relate the next morning all that God had told him the night before. And Isaiah, after his vision in the temple, was able to think of his own unworthiness and then volunteer himself to be God's emissary (Isa. 6:1-8).¹

5. Yet the prophet's disclosure experience was more than merely an exercise of reason. There was also an ecstatic extra; a going beyond reason, while still retaining its power. There was a contact with the Divine without any negation of the human. The human mind was enabled to transcend its own finite limitations and come away from the moment knowing more than it had before. Or, as Knight puts it, it was an encounter when "the eye of the soul" was "opened to the reality of the transcendental world."²

¹S. A. Cook writes, The Old Testament, A Reinterpretation (New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), pp. 188-89, "It was the sanity of the prophets and not their manticism which made them such tremendous factors in human history."

²Op. cit., p. 95. Porteous says in his "Prophecy,"

6. And the center of this experience was always the "word" of Yahweh. A message was communicated, and the prophet was convinced that God had spoken it. He would then go forth and assert without hesitation, "Thus saith Yahweh." H. W. Robinson comments in this respect:

When we would trace the most essential part of the Old Testament religion back to its most essential element, we find a man standing in the presence of God, and so wrought upon by Him that he comes away from that presence ready to declare in the teeth of all opinion and all persecution, 'Thus saith Yahweh.'¹

This "word" thus given was more than the prophet's own; more than his reason could supply of itself though heightened to fullest degree. As H. Rowley says,

The mission of the prophet was to be an extension of the divine personality, and the utterer of a word which was not his but God's. . . . Their word came through the organ of their personality, but in so far as it was true prophecy, it did not arise merely from that personality, but from God.²

Record and Revelation, ed. H. W. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 246, "The personality of the prophet is not negated in the act of inspiration, but neither is prophecy to be explained as the emergence in religion of free and unfettered personality. . . . If we are to be true to the evidence of the Old Testament, we must insist on the essentially dialectical character of the prophetic experience; in it we see . . . the confrontation of human personality by the divine and the determination of the human by the divine will."

¹"The Philosophy of Revelation," Record and Revelation, ed. H. W. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 314. W. Robertson Smith, The Old Testament in the Jewish Church (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1881), p. 274, says "The characteristic mark of a true prophet is that he has stood in the secret counsel of Jehovah and speaks the words which he has heard from His mouth."

²The Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 141. He says also, Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 24, "God's will for men may be known because he has of his grace chosen to communicate it. He has not left man to stumble along in darkness, but has declared his will."

And further, this "word" was intelligent, communicable, not needing special interpretation by an attendant priest.¹

C. Spirit Possession

A matter tangent to the degree and nature of ecstasy among the prophets concerns the meaning of being possessed by the Spirit. The fact of this experience by the prophets has been observed. The seventy in the wilderness received the Spirit, and so did Saul on the two occasions considered. Thus, what sort of an experience was this, and what bearing did it have on prophesying generally and on the disclosure aspect particularly?

1. Not frenzied ecstasy

Those who hold to ecstaticism among the prophets, believe that this possession by the Spirit was an indication of that fact. By being thus outwardly possessed, they lost their own self-possession. As noted in chapter II, Haldar seeks to show identity between the prophets and the Babylonian mahhu priests on this basis.² S. Mowinckel too builds a case for distinction between the early and later prophets in the same reference, believing that the earlier were such ecstasies, while the later would have disdained the idea.³

However, both positions have been proven untrue in

¹Cf. Knight, op. cit., p. 32.

²Cf. supra, pp. 38-42.

³Mowinckel, "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets," JBL, LIII(1934), 199-227.

that ecstasy has been shown not to have been characterized in any of Israel's true prophets. And so too, then, has it been implied that Spirit possession could not have been related to such a frenzied state. There is also positive evidence for this last, however, and the interest now is to observe it. It appears from a study of other types of Spirit-filling, of which two are particularly pertinent for comparison. Neither involved an ecstatic experience.

The first type occurs with the judges. They were individuals who in many instances were raised up to deliver the land from outside enemies and, having done so, continued in an accepted role of supervision for several years. Among these leaders, Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson were principals, and of each it is said that the "Spirit of Yahweh came upon him."¹ Following this statement in each instance, the account of some great military achievement is described; but never is any suggestion made of some frenzy display.

The other concerns two mentions regarding a craft. Bezaleel, skilled in the building trade, is said to have been "filled" with "the Spirit of God" for his work on the Tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex. 31:3; 35:31). Then later, regarding the Temple, it is said that David passed along to Solomon "the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit" (I Chr. 28:12). The implication is that the Spirit had

¹Jud. 3:10 (Othniel); 6:34 (Gideon); 11:29 (Jephthah); and 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14 (Samson).

supplied guidance in regard to these plans. Neither instance suggests any aspect of ecstatic action. In contrast, indeed, both occasions, and especially the building responsibility of Bezaleel on the Tabernacle, demanded the greatest presence of mind.

Then there are other works too which God is said to perform by His Spirit, and again the idea of ecstasy is in no way involved. He works in nature by His Spirit: creating (Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30; Isa. 40:13), and garnishing the heavens (Job 26:13). He thus restrains men from sin (Job 27:3). He judges sinners (Isa. 4:4),¹ He gathers men (Isa. 34:16), He withers the grass (Isa. 40:7), and He defeats the enemy (Isa. 59:19). And often He is said to bring blessings on His people by the Spirit (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:26-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-29; Hag. 2:5).

The point is that, if God is said to have employed the Spirit in this variety of ways, in none of which ecstasy was, or could have been, involved, then there is reason to doubt that ecstasy was involved either when He endowed the prophets with the Spirit.

2. A means of Divine enablement

But the question remains, then, what this Spirit pos-

¹In this regard, N. Snaith's comment, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1944, p. 149, is pertinent: "The phrase 'ruach of judgment' is found in Isaiah xxviii. 6. It refers to the power being given to 'him that sitteth in judgment,' by which he is enabled to exercise his judicial functions. This power is given him by God."

session did mean when given to persons. The answer that is in keeping with the instances cited is that it meant the person's Divine enablement for an assigned task. The judges needed special wisdom, strength, and skill to lead against the enemy. Bezalcel required his normal craftsmanship heightened for the work on the house of God. David had needed special discernment for making the Temple plans. And this answer suits also the situation with the prophets. For they required special ability for both the reception and communication of their messages. Thus it was, for instance, with Azariah, following Asa's victory over Zerah the Ethiopian, as he gave the returning king words of encouragement and advice (II Chr. 15:1-7); and similarly too with Jahaziel when Jehoshaphat, a few years later, needed encouragement and instruction in view of eastern invading armies (II Chr. 20:14f).¹

Applying this explanation to the instance of the seventy in the wilderness, the placing of the Spirit upon them would have been to enable them for judging and administrative work. They had just been appointed to help Moses in this capacity. As a by-product of this endowment, they gave the praise to Yahweh noted. As for Saul, his special enablement in I Sam. 10 was in anticipation of his newly appointed office as king. He had been introverted and shy, and now needed to be made aggressive and confident. Again the by-

¹Other instances: Amassai (I Chr. 12:18); Zechariah (II Chr. 24:20); and in general, Neh. 9:20,30; Hos. 9:7; and Zech. 7:12.

product of praise to God was evidenced.

Respecting the instance with Saul in I Sam. 19, which was left priorly to be more fully explained at this point, the enablement involved was, as then suggested, in reference to the praising function itself. Saul had already ruled for some time, and even been rejected in that rule prior to this time, and so no extra empowerment was to be expected in that connection. But such Spirit possession would account for the rendering of praise by both himself and his messengers. Saul, particularly, had been disgruntled and in no mood for giving praise, and so had needed this endowment if he were to do so. There is reason too why such a change of mood was called for: namely, the protection of David, and perhaps even of Samuel, from Saul's anger otherwise. Sometime later Saul did not hesitate from slaying the high priest Ahimelech and his fellow priests at Nob in a similar situation. As it was, David was not even apprehended, though Saul had previously sent three companies to bring him. Instead, Saul lay in a fit of despair all night long at the complete defeat he had experienced.¹

3. The writing prophets and Spirit possession

In the light of this meaning for Spirit possession, all prophets should have had this experience, for one would

¹Only culminated here with this instance, of course. He had previously been rejected as king, and here David was clearly in Samuel's favor. Hence, though he joined for a while in a chanted praise song, perhaps as a sort of gesture of surrender, he could not avoid for long the flood of despair that swept over him.

have needed enablement as well as another. Yet the writing prophets give little testimony that they were Spirit filled. There is no direct statement to this effect regarding Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi. Of only two, then, is it made: Ezekiel (several times: 2:2; 3:12,14,24; 8:3; etc.) and Micah (3:8). Four prophets do use the term, Spirit, but not as applied to themselves; namely, Isaiah (4:4; 11:2; 19:14; etc.), Hosea (9:7), Haggai (2:5), and Zechariah (4:6; 7:12). It is this fact especially upon which Mowinckel builds his case for the distinction observed between early and late prophets. He believes that these prophets were not Spirit filled, and so did not ascribe the fact to themselves.¹ This answer, it may be repeated, has been shown to be in error.²

However, the question remains as to why these prophets make such little mention of the Spirit. Were they Spirit filled or not? And if so, why did they not speak of it? The answer is that they did consider themselves thus filled;

¹On this basis, Mowinckel has some problem, of course, with both Ezekiel and Micah, which do ascribe Spirit possession to themselves. Of Ezekiel, he says, op. cit., p. 226, that he was simply "a true ecstatic of the ancient type"; in other words, quite out of place for this late time; and of Micah that here was an "ideological 'throw back' to the older nebh'ism"; but neither observation appears satisfactory.

²Supra, p. 122. Rowley cites this viewpoint of Mowinckel and comments: "It is doubtful if this represents any sounder distinction. It is quite improbable that the true prophets would have repudiated the idea that the spirit of God was the source of their inspiration"; The Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 149.

but filled continuously, so that there was no need to speak of any refilling. It was simply to be assumed that, since they were Yahweh's prophets, they were of course Spirit filled. Evidence to this end is found in two directions.

The first concerns two direct statements from two post-exilic writers to the effect that prophets of former days had been Spirit enabled. Zechariah (7:12) is one, writing, "The words which Yahweh of hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former prophets." Nehemiah (9:30), some seventy years later, is the other, saying that God had testified against this people in time past by His "Spirit through" the "prophets." The pre-exilic, writing prophets would, of course, have been mainly in mind for each of these statements.¹

The second is more indirect in nature, but of equal significance. It is that a continuous Spirit possession of this kind was experienced by a number of leading persons in the Old Testament as definitely indicated, and so it should not be thought unusual if all the writing prophets considered themselves endowed similarly.

One such person was Saul, so much discussed already. In I Sam. 16:14, it is stated, "Now the Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul." The Spirit had come upon him priorly just before the Jabesh-gilead battle (11:6).² Thus, the im-

¹Cf. N. Snaith, op. cit., p. 154, for discussion of these two texts, along with Ezekiel and Micah, in this regard.

²Evidently the earlier coming upon Saul of the Spirit in I Sam. 10 was only temporary. The continued aspect did not begin until he took over actual leadership with the Jabesh-gilead battle.

plication is that the Spirit had been continuously upon him from that time until this mention in 16:14, where he had just been rejected from enjoying a long rule with David having been anointed to take his place.

Then a similar reference is made regarding David. In I Sam. 16:13, following David's anointing, it is said, "And the Spirit of Yahweh came mightily upon David from that day forward." (italics mine.) Then in the well known 51st psalm, David prays to Yahweh, "And take not thy holy Spirit from me," thus implying his own recognition of continual Spirit possession. And finally, in his last words (II Sam. 23:2), he states in a similar vein, "The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me," with the implication that this had been a regular experience.

The same may be pointed out also for Israel's first two leaders, Moses and Joshua. The clues are incidental, but they are clear. Indeed, the fact that they are incidental could itself carry significance that such leaders were taken for granted as thus continuously Spirit filled; and this, in turn, could suggest the reason why similar clues are not found for every great leader, including the writing prophets.

Regarding Moses, a clue appears in the passage again concerning the seventy in the wilderness (Num. 11:17). The Spirit there placed on the seventy had been dwelling on Moses, and was not removed from him at this time. Isaiah (63:11,14), much later, gives another, stating that Yahweh had led His people through the wilderness by His Spirit, and

referring prominently to Moses at the same time in a way as to imply that he had been the intermediary for this leading.

As to Joshua, the clue appears in Num. 27:18 where Moses anoints the younger man as his successor. To that end, God instructs Moses, saying, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit." (italics mine.) Thus, the Spirit was indwelling Joshua at this time. Then Deut. 34:9 speaks to the same effect: "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom." The element here, "of wisdom," would characterize the aspect of Joshua's enablement, so needed as Israel's leader.

Turning now to similar clues regarding prophets, a significant one comes in II Kgs. 2:9, where Elisha makes the request of his departing master, Elijah, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me." Hence, Elisha recognized that the Spirit had been dwelling upon Elijah.¹ Then in vs. 15 following, after Elisha had recrossed the Jordan, the "sons of the prophets," watching, say, "The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." Thus, they too recognized what had been true of Elijah, and here were persuaded that the same was now true also of Elisha.

Then two of the writing prophets, themselves, can be shown to have been similarly Spirit indwelt. They are the

¹This request was not that Elisha might have twice as much of the Spirit as did Elijah, for this would be quite meaningless, but that he might have from his master the inheritance share of the first-born, namely the double portion. Cf. Cyrus Gordon, The World of the Old Testament (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Co., 1958), p. 200.

two mentioned earlier as alone claiming this status, namely Ezekiel and Micah. Both indicate a continuous Spirit possession for themselves. Of Ezekiel it is necessary to speak at some length, for his indications are numerous, have been discussed frequently by scholars, and so call for some argumentation to be developed. This will follow presently.

However, Micah can be considered at this point. He says, "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh, and of judgment, and of might" (3:8). It should be noticed that he not only indicates he was Spirit filled, but that he considered this continuous; saying, "I am full (male'-thi)."¹

In view of this evidence now, it may be concluded that the other writing prophets, in addition to Micah and Ezekiel, were also Spirit filled even though they do not themselves say anything about it. The clear statements of Zechariah and Nehemiah cannot be discounted, and the clues for continuous indwelling of great leaders carry a combined weight that can not be denied. This Spirit possession for them would have meant the same, of course, as for the other prophets, namely Spirit enablement.

A further clarification is called for at this point as to just who these "other" prophets were; that is, those concerning whom the mentions are made that the Spirit came upon them. Mowinckel's viewpoint simply calls them "early." But

¹This verb form is in the perfect state, thus signifying a condition already existent.

this was true only to a point; for none, who are definitely mentioned to have been thus filled, lived earlier than David, and the last preceded Amos by less than half a century. In Samuel's day, of which prior discussions have dealt, only Saul and his three messenger bands, none of whom were prophets, had this experience; and the seventy in the wilderness were not prophets either.

Hence, a more basic distinction is in order; and one logically commending itself concerns relative importance. These others were all relatively less important as prophets; receiving occasional assignments, but otherwise seldom if ever mentioned.¹ On the other hand, the writing prophets were of major importance, receiving assignments often and engaged regularly in prophetic activity. Hence, the reason appears as to the difference between them in type of filling: the former only needed special enablement for the occasional duties, while the latter required it daily. On this basis, indeed, it may be believed that the earlier, great prophets too, like Samuel, Nathan, Gad, etc., also thought of themselves as continuously Spirit filled.

4. The special case of Ezekiel

The special case of Ezekiel may now be considered. Two matters call for attention: first, the reason, in view of the above conclusions, why Ezekiel speaks as he does concern-

¹To indicate them again, they are: Amasai (I Chr. 12: 18, David's reign); Azariah (II Chr. 15:1, Asa's reign); Jahaziel (II Chr. 20:14, Jehoshaphat's reign); and Zechariah (II Chr. 24:20, Joash's reign).

ing the Spirit; and second, how Ezekiel gives further corroboration that Spirit possession meant Spirit enablement.

a. Continuously Spirit filled

Considering the first of these matters, there are three mentions by Ezekiel which particularly appear out of keeping with the conclusions made above. They are: "And the Spirit entered into me" (2:2); "Then the Spirit entered into me" (3:24); and "The Spirit of Yahweh fell upon me" (11:5). Seven other times, Ezekiel speaks of the Spirit "transporting" him some place,¹ and these also have a bearing which will be discussed; but these three alone state directly that the Spirit entered into him, an indication which seems to say that he was not continuously indwelt. The following observations show, however, that, even so, Ezekiel yet thought of himself on this count just as did the other writing prophets.

1) The first concerns the fact that Ezekiel uses different verbs here than employed in the other, earlier instances. The earlier mentions use five different verbs, and three of them depict a vigorous action by the Spirit. Samson and Saul were both "attacked" (tsalah, "to attack, succeed over") by the Spirit.² Gideon, Amasai, and Zechariah were each "clothed" (labash, "to put on clothes").³ And Bezaleel was

¹3:12,14; 8:3; 11:1,24; 37:1; 43:5.

²Samson: Jud. 14:6,19; 15:14; Saul: I Sam. 10:10; 11:6.

³Gideon: Jud. 6:34; Amasai: I Chr. 12:18; Zechariah: II Chr. 24:20.

"filled" (male', "to be full").¹ In contrast, Ezekiel uses only the two verbs, "entered into" (bo' b, "to come in") and "fell upon" (naphal al, "to fall upon"), neither of which depicts this stronger type of action.

It is believed that the significance of this change is that Ezekiel is not thus speaking of an actual, renewed possession by the Spirit, as in the earlier instances, but only of a strong, renewed awareness on his part of the Spirit's continuous enablement.

2) The second observation pertains to a factor which could have prompted this awareness on Ezekiel's part: namely, a new revelation which accompanied each of these mentions. For instance, in 3:24 it is stated, "Then the Spirit entered into me . . . and said unto me," with the message then following. And 2:2 ties this revelation factor yet closer to this renewed awareness, saying, "And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me." (*italics mine.*) Ezekiel would have been aware of this speaking first, which, then, could indeed have served to prompt the fresh awareness of enablement.

3) The third concerns another factor which could have prompted this awareness; namely, a new assigned task each time. To receive such would have naturally called for a renewed awareness of this kind. In the first mention (2:2), that assign-

¹Bezaleel: Ex. 31:3; 35:31. The other two verbs are "was upon," (Jud. 3:10; Jud. 11:29; II Chr. 15:1; II Chr. 20:14); and "rested upon" (Num. 11:26).

ment concerned his very commission; in the second (3:24), an object lesson for his ministry; and in the third (11:5), a fresh message to deliver to the people.

4) The fourth pertains to the seven times he makes mention of being "transported" by the Spirit to some location, such as the temple in Jerusalem (8:3). None of these tells of any filling having been necessary before the transportation could be effected, but the implication is that this was possible at any time; in other words, as though his Spirit enablement for such was continuous.

5) And the fifth couples these seven mentions with eight others in which the prophet speaks of the Spirit doing yet other things,¹ and concludes that, therefore, in order to account for such frequent references to the Spirit, Ezekiel must have been unusually Spirit conscious. But such Spirit consciousness is much more in keeping with a continuous enablement than with merely temporary fillings.

6) In summary, then, this evidence points to the fact that Ezekiel did believe himself continuously indwelt by the Spirit; that he was unusually conscious of this fact, ascribing numerous activities, including his own "transportation," to the Spirit; and that he experienced a particularly strong, renewed awareness of this state through certain revelations by the Spirit when new assignments were given, which renewed

¹1:12,20,21; 10:17; 36:26,27; 37:14; 39:29.

awareness combined with this revelation he then described as being "entered into" or "fallen upon" by the Spirit.

b. Further evidence for "enablement"

The second task here concerns how Ezekiel gives unique, further evidence that Spirit indwelling meant Spirit enablement. This evidence appears clearest in the well-known "dry bones" section (37:1-14). As N. Snaith points out, "We get the word ruach in its most effective context" in this passage.¹ The dry bones are animated by the coming on them of the ruah (normally translated here "wind" or "breath"). And then the parallel is drawn with Israel (vs. 14) as Yahweh says to His people, "And I will put my Spirit (ruah) in you, and ye shall live." Thus, as the "wind" (ruah) made the dry bones live, so the Spirit (ruah) will make Israel take on life. This means enablement. They were dead; the Spirit would enable them to live.

Three other instances in Ezekiel also bear out this thought. In 36:27,² God is said to place His Spirit "within" Israel so that they will be caused (enabled) to walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances. In 13:3, the false prophets are said to "follow their own spirit" in this false activity, implying the lack, accordingly, of being enabled

¹The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 15. Snaith gives a well rounded treatment of this passage.

²Cf. 36:29 where God is said to save them from all their uncleannesses, and then increase the corn that no famine will come; all implied as being done through the Spirit.

for true prophetic work by God's Spirit. And in 1:20 (also 1:12,21; 10:17), the "wheels" and the "four living creatures" are directed by the Spirit and thus enabled to move about in their unusual manner. Thus, each of these mentions deals with the concept of enablement by the Spirit and so further reinforces the enablement idea.

5. Spirit possession and Divine disclosure

It has not yet been shown definitely what aspect of the prophet's function this Spirit enablement concerned: whether the reception or the declaration of the message. The evidence of the pertinent passages is that it concerned both. For instance, Micah's reference (3:8) is to the declaration aspect, as he says, "I am full of power by the Spirit . . . to declare." (italics mine.) Nehemiah's general reference (9:30) is similar, saying that God had warned Israel by the Spirit "through the prophets."¹ On the other hand, Ezekiel, in the three places just discussed, refers clearly to the reception aspect, as he gives each time the very words that were spoken to him. Also Jahaziel's experience before Jehoshaphat (II Chr. 20:14) was of the same kind, as a message of instruction came to him to relay to the people.² In fact, in every instance where a prophet (not of the classification where Spirit possession was considered continuous)³ receives

¹This "declaration" aspect is shown also with Amasai (I Chr. 12:18) and Zechariah's mention (7:12).

²Cf. Neh. 9:20.

³Besides Jahaziel mentioned, this involved Amasai,

a revelation, it is said that the Spirit came upon him in connection with it. Thus, Spirit possession was considered necessary for all prophetic activity, both the receiving and the giving. Relative to Divine disclosure, then, the interest here particularly, it may be said that Spirit possession was that which was believed necessary for enablement for the revelation experience.

III. The Prophetic Divine Disclosure

Much of the material thus far has been necessarily more foundational to, rather than dealing directly with, the nature of the prophetic Divine disclosure. Hence, it is well to close the chapter with a section devoted to this matter as such, in which both summary statements and further elaboration are included.

A. Summary Statement

It has been seen that the prophetic Divine disclosure came by means of direct contact, without the use of instruments as with the Urim and Thummim, characterized by the formula, "Thus saith Yahweh." The occasion was to a degree "ecstatic," for the prophet's normal powers were transcended, through the means of Spirit possession, so that a meeting of the Divine with the human was effected. This was not by the loss or sublimation of rational power, but through its height-

(I Chr. 12:18), Azariah (II Chr. 15:1), and Zechariah (II Chr. 24:20). The prophets who were continuously filled are not pertinent for evidence here, for they, then, could never have received revelation without Spirit possession.

ening for the reception and understanding of the Divine "word." The prophet came away from this disclosure experience knowing more than he had before and with the conviction that he had received a Divine communication.

B. Early and Late Prophets

Many scholars have made a sharp distinction in respect to Divine disclosure between the earlier and the later prophets. That distinction pertains to the matter of ecstasy; with those earlier thought to have been highly ecstatic, and the later much less so. For instance, Battenweisser writes: "The inspiration of the great literary prophets has nothing in common with the ecstasy of the prophets of the older type."¹

However, it has been shown that ecstasy of this frenzied variety did not characterize any of Israel's true prophets. These scholars take their evidence primarily from the events of Samuel's day, but it has been substantiated that both his company of prophets and Saul were not frenzied,

¹The Prophets of Israel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 138. J. Skinner speaks of "The older nabi'ism of the period from Samuel to Elisha" and "the new type inaugurated by Amos"; Prophecy and Religion (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), p. 5; cf. pp. 220-21. C. Sauerbrel, in his "The Holy Man in Israel: A Study in the Development of Prophecy," JNES, VI(1947), 209, says that the distinction was so great that the later prophets must even have developed separately from the early "ecstatics." On the other hand, J. Bright, The History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 247, feels the similarities should be stressed, since "The entire prophetic attack is rooted and grounded in the tradition of the Mosaic covenant." Still differently, T. H. Robinson emphasizes similarity, but because both early and late prophets were ecstatics, Prophecy and the Prophets (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 36-46.

but were engaged rather in "praising" Yahweh. No evidence to this end can be found either regarding any of the other early prophets, as Samuel himself, or Nathan, or Gad.¹ And Elijah on Mt. Carmel, somewhat later, but still before the literary prophets, shows outright scorn for the frenzied display of the Baal representatives, both in his contrasting manner and his mockery at the noon hour.²

It has been shown that no difference existed either in respect to the filling of the Spirit. Early prophets, such as Moses, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, were thought of as continuously filled just as well as the later. And prophets filled temporarily, as observed, are found from the time of David until within a half century of Amos.³ Thus, this special enablement of the Spirit did not change. And the formula, "Thus saith Yahweh," did not change either. It is used from the day of Moses until after the exile. In basic respects, then, early prophets did not differ from later.

C. A True Divine Communication

A further matter much debated concerns the real meaning of "Thus saith Yahweh." Was the event so described truly an ab extra for the prophet, an impartation from without? It is generally admitted that its experience was vital to the

¹In contrast, every instance recording early prophet activity shows only sobriety manifested.

²I Kgs. 18:25-39. In view of such, Eichrodt concludes "that the early prophetic movement . . . was fundamentally distinct" in its day; Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 323, cf. pp. 316-23.

³Supra, pp. 131-32.

prophet, one which he believed came from God; but many have found the explanation for it only in a heightened mood or psychic insight of the prophet himself. For instance, writes W. F. Lofthouse, "The prophet uses the term, 'Thus hath Yahweh spoken' when he is really uttering his deepest convictions."¹ And H. W. Robinson closes a treatment of this subject with the words, "Hebrew prophecy is revelation, because it is realization--true to God, because so true to man."²

On the other hand, others have found difficulty in explaining certain features of the record apart from such an extra factor. A question from Guillaume is typical:

How, for example, can we explain the fact that Micaiah, the son of Imlah, knew that all Israel would be "scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd," or if he did not know that such a disaster impended, how could he stake his life on the truth of the assertion?³

And H. Rowley, who has previously been quoted as believing in such a Divine contact,⁴ speaks in similar fashion relative

¹"Thus Hath Jahweh Said," AJSL, XL(1923-24), 249.

²"The Psychology and Metaphysics of 'Thus Saith Yahweh,'" ZAW, XLI(1923), 15. Writes J. Skinner, op. cit., p. 10, "The prophetic vision is undoubtedly a creation of the sub-conscious mind, working uncontrolled by voluntary reflexion, and producing subjective images which have something of the vividness and reality of actual sense perception." Cf. W. O. Irwin, "Revelation in the Old Testament," The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, ed. H. Willoughby (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 257; G. E. Wright, Old Testament against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 75; and W. Williams, The Prophets (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), pp. 137-49.

³Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p. 107.

⁴Supra, p. 121.

to predictions of the Red Sea deliverance, Deborah's victory, and the loss of Sennacherib's army.¹

In view of such considerations, Eichrodt states his opinion:

The state of ecstasy enabled many to impart information in the name of Yahweh in a way which revealed the presence of a higher kind of knowledge. . . . The nabi became the proclaimer par excellence . . . as the speaker empowered by God to reveal his hidden will.²

And G. Joyce writes,

Those who have experienced the abiding power of the prophetic message over the human soul will know better than to be content with any account of the matter which reduces the whole process to the level of a purely natural event. Whatever light may be thrown upon the phenomena of prophecy by comparison with other religious experiences, the innermost secret will remain inviolate.³

This viewpoint is shared by the present writer. The power of the prophet's message, the compulsion he felt, the commitment unto death he gave, the fulfillment of predictions he made--these are not to be denied in their evidence for the extra factor. The prophets did experience an outside

¹The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 40.

²Op. cit., p. 312. In a footnote he says that "this point is being grasped more and more clearly, and mentions especially Rowley and Eissfeldt.

³The Inspiration of Prophecy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 65. Though H. Knight, The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), pp. 99, 61, warns against taking "Thus saith Yahweh" in a "too literalistic and short-sighted" manner as to believe this implied "the audition of external spoken words," in another context, commenting on Isa. 21, he says, "Here the sense of being gripped by an overpowering, invading, presence becomes so intense that the prophet experiences a violent disruption of his personality. The spiritual force ab extra, by which he is inspired, stands out and is objectified over against the prophet's more normal consciousness."

addition to their natural powers in the moment of Divine disclosure. It came as a result of Spirit possession. Because the prophet already had, or was at a given moment filled by, the Spirit, he was enabled to know what he had not known before. As N. Snaith writes,

The idea of a more than human power runs through the whole of the phrase ruach-adonai. As a result of this special endowment of divine power men are able to do that which, in the ordinary way and relying upon purely human resources, they are quite unable to do.¹

D. Final Summation

In final summation, the prophetic Divine disclosure can be described as that direct type of revelation, not mediated by instruments, common to both early and late prophets, initiated and empowered by the Spirit, by which such a meeting of the Divine and the human transpired in the personality of the prophet that, without sensing any negation of his normal, rational powers or experiencing any form of ecstatic frenzy, the prophet came to know more than he had before and was given the unequivocal conviction that he had received a "word" from Yahweh.

¹The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 154. Martin Buber's comment, The Prophetic Faith, trans. C. Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 64, is pertinent: "Dabhar does not displace ruah, but joins with it. According to the Biblical view he to whom full power is given first experiences the ruah, and afterwards receives the dabhar. In the one case one received the stimulus, in the other the content."

Chapter V

THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE PRIEST

I. Identity

With the questions regarding means of revelation for the priests and prophets now answered, it is possible to take up the teaching ministries proper. The ministry of the priests is treated first, and the initial question concerns their identity.

A. Usage of the Term, kohen

Israel's word for priest, kohen, was not limited to the Hebrews, but was used commonly in the Semitic world. However, only in Arabic is its verbal form found, where kahana means "to divine."¹ Everywhere but in Israel the function of the kohen was in keeping with this meaning, i.e. divination. Regarding Israel, however, R. Yerkes observes, "The Hebrews apparently took the word from the Canaanites to describe their cult officers, but their radical opposition to divination robbed kohen of all its original significance."² E. O. James

¹Cf. R. K. Yerkes, Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 122; S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and Topography of the Books of Samuel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 284-85; E. O. James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1959), pp. 74, 92-93.

²Op. cit.

believes that something of that original meaning was preserved in Israel in connection with the Urim and Thummim employment, but feels that "under the influence of the cultus centralized in the Temple . . . it became increasingly specialized and concentrated upon sacrificial worship."¹ Its Old Testament usage does indeed indicate the broader meaning, but not only as to including the idea of sacrifice, but also the prominent teaching ministry carried on by the priests. The Old Testament also uses kemanim in reference to priests, but, as Baudissin correctly states, "only of heathen priests."²

B. Identity of the Priests

The question of the identity of the priests is tied in with the identity of the Levites, and the latter must be identified first. Disagreement among scholars exists as to who the Levites were. The question hinges on whether the name applied originally to a family or to an office.³ To assign it merely to the office is to deny the strong testimony of the Old Testament that the Levites were a tribe.⁴ But some scholars find it unreasonable that an entire tribe should

¹Op. cit., p. 74.

²"Priests and Levites," DB, IV, p. 67.

³Oesterley and Robinson, Hebrew Religion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 164, state, "We do not know whether the name 'Levi' applied originally to a clan or to an office."

⁴T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 121, writes, "That the Levites were originally a tribe is the unequivocal testimony of the Old Testament narratives"; cf. Baudissin, op. cit., p. 63.

have been made into a religious body, which involved, among other things, their forfeiting tribal territory of their own. Eichrodt, indeed, finds both considerations compelling and believes it quite impossible to be sure on the matter.¹ To the present writer, however, the testimony of the Old Testament that Levites were a tribe is too great to be set aside.²

A further question concerns whether or not to be a member of this tribe was considered an absolute requirement for being a qualified cultic official. Certain instances have been pointed out which suggest this was not so: namely, Micah's appointment of his son as a priest (Jud. 17:5); David and Solomon said to have offered sacrifices (II Sam. 6:17,18; I Kgs. 3:4; 8:62-64); and especially David appointing his sons to be priests (II Sam. 8:18). None of these individuals were descendants of Levi. Thus, it is necessary to examine and evaluate the evidence here concerned.³

¹Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 392f. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1961), pp. 369-71, accepts the force of the tribal evidence and seeks to account for this tribe becoming a religious group by suggesting that they spread themselves thinly among the other tribes, rather than staying together, and so lost something of a unifying tribal spirit.

²With the testimony spread all the way through the Old Testament that Levites were a family, one must believe that this was so. In reply to the opposing argument, the Levites simply believed seriously that Yahweh had designated them as a family for religious service, and accordingly gave themselves to it.

³Because of these instances, which he discusses, G. B. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 240, holds that "The Levitical priesthood of the seventh century B.C. . . . was preceded by a yet wider priest-

Speaking first of the Micah instance, the possibility exists that this appointment constituted an irregularity on Micah's part. A prime intention in the book of Judges is to portray infractions of the law, and the verse following this mention states significantly, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6). The implication is that this act of Micah was such a case. Hence, there is lack of warrant for using this instance as an illustration of what was normal in Israel.

As to the instances of David and Solomon sacrificing, it is likely that they did not do this personally, but rather through attending priests. Two times Solomon is involved (I Kgs. 3:4; 8:62-64), and in the first he is said to have offered a "thousand burnt-offerings," and in the second some 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. Obviously he did not offer all these personally; and if not all, then likely not any. He offered them in that he directed proceedings, but attending priests did the work. Then in David's case too (II Sam. 6: 17,18) the circumstances suggest priestly activity. He had just brought the Ark into Jerusalem, with much public ceremony. Certainly there would have been priests in such a procession. And if so, they would have been on hand when the sacrifices were made, and they would not, of course, have watched while David did the sacrificing.

hood, a priesthood which was not limited to Levites." J. Peters, Religion of the Hebrews (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1914), p. 139, argues similarly, saying, "Priests might thus be chosen from any family."

As to David's appointment of his sons as kohenim, there is reason to believe that they were not made priests in the normal sense, but only as a type of religious, confidential advisor. Several factors suggest this.

First, these sons thus appointed are not listed along with the normal priests. The passage involved (II Sam. 8: 16-18) gives a listing of officials during David's reign, and priests are named in vs. 17. Then follows the naming of a scribe, then of bodyguards, and only then of David's sons as kohenim. If the intention was to classify them as normal priests, this order of listing is strange.

Second, the same list of officials is repeated in I Chr. 18:14-17, and this time the designating word for these sons is not kohenim, but "heads (hari'shonim).\" Why should this designation have been changed if they were normal priests?¹

Third, a suggestion that the term, kohen, was sometimes used in a broader sense than just for the normal priest is found in II Sam. 20:26. There, following an indication that Zadok and Abiathar were priests, it is stated that "also Ira the Jairite was kohen unto David.\" Two matters are noteworthy. One is that this mention is also separated from the

¹James Orr, Problem of the Old Testament (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1907), p. 505, comments that this "need not be set down to the motive of recognizing none but Aaronic priests.\" His reference is to the fact that some scholars believe the Chronicler here in using the term, "head,\" had purposely changed from "priest\" since by this time it had come to be accepted that all priests should be descendants from Aaron. For instance, S. R. Driver so explains, op. cit., pp. 219-20, 293-94.

list of regular priests, thus suggesting another type of office; and the other is the unusualness of the phrase, "priest to David (kohen ledhawidh)," for a normal priest. Priests were public servants, not private. It would fit, however, if this man were some type of religious advisor.

Fourth, this suggestion is corroborated by I Kgs. 4: 4-5. Here again priests are listed together and then, after an intervening naming of another type of official, it is stated that "Zabud . . . was kohen, the king's friend." Here too, in addition to the same, significant separation of this man from normal priests, there is an unusual phrase for a normal priest, namely "the king's friend." It again suggests intimacy out of keeping with a public servant, but not with a religious advisor.

And fifth, in the several times in which various of David's sons are listed,¹ with the lives of some being rather well known,² no suggestion is made that any engaged in such priestly activity. If some did, they could only have been individuals of whom nothing is known otherwise. Thus, it is better not to think of them as having been appointed regular priests, but as a type of religious, confidential advisor.

¹Listings in II Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13-16; I Chr. 3:1-9; 14:3-7; II Chr. 11:18.

²Amnon, the oldest, II Sam. 13; Absalom, the third is mentioned often from II Sam. 13 to 18; Adonijah, the fourth, I Kgs. 1; and of course Solomon became king. David's second son, Chileab (called Daniel in I Chr. 3:1) is not mentioned in later life and probably died young since Adonijah felt himself in line for the throne with both Absalom and Amnon dead.

This, then, accounts for each of these occasions in a way which removes the evidence claimed for them. And without such conflicting evidence, the general indications elsewhere that Levites by office were always descendants of the same family should stand.¹

The matter yet needs attention as to the relation between those called priests and those called Levites. Many scholars believe that until the time of Ezekiel there was no distinction between the two groups. All Levites were priests, and all priests were Levites. Ezekiel inaugurated the idea of limiting the term, priests, to a special group within the Levites, namely those who were descendants of Zadok, and then later writers broadened the number by assigning Aaron as the priestly progenitor.² Other scholars, however, taking the Old Testament more literally, believe this Aaronic distinction should be taken even from the time of Moses. On this basis, from the Mosaic period on, priests were descendants of Levi who could also count Aaron as their father.

This last is the position of the present writer. However, this distinction between priests and Levites is not of vital importance to this discussion respecting teaching func-

¹An exception to this came following the division of the kingdom when Jeroboam, in the northern division, "made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi" (I Kgs. 12:26-33). However, it is made clear that in so doing Jeroboam was running counter to the traditional law.

²For discussion, cf. S. R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1894), pp. 146-50.

tion. For in this respect there was little difference between them. They differed in their sacrificial duties, but little in their teaching activity. And because this is true, it will not be necessary in the ensuing treatment to distinguish often as to whether Levites or priests are in mind. For the most part, both will be whenever teaching activity is concerned, and normally the term, priest, will be used for the designation.

II. Occasions of the Teaching

A. A Major Function

Scholars agree that the teaching function of the priest constituted a major part of his activity. It was not just something he did occasionally, nor was it arbitrary with his inclination. It was his job, and an important one. Indeed, he was the standard teacher. Others, such as prophets and elders also had teaching responsibilities, but not as regular or as standard as the priest.

Writes Eichrodt, as he describes the various functions of the priest: "Pre-eminent among these is the work of counselling and teaching, which was already of central importance in the very earliest period."¹ G. Gray states that besides the priest's sacrificial tasks, "an equal or greater demand was made upon their time by other duties which may be broadly classified under the teaching function."² And J. Pedersen

¹Op. cit., p. 395.

²Op. cit., p. 217.

says, "The influence of the priests as . . . teachers of the Tora may be traced throughout the history of Israel."¹ This agreement is the result of clear indications in the Old Testament. They may be divided into two classes: those of official commandment, and those of historical example.

1. Official commandments

Two passages giving a general command to teach stand out. The first, Deut. 33:10, comes in the section where Levi's particular blessings and responsibilities are enumerated. As one of these responsibilities it is stated:

They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances,
And Israel thy law.

Of similar import is Num. 10:11 where the words are directed particularly to Aaron, but in a representative capacity:

And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the
statutes which Yahweh hath spoken unto them by Moses.

Then, of a more specific nature, there is a command to teach leprosy instructions (Lev. 14:57; Deut. 24:8); to give regulations pertaining to "the tenor of the law" as this should apply in any particular case for judgment (Deut. 17:8f; 19:17); and to bring encouragement for warriors in time of battle (Deut. 20:2-3).

2. Examples of priestly teaching

The earliest clear examples of priestly teaching come

¹Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, p. 163. Cf. J. Peters, op. cit., pp. 147-49; E. O. James, op. cit., p. 232; and R. Bowman, "Yahweh the Speaker," JNES, III(1944), pp. 1-8.

in the reign of Jehoshaphat, when two are described. The first occurs in a revival context when Jehoshaphat, recently come to power, lifts up his heart "in the ways of Yahweh" and takes away "the high places and the Asherim out of Judah."¹ Then he sends Levites, naming nine, and priests, naming two, to instruct throughout the land in the law: II Chr. 17:9 stating, "And they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of Yahweh with them; and they went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught among the people."

The second comes after a reprimand to Jehoshaphat by the prophet, Jehu, for making alliance with the "wicked" Ahab at Ramoth-gilead. As a result, the king personally tours his land which serves to bring the people "back unto Yahweh." And then he instructs Levites and priests, and this time also "heads of the father's houses," to act as judges for controversies that might arise, and in that capacity to warn the people "that they be not guilty towards Yahweh."²

A later example comes following the fall of Israel to the Assyrians. Captives from the east had been quartered in Israel, and, with a lion menace having shown itself among them, they sent a request to the king of Assyria³ that one of the Israelite priests, formerly taken from the land, be returned so as to teach them "the law of the god of the land." Thus, contemporary peoples too thought of priests as the pro-

¹II Chr. 17:6.

²Found in II Chr. 19:1-10.

³Sargon.

per ones to give such instruction.

Jeremiah describes the priests as those that handle "the law" (2:8). His opponents say their interest is that "the law shall not perish from the priest" (18:18). Thus, both believed that the handling of the law was particularly the province of the priest. Ezekiel, shortly after, implies his similar belief as he predicts a day when "the law shall perish from the priest" (7:26). Then later he says that the priests of the future temple, which he has just described, "shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (44:23).

Following the exile, the thinking is the same. Haggai goes to the priest to find an answer to a legal question (2:10f). Ezra is described as one prepared "to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (7:10). Then, when it is time to read the law to the people, he does it and apparently is assisted by Levites (Neh. 8:1f). And Malachi, reprimanding the priests of his day, says "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth" (2:7).

B. Levitical Cities

In the light of this Levitical responsibility for instruction, the reason for the Levitical cities being dispersed throughout the land appears.¹ According to Num. 18:

¹These cities are commonly called Levitical though they housed priests as well as Levites.

20f,¹ the Levites were to have no inheritance in the land, but, of course, they needed some place to live. This was provided by designating forty-eight cities out of the other tribes for their residence.² And these were not to be in one area only, but dispersed among all the tribes, with an average of four each.³ The advantage for priestly teaching in this arrangement is easy to see. They would be near the people so that none would have far to go for instruction.

Several indications in the later history show this plan was carried out.⁴ For instance, when the Ark was returned to Beth-shemesh by the Philistines, it was taken from the cart

¹On the basis of Num. 18:20 (also 26:62 which is similar), R. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 261, says that these Levitical cities were only "a late afterthought, born in the fancy of a priest but never put into practice." However, all that these verses need to mean is that no tribal division of land was given to the Levites. They had to have some place to live, and so rather than give them a unit section, they were provided these cities. From Lev. 25:32-33, it appears that they did not possess all the houses in these cities, but only as many as they needed. Cf. J. Pedersen's discussion, op. cit., pp. 177-78.

²Num. 35:1-8; Deut. 19:1-13; Josh. 21.

³To the priests were assigned 13 cities from Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, The Levites held four in each of the other tribes, except that Naphtali had only three. Cf. "Levitical Cities," Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), pp. 658-59.

⁴There are no actual illustrations of Levites teaching out from these cities, but this could well be due only to lack of reason for giving such. Regular and routine matters seldom find reason for mention. It should be observed too that certain of the prescribed cities could not have been occupied by Levites for some time in that they were not taken from the Canaanites; for example, Gezer (Josh. 21:21; cf. Josh. 16:10) and Taanach (Josh. 21:25; cf. Jud. 1:27).

on which it had been carried and Levites, who were evidently present, made sacrifices in celebration.¹ That Beth-shemesh was listed as one of the Levitical cities would account nicely for these Levites being thus handy. Again, regarding Anathoth, another of these cities, Abiathar, the priest, was told by Solomon to return there unto his "own fields" (I Kgs. 2:26). Hence, his ancestry had been assigned to this city. Also Jeremiah attempted at one time to leave Jerusalem so as to redeem property at Anathoth which had recently become his by right of inheritance.² And in the opening words to his book he states that he was of "the priests that were in Anathoth" (1:1).

The Chronicler also gives a number of such intimations. In I Chronicles there is first another listing of all the Levitical cities, 6:50f; then in 9:2 he states that priests and Levites were among those who "dwelt in their possessions in their cities"; and in 13:2, he observes that the "priests and Levites are in their cities." In II Chronicles still more instances occur. In 19:10, Jehoshaphat is made to say, as he speaks to the Levites, "Your brethren that dwell in their cities"; in 23:2, he tells of Jehoiada the priest as having "gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah"; in 31:15, he speaks of "The cities of the priests"; in 31:19, he talks of "The sons of Aaron the priests, that were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities"; and in 35:3, he says

¹I Sam. 6:15, the story occupying all the chapter.

²Jeremiah was informed of this inheritance privilege by a relative, called his uncle's son (Jer. 32:8).

that Josiah instructed "the Levites that taught all Israel."

Evidence may also be taken from the existence of cities of refuge.¹ There were six of these. Three were located on the west of the Jordan and three on the east, and placed well apart for convenience to the person who had killed someone. He could run to the one nearest and be safe until trial could be held. The evidence arises in that these refuge centers were chosen from the Levitical cities. The reason for so selecting them becomes apparent in the light that one of the tasks of Levites was to give counsel in cases of this sort.² Thus, they would be conveniently present for this purpose,³ as well as to give official protection to the person.⁴ Hence, the fact of the refuge cities lends support to the fact and operation of the Levitical cities.

Thus, the Levitical cities did exist; they were scattered evenly through all the land; and the logical reason for this was that Levites might be near the people to instruct them. Though no details are supplied, it is likely

¹Num. 35:1-34; Josh. 20:1-9.

²Deut. 17:8f; 19:17; 21:5.

³It would appear that elders did the actual judging in these cases. Josh. 20:4 states that they would hear the slayer's case when he first entered the city. And from other judicial patterns (Deut. 17:8-11; 21:1-9) it would appear that the Levitical function was limited to an advisory capacity.

⁴Both before trial and after, if the person was proven innocent of malevolence. If innocent, he was to remain in the refuge city until the death of the high priest, after which he could return home. So long as he complied with this regulation, no person could legally take his life in vengeance (Num. 35:25-28).

that the Levites, using these cities as a base, circulated out among the villages of their region, perhaps holding regular classes, as well as providing individual instruction and counsel. Samuel's pattern of circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah and back to Ramah (I Sam. 7:15-17) may have been suggested to him by this activity of the Levites.¹

C. Relation to Other Responsibilities

The question must now be answered as to the relation of this teaching ministry of the priests to their other duties. Two general areas should be considered: that of sanctuary service and that involving the Urim and Thummim.

1. Sanctuary service

Many scholars hold that there was no real central place of worship until late in the seventh century following what is called the Deuteronomist reform. Only then were priests required to come to Jerusalem to conduct sacred service, having been free before to perform sacrifices in many smaller sanctuaries throughout the land. This thinking has accompanied the idea that the twelve tribes had little or no unifying factor among them until the time of the monarchy under

¹With these cities thus spread out, no one tribe was greatly burdened either. However, this advantage of itself would hardly have been a sufficient reason for the dispersion, for this alone would have been offset by the advantage for these men to have lived nearer the central sanctuary. They had to take their turn in service there, and so a nearer proximity in residence would have been desirable. On this basis alone, it would have made sense to assign them a territory of their own near their work, which, indeed, was often done in other lands.

Saul, and so no central place of worship before then; and only came to think in that direction after having lived thus as a nation for many years.

Other scholars, however, believe there was the unifying factor of a common heritage from the time of Moses, and that, though the tribes were often divided in purpose after entering the land, a central sanctuary existed among them symbolizing this fact.¹ Individual altars were permitted in places and on occasions of particular importance,² but they had only one place for general, public worship. This place was at Shiloh until the seizure of the Ark by the Philistines,³ and later at Jerusalem after the erection of the temple. This is the viewpoint of the present writer, and it is in terms of it that the activity of the priests will be viewed.⁴

¹With the suggestion of M. Noth, The History of Israel (2d ed.; London: A. & C. Black Co., 1958), p. 91, and others, of a parallel in this history with the later Grecian amphictyony, the number of scholars holding to an early, central sanctuary has risen in recent years. Albright, indeed, writes in a critical vein of the opposing viewpoint as he says, "The only reason why the school of Wellhausen has consistently disregarded or even rejected the straight-forward Biblical account of the central Tabernacle at Shiloh is that it does not fit into the postulated, but never demonstrated, theory of progressive centralization of cult"; From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 215. Neither Noth nor Albright accept the idea of a common heritage for all the tribes, but only that they made a confederation early, with the Shiloh sanctuary as a central point of focus.

²Such as illustrated with Gideon (Jud. 6:25-26), Manoah (Jud. 13:16f), David (I Kgs. 3:4-5), etc.

³It may have been at Bethel for a short time; cf. supra, chap. III, p. 64, note 3.

⁴It is believed unnecessary to bring here an argument for this position. For the most part, those who reject an

What the pattern of operation was for the priestly activities at the central sanctuary before the time of David may be conjectured in some part from the type of regulations he established in his day, and which, then, continued through ensuing centuries. David divided the priests into 24 courses, with one course to be employed per week at the sanctuary.¹ Each priest thus had an average of just over two weeks per year responsibility. The frequency for the Levites is not made quite so clear, though an inference of about the same amount may be made.² David took a census of those who were of age for service and found them to number 38,000.³ Of these he appointed 4000 singers, 4000 gatekeepers, 6000 "officers and judges," and the remaining 24,000 for the normal work of helping with the sacrifices. All these in turn were divided into courses, though only the number of such for the singers is indicated; namely, 24,⁴ like the priests. However, if

early sanctuary also reject an early organized priesthood in the respective cities, for these matters are closely related. Hence, there is relevance for this discussion, at least as it pertains to Israel's early history, only if there was such an early sanctuary.

¹These divisions are recorded in I Chr. 24.

²I Chronicles 23 gives general information as to the Levites, and chapters 25 and 26 details as to the singers, gatekeepers, and other special group divisions.

³I Chr. 23:3. The age of 30 here cited is probably a copyist's error following Num. 4:3. In I Chr. 23:24, the age is given as 20 years and older. Moses himself had changed the age down to 25, Num. 8:23-26. Later, II Chr. 31:17 indicates this age of 20 to have been recognized in Hezekiah's time, and Ezra 3:8 shows the same following the captivity.

⁴These courses are named in I Chr. 25:8-31.

these were 24, the probability is that the others were also, or at least not greatly different. Consequently, it is warranted to think in terms of about the same two weeks per year responsibility for the Levites as for the priests.

This was the regulation following David's time. But what of before? Is it likely that David began something altogether new? There is reason to think not. The reason is that the same motivation existed prior to this time for these divisions as prompted David's regulations; namely, too many Levites to serve all at one time.¹ Also, the plan of having priests and Levites quartered at some distance from Shiloh from the first speaks of an infrequent call to sanctuary service. Hence, probably about all that David did was to give official formulation to what had been practiced for some time. The frequency of service may have been lessened a little, and perhaps a few other minor changes, but nothing major. Thus, it is reasonable to think in terms of two weeks, or possibly up to a month, of service per year at the sanctuary from early in the tribal history; which means that each priest and Levite had eleven months or more to spend in his home city.

And while at home, the time of these individuals, significantly, was kept free from manual labor. Each had a little land for pasturing a few animals,² but none to farm. Indeed, he was not supposed to, for his living was provided by the

¹Due to the entire Levitic family being included. It would have grown yet more, of course, by David's time.

²Num. 35:3, where this pasture area is said to have extended a thousand cubits from the city on all sides.

tithes of the people.¹ Thus, his time was kept free for teaching. Which means, then, that so far as sanctuary service is concerned, though this was important, it did not detract greatly in point of time from the function of teaching.

2. Urim and Thummim

As to the relation of the teaching of the priests to their function with the Urim and Thummim, little need be added to the conclusions drawn in chapter III. It was there pointed out that the Urim and Thummim, though given to the Levites as a whole, was to be employed only by the high priest. Thus, the responsibility of the regular priests must have been limited to bringing questions, whether of themselves or their constituency, to the high priest for answer, and then returning the answer to those who had asked. At times there would have been decisions affecting people generally, and these also would have had to be conveyed.

Hence again, though this Urim and Thummim activity was also important, it would not have detracted greatly either from the time for teaching. Rather, it would have nicely complemented that activity, for the decisions to be conveyed would have provided a part of the information to be taught; and, even more, it would have reminded the people each time that these priests were indeed Yahweh's authorized messengers.

D. Little Early Mention

The Old Testament gives little direct indication of

¹Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:21-24.

this teaching being carried on by early priests. In fact, as observed above, the first definite mention comes only in the time of Jehoshaphat, and then merely as a special activity, not a routine function. Accordingly, the task arises of accounting for this little mention.

In brief, the answer is found in the fact of lack of reason for including mentions to this effect. That is, this teaching was too much a routine feature of life for the writers to find cause for speaking of it. Evidence is found in three observations.

The first is that regular, routine teaching by the priests is not described in the later history either. The two instances with Jehoshaphat, as noted, do not record such. The case of the foreigners in Israel, calling for the return of a teaching, native priest, does not illustrate it. And the references made by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Ezra, and Malachi, though all implying it, only mention it in passing and do not describe it. In fact, what they say is largely as applicable to early teaching as to later. But if its existence did not call for mention in the later history, it follows that it need not have done so either in the early history.

The second concerns the type of information that Old Testament writers saw fit to include in their records, noting that it did not involve such as routine teaching. The scope of subject matter was really quite limited. For instance, they did not include even outstanding historical events of their time. Ahab might join an international alliance to

stop the invading Shalmaneser III at Karkar, but to learn of it one must consult the records of Assyria, not Israel.¹ Or Ahab's father, Omri, might conquer the neighboring Moabites, but to learn of it one must read a Moabite inscription, not Israel's Old Testament.²

And neither did these writers include record of normal home activities in any detail; in fact, activities which were basic to their way of life. Next to nothing, for instance, is included relative to civil government for the tribal period. A few hints that elders were in general supervision are given,³ but no information as to what type of organization they worked through, or their relation to the occasional judges who arose. And there is even surprising lack of mention regarding the central sanctuary. Its existence is made clear enough, but there is so little as to its operation. The book of Joshua specifies its establishment,⁴ Judges says enough to indicate its existence,⁵ and I Samuel describes something as to its operation, but only because it was being operated wrongly.⁶ Really at no time is the normal activity depicted.

¹Described on the Monolith inscription of Shalmaneser III. This battle was fought in 854 B.C.; cf. G. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible (7th ed.; Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1937), pp. 457-58.

²Recorded on the Moabite Stone, written by Mesha, king of Moab, against whom Jehoram of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah joined in battle (II Kgs. 3); cf. W. Bennett, "Moab, Moabites," DB, III, pp. 402-413, for text and description.

³Jud. 8:14-16; 11:5-11; 21:16.

⁴Josh. 18:1-9; 19:51; 22:9-12.

⁵Jud. 18:31; 21:19.

⁶I Sam. 2:12-17.

Consequently, if important historical events were not recorded, and especially if other routine functions of this kind were not included, then it should not be thought unusual that regular teaching activity was not mentioned.

And the third is that there is even more reason for such omission in the book of Judges, which is mainly concerned here, in that its author had the special interest of recording only the deviant behavior of the day. The twice-used phrase supplies the key: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6; 21:19). The first chapter indicates lack in occupying the land as directed. Chapter two tells of the people generally forsaking Yahweh for Baal, stating that because of this the series of foreign occupations was permitted. Chapters three through sixteen describe this series, giving record of the recurring cycle of invasion, repentance, deliverance, and renewed defection. And then the closing chapters give particular examples of bad behavior: concerning Micah, the moving Danites, the ravaging of the Levite's concubine, and the resulting civil war. Thus, no record of normal, peaceful, legal activity, like priestly teaching, could find a place of entry here.

Such considerations as these adequately account for the little mention of early priestly teaching. It did exist. In fact, it is because it existed as such a routine part of life that it was not mentioned.

E. Bulwark against Canaanite Influence

An important question concerns why Israel was not influ-

enced more than she was by the Canaanites. She was influenced, as observed in chapter II. But there was reason for much more. There was the wide difference in cultural level between them; there was the significant fact that Israelites had to learn agricultural techniques from this people who believed worship of Baal the most important part; and there was the common enemy of the Philistines which encouraged mutual protection. Yet Israel was not engulfed by the Canaanite culture. The distinction between the two peoples always remained clear, and this especially in morality and religion. The words of A. Guillaume are much to the point:

Thus the religious history of the Near East presents us with a general rule and an exception. The rule was that every people who entered the orbit of Sumerian influence succumbed to its mythology. The exception was Israel. If we endeavor to explain this exception on purely human analogies, there seems to be no ground for it. The Israelites began as other invaders of Palestine had begun. They came as a comparatively ignorant people to learn the arts of civilization from the subject peoples. They intermarried with them, formed alliances with them, spoke substantially the same language, and were ultimately conquered by another still more civilized and powerful branch of the great Semitic race. Unlike every other nation, they did not abandon their God in favor of the gods of the conquerors who had overthrown them.¹

W. Eichrodt suggests as a reason for this unusual resistance, as pointed out in the prior chapter, the fact of an opposed, early prophetic movement. But would this source of resistance have been enough? It would seem not. And it need not have been either, for there was available in the priests

¹Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 98. Cf. N. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 179; Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 121.

a potential for opposition yet stronger and better organized. They were the official teachers, recognized to this end. They were of large number, and were in close, continuous contact with the people. To them people would naturally have turned for advice on such a matter. And, of course, being teachers of Yahweh's law, their advice would have been to resist all such foreign influence. Consequently, it is altogether reasonable to think of the priests in this capacity. It may be, indeed, that many times a major part of their instructive efforts were lent in this direction. For the pull away from Yahweh would have been strong. Often, a given community likely wavered on a fine edge of indecision. Abi-ezer, indeed, where Gideon lived, for a time decided for Baal (Jud. 6:25-34). Likely other places did too. But in general their resistance was successful, for Israel maintained her uniqueness especially in religion.

This fact may be cited as further evidence for the existence of the priest group as it has been described. For it is highly doubtful if any other explanation would be adequate for this resistance. Prophets would have been helpful, but they would not have commanded nearly the influence of the priests with their greater numbers and strategic situations.

III. Content of the Teaching

The fact of the priestly teaching has been the concern thus far. But what now of its content? What did the priests teach? The Old Testament indicates that they taught the torah. But what was the torah? This question must be an-

swered both formally and materially.

A. Identification Formally

1. Parallel terms

Certain terms appear frequently in parallel with, or in relation to, the term, torah. They are five in number: mishpatim, "judgments"; hucqim, "statutes"; mitswoth, "commandments"; edoth, "testimonies"; and picqudim, "precepts." The first three are the more common.

Though these words are often used thus parallel with torah, still torah alone is also used in reference to law generally. It is regularly used, for instance, in such a phrase as "the torah of Yahweh," or "the torah of Moses," while one never finds such as "the mishpatim of Yahweh" or "the mitswoth of Moses." Thus, it is correct to speak here of the content of priestly teaching as involving the torah, rather than the mishpatim, etc. It is necessary, however, to take notice of these other words for they supply background and content for the more inclusive term.

a. Mishpatim, "judgments"

This word comes from the verbal root, shaphat, meaning "to judge." Thus, mishpatim are judgments which issue from acts of judging. When used in its legal sense, the term carries reference to a particular kind of law, namely "case-law."¹ A good example may be seen in Ex. 21:1, where the

¹Cr. G. T. Manley, The Book of the Law (Grand Rapids:

term is directly followed by a series of laws of this type; the pattern being, "If a man do . . . then he shall . . ."

b. Huggim, "statutes"

This word is from the root, haqag, meaning "to cut" or "to inscribe," and so here means something inscribed as a permanent rule of conduct. Again a specific kind of law is intended; namely apodictic law, carrying the pattern: "Thou shalt do . . ." In contrast to the former type, there is no "if" clause setting up a situation, and so these are more general in scope. G. Manley distinguishes between them further, saying that the "judgments" were a matter for the judge to decide, the "statutes" for one's own conscience.¹ And in keeping with this distinction, Solomon is told to "walk" in God's "statutes" and "execute" God's "judgments" (I Kgs. 6: 12). An illustration of "statutes" can be found directly following the instance of "judgments" just cited, running from Ex. 22:21 to 23:19.

c. Mitswoth, "commandments"

This word is from the root tsawah, meaning "to command." Hence, mitswoth are the commandments thus issued. It is used in the Old Testament generally of commandments as given either by God or man. It thus does not carry the specific sense as do the first two, though M. Kyle believes it

Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1957), p. 72; also M. G. Kyle, The Problem of the Pentateuch (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra Co., 1920), pp. 13-15.

¹Op. cit.

often carries particular reference to the Decalogue.¹

d. 'edoth, "testimonies"

This word and the next occur much less frequently than the first three; 'edoth appearing only 22 times in the sense here pertinent, with only three of these in the Pentateuch.² It comes from the root 'udh, meaning "to bear testimony," thus connoting God testifying to man of His will. M. Kyle says it represents "the law as the voice of God."³ In a form closely allied, 'eduth, it is used to describe the Tables of Law (Ex. 31:18), the Ark (Ex. 26:33), and the Tabernacle (Ex. 38:21), thus connoting these as representing God's witness here on earth.

e. Picqudim, "precepts"

This word is from the root paqadh, meaning "to visit" or "to oversee." The latter meaning is significant here; thus giving the thought to picqudim of "oversight." That is, laws so designated were seen as means by which oversight or supervision was effected. The word is extremely limited in use, not being found at all in the Pentateuch, but only the Psalms.

2. Meaning of torah

The etymology of torah is not so easily determined, and accordingly difference of opinion exists. S. R. Driver finds

¹Op. cit., pp. 10,27.

²The others are in the Psalms.

³Op. cit., p. 8.

the derivation in the root, yarah, meaning "to point out" or "to cast," taking the idea "pointing out" in the sense of instructing.¹ H. W. Robinson uses the same word, but in the sense of "casting," seeing connoted the idea of "casting" the Urim and Thummim by which to determine Yahweh's laws.² G. Manley and M. Kyle agree with Driver but particularize the "pointing out" in instruction as by Yahweh, not by human priests as Driver primarily thought of it.³ W. Albright takes a different word, the Babylonian tertu, meaning "commission, command, oracle," and so stresses the idea of Divine utterance.⁴

Since the Old Testament places stress on relating the torah to Yahweh, as will be observed presently, the two positions which also connote Divine origin are to be favored; namely, that of Manley and Kyle using yarah, and of Albright using tertu. Between these two, however, it is hard to decide. Either fits the picture of the torah as set forth by the sacred writers.

3. Identity of the torah

What now was the torah? How did the priests, and those whom they taught, think of it? Several considerations show

¹Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (5th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1894), p. 145.

²The Old Testament, Its Meaning and Making (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1937), pp. 171-72.

³Manley, op. cit., p. 67; Kyle, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴"The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah,'" JBL, XLVI(1927), 180. Tertu implied the idea of Divine origin for the command.

that they thought of the torah as a body of law given by Yahweh through Moses.¹

a. The torah is commonly referred to in the Old Testament as of Yahweh. Not counting the mentions of torah occurring before the close of Deuteronomy, there are more than 150 uses of the word, and nearly half relate it to Yahweh, either by use of the personal name or such pronouns as "my," "thy," or "his."² Two times the torah is said to have come from the mouth of Yahweh (Job 22:22; Ps. 119:72).

b. In this same portion of the Old Testament, the phrase, "torah of Moses," occurs 15 times, and some additional instances use both names, Yahweh and Moses; as, for example, II Chr. 34:14, "The book of the law of Yahweh given by Moses." Joshua in his closing message first admonishes the people to keep the "law of Moses," and then is said to have written "these words in the book of the law of God," (italics mine) thus showing the close relation of both God and Moses to this law (Josh. 23:6; 24:26).

c. The Pentateuch portrays the torah as having been given by Yahweh to Moses. In Ex. 13:9, Moses is promised that the

¹J. Robertson, Early Religion of Israel (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1903), p. 335, says, "The persistence with which it is presented that law, moral and ceremonial, came from Moses, and the acceptance of the laws by the whole people as of Mosaic origin, proves at least that it was a deeply rooted belief in the nation. . . . The testimony of a nation is not so lightly to be set aside."

²It is appropriate to exclude the Pentateuch here for Moses yet lived and the torah, accordingly, was in process of preparation.

"law of Yahweh" shall be in his mouth. In 18:20, he is instructed to teach the people "ordinances and laws." And in 24:12, God directs him to "come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them." Moses obeys and is said to have remained on the mountain forty days, presumably receiving the same.

d. In contrast, never is the torah ascribed in a parallel way to the priests. Never does such a phrase occur, for instance, as "the law of the priests," or "the law of Yahweh which he gave through the priests." Priests are its administrators. They teach and counsel in view of it, but they are never represented as having originated it.

e. To account for such a major role being ascribed to Moses, it has been said that this was a type of "blind ascription to some great ancestor," but James Robertson presents a forceful objection. He says, "There are ordinances and customs which are not traced to him," such as the Sabbath being grounded in creation, circumcision being already given to Abraham, sacrifices being practiced long before Moses, and the "abstaining from the sinew that shrank" being traced to Jacob. He then asks why, if Moses was simply thus given a blind ascription, all these matters were not so ascribed.¹

f. A viewpoint held by many scholars is that the torah was

¹Op. cit., p. 335.

a body of gradually growing law which resulted mainly from Urim and Thummim determinations. New determinations, when of general significance, would be considered individual torahs to be added to the collective torah.¹ But the Old Testament gives no indication to this effect. Indeed, never does the word, torah, occur in connection with the Urim and Thummim. A most appropriate place for such a mention too comes in Num. 27:21, where Joshua is instructed to listen to the high priest for directives, which he, in turn, would receive by Urim and Thummim. If such directives were considered torah, why were they not so called in this place?

In the light of these considerations, the conclusion is definite that the people believed the torah had been given by Yahweh through Moses. This torah carried Divine authority, consequently, as the priests taught it to the people.

4. Date of the torah

It has long been customary to find three main codes of law in the Pentateuch; one assigned to the Yahwist document of the ninth century, one to the Deuteronomist of the seventh, and the third to the Priestly of the fifth. But on this basis, the early priests would have had little to teach. In recent years, however, many have revised this thinking, if not in terms of final composition of these codes, at least as to the date when many of the laws were first formulated.

One point of view in this revision is that of the oral

¹Cf. N. Snaith, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 75.

traditionalists of the Uppsala school. They see a long oral transmission for much of the Old Testament, including these legal portions, prior to being put in writing. Thus, they believe a substantial part of the law was likely in existence in this oral form from earliest days.¹ Others, not of this school, have also come to view much of the Pentateuch as having existed from early times at least in oral form. For instance, W. Albright says "that the background of the Book of the Covenant, . . . must go back substantially to the Mosaic age."² J. Bright states, "A vast quantity of material, even in the latest documents--poems, lists, laws, and narratives" have been pushed back to "the early periods of Israel's history."³ And W. Eichrodt, speaking even of the "Priestly law," normally put last in date, says, "The basic stratum of the law goes right back to the beginnings of the nation's history and confirms the tradition that Moses regulated its cultic life as well."⁴

¹For a fine survey of recent developments, not only in the oral traditionalist school, but also other reactions against the older literary criticism, cf. C. R. North, "Pentateuchal Criticism," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 48-82.

²"Archaeology of the Ancient East," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 39.

³"Modern Study of Old Testament Literature," The Bible and the Ancient Near East, ed. G. Wright (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 22.

⁴Op. cit., p. 73. Eichrodt grounds this thinking in what he believes was a fundamental, covenantal relation between Yahweh and Israel from the day of Moses; ibid., pp. 37-39. This idea is shared by others. For instance, G. Wright says, "Recent study, however, makes it increasingly

On the basis of these viewpoints, a different picture presents itself. For these see a substantial part of the Pentateuchal laws as having existed from early days, and so the priests would have had ample material to teach. The present writer finds himself far more in agreement with this position; believing, indeed, that the torah in its entirety came from the time of Moses, with possibly certain minor supplementations.¹

B. Identification Materially

Before looking at the content proper of the torah, it is well to make a brief comparison with other laws of the day. The question is of interest whether Israel's priests taught a unique law to their people or whether it was similar to others in the world.

1. Comparison with other laws

difficult to give credence to" the idea that the concept of a "special covenant between God and Israel" arose late; "The Faith of Israel," IB, I, p. 356. J. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 137, says, "These features--election and covenant, the stipulations of covenant and its promises--were of the structure of Israel's faith from the beginning and so remained throughout all her history." H. Orlinsky, Ancient Israel (2d ed.; Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 148-55, presents a similar viewpoint.

¹This position is based especially on the following reasons, briefly stated: (1) Moses' ability for the task, both in terms of education and accessibility to necessary information. (2) Advanced stage of writing he could have used. (3) That six times the Pentateuch states that he wrote some part of it. (4) The strong testimony of the remainder of the Old Testament to his authorship. And (5) the testimony of Christ and the New Testament, even equating the name, Moses, to one division of the Hebrew Bible, the torah.

Six codes of law of the ancient Near East have been discovered. G. Mendenhall lists them in the following order:

(1) the Ur-nammu code, c. 2050 B.C., from the Third Dynasty of Ur; (2) the code of Bilalama, c. 1925 B.C., from Eshnunna; (3) the code of Lipit-Ishtar, c. 1860 B.C., from Isin; (4) the code of Hammurabi, c. 1700 B.C., from Babylon; (5) the Hittite code, c. 1450 B.C., from Boghazkoy; and (6) the Assyrian code, c. 1350 B.C., from Assur.¹

These codes have been carefully compared, especially that of Hammurabi, with the Mosaic law. Some similarities have been found, but more differences. H. Orlinsky concludes some discussion of the matter, saying, "By and large the Israelites made and compiled their own laws to suit their own way of life, and what they did borrow from others they adapted to their own needs."² And T. J. Meeks concludes similarly, "Most of their law, however, was their own, . . . and what they did borrow they made their own."³ The principal contrasts follow.

a. Difference in form

Hebrew legislation has both the casuistic and apodictic

¹Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," BA, XVII(May, 1954), 33, note 18. For text and discussion of the codes, cf. ANET, pp. 159-98.

²Ancient Israel (2d ed.; Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960), p. 62.

³Hebrew Origins (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 81. For other judgments, cf. G. Ricciotti, The History of Israel (2d ed.; Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1958), I, p. 204; R. Harrison, A History of Old Testament Times (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1957), p. 116.

law types (called respectively "judgments" and "statutes" above); the former beginning with an "if," and so setting up a specific situation, and the latter covering a general area of conduct. The other codes major almost exclusively on the casuistic type, though Mendenhall has correctly pointed out that the apodictic is used though rarely.¹ The significance is that Israelites, in contrast to their neighbors, were expected to observe laws which covered conduct in all situations and not just specific instances.

b. Difference in general character

G. Manley states that Hammurabi's code (to which the others are similar) is legal and secular in its approach, dealing with "property, marriage, and inheritance, . . . the legal rights of employers and employed in various trades, . . . the fines and penalties for damage or misdemeanour."² In contrast, the Hebrew legislation is deeply religious in atmosphere, with a large percentage of laws pertaining to morality and religion. In Deuteronomy alone, the name, Yahweh, appears 189 times. And when purely secular regulations are stated, they often are grounded for their rationale in a re-

¹Op. cit., pp. 29-30, where Mendenhall corrects others who had said Israel was unique in this respect, citing evidence mainly from the Hittite code. T. J. Meek also finds examples in the Assyrian laws, ANET, p. 183, note 24. However, Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 71, writing yet later, still says that "we are dealing in Israel with a genuinely new formulation" in respect to the apodictic type law.

²The Book of the Law (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1957), p. 67.

ligious framework.

c. Difference in moral tone

A difference in moral tone exists between Israel's law and these other codes. A. Jeremias, speaking particularly of the Babylonian code, says in this regard:

(1) There is no control of lust. (2) There is no limitation of selfishness through altruism. (3) There is nowhere to be found a postulate of charity. (4) There is nowhere to be found the religious motif which recognizes sin as the destruction of the people because it is in opposition to the fear of God.¹

d. Difference in social distinctions

The Hammurabi code (to which again the others carry similarities) distinguishes three classes of people in its society: free men (awelum), semifree (mushkenum), and slaves. Israel's torah has nothing parallel. Slaves are mentioned, but in the sense of protecting their rights, not maintaining their existence for a privileged class.

e. Difference in implied life situations

Hammurabi's laws are directed to an urban people, settled, with irrigation in process, and industry and trade well established. Israel's law, in contrast, is addressed to an agricultural people, where food and clothing are a chief concern, and city problems are as yet non-existent. This differ-

¹ The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East, trans. C. L. Beaumont (London: Williams & Norgate, Univ. of Wales Press Board, 1911), II, p. 112. Deut 4:8 is pertinent here for contrast: "And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

ence fits the contrasting situations of the two peoples at the time of the Hebrew's entrance into Palestine.

2. Content proper

A general survey of Israel's torah now follows. The three customary divisions of moral, civil, and ceremonial law are observed.¹

a. Moral law

The term, moral law, has the disadvantage of implying that the civil and ceremonial divisions of the torah are non-moral. This of course is not so. What is meant is that the moral law, often called the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, supplies the broad, moral principles for governing life generally, and also the moral basis upon which the more specific civil and ceremonial regulations rest.

The Ten Commandments carry two fundamental divisions,² often called the Two Tables. The first concerns man's duties to God: as to God's being, His worship, His name, and His day. The second concerns man's duties to fellow man: as to honoring parents, not murdering, not committing adultery, not stealing, not bearing false witness, and not coveting.

There is reason to believe that these laws were consid-

¹For helpful treatments, cf. G. Mendenhall, op. cit., pp. 26-46, and also his "Covenant Form in Israelite Tradition," BA, XVII(Sept., 1954), 50-76; "Law of Moses," Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 647-49; and S. R. Driver, "Law (in Old Testament)," DB, III, pp. 64-73.

²Listed in Ex. 20:1-17 and Deut. 5:6-21. The numbering here observed is that commonly held by protestant churches.

ered of great importance in Israel. They were stressed by being engraven on stone, and then placed, as symbolic of all the law, in the sacred Ark.¹ In Deut. 4:13, Moses even equates them with the covenant, saying, "And he, Yahweh, declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments." Then, showing the thinking of Jews regarding them in New Testament time, the rich young ruler, hearing Jesus respond to his inquiry by quoting from the Decalogue, understood quickly the significance of Jesus' answer.² And at another time the Jews desired to know which was the greatest commandment, and Jesus again referred directly to the Decalogue as He summarized its two Tables, saying that they should first love God and then their fellow man as themselves.³

It is likely, then, that these laws comprised a fundamental part in the priestly instruction. The people should be grounded in these that they might carry out the more specific regulations properly. There was not so much here for them to learn, but there was a great deal respecting volitional conformance. Constant reminder and urging would have been necessary to bring the desired result.

b. Civil law

The civil law gave specific instructions as to daily,

¹Ex. 34:28,29; Deut. 10:1-5.

²Mk. 10:17-20

³Matt. 22:36-40.

social relationships. Many of the laws dealt with personal inter-relationships: fathers and children, husbands and wives, masters and slaves, and kindness toward the stranger. Fathers were to maintain authority over their children (Ex. 21:15,17; Lev. 20:9); the first born was to inherit a double portion (Deut. 21:15-17); unmarried daughters were to remain entirely dependent on their fathers (Num. 30:3-5). Marriages within a certain degree were forbidden (Lev. 18:1f); the widow could claim the right of raising up seed by the unmarried brother of her deceased husband (Deut. 25:5-10); slander against a wife's virginity was punishable by fine (Deut. 22:13-21). The master could not punish his slave too severely or else he became subject to punishment himself (Ex. 21:2-27); slaves were to be freed at the sabbatical year (Ex. 21:1-6; Deut. 15:12-18); foreign slaves could be held for life (Lev. 25:45,46). Kindness to the stranger was a duty for all (Ex. 22:21; Lev. 19:33,34).

Then there were laws dealing with land and property (Lev. 25:22-28; Deut. 24:19-21); with debts (Deut. 15:1-11); with non-exaction of interest (Ex. 22:25-27; Deut. 23:19-20); with taxation (Ex. 30:12-16); the spoils of war (Num. 31:26f); and the right of the poor to glean fields and vineyards (Lev. 19:9,10; Deut. 24:19-22).

Further, there were the judicial laws to which the priests carried a special relationship. There appear to have been two levels of courts: the local courts and a higher court. As to the local, Deut. 16:18 states, "Judges and

officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates," and then admonishes strict justice to be observed in all decisions made. It is of interest that these court officials were to sit in the gate to hear their cases, as was customary also in adjacent countries.¹ The higher court was for cases "too hard" for the lower (Deut. 17:8). It sat at the central sanctuary, and was composed of priests, serving there, and a lay judge. The judge conducted the investigation (Deut. 19:18) and the priests served as legal counsels.

Besides these courts, there was also judicial activity by the elders of the cities. For instance, they were to return the murderer to the "avenger of blood" (Deut. 19:12); to decide the case of a rebellious son (Deut. 21:18f); and to hear a husband's charge against the virgin chastity of his new bride (Deut. 22:13f). These matters likely did not require as much investigation, and perhaps could be handled with greater dispatch by civic officials. They also sat in the gate for these dispositions (Deut. 21:19; 22:15).²

Court decisions required at least two witnesses (Deut. 29:15). If a witness proved false, he received the punishment of the accused had he been proven guilty (Deut. 19:16-19). Punishment was executed without delay (Num. 15:36;

¹The Lachish ostraca were discovered in the gate of Lachish, for they were part to the evidence in a trial in progress at the time of the city's destruction. Cf. Deut. 21:19; Prov. 22:22; Amos 5:15.

²An illustration of perverted justice by elders serving in this capacity occurred in connection with Naboth when Jezebel sent letters requiring his false conviction and death (I Kgs. 21:5-13).

Deut. 22:18), was sometimes carried out in the presence of the judge (Deut. 25:2f), and even by the officials themselves (Deut. 22:18). If the sentence was stoning, then many people assisted (Num. 15:36; Num. 22:21), and the witnesses had to cast the first stones (Deut. 13:9).

The importance of instruction in this civil law is obvious. These laws concerned daily conduct. Hence, the priests doubtless spent much time with them, helping the people to know their responsibilities and privileges.

c. Ceremonial law

The ceremonial law had to do with the religious life of the people. It required personal faith and love toward God and laid down numerous regulations as to how those attitudes should be demonstrated.

A major portion of these regulations pertained to sanctuary service. Such were of primary importance to the officials themselves, indicating their clothing, the description of the sacrifices to offer, and the procedures in doing so.¹ Accordingly, they must have spent much time in acquainting themselves with this information, but probably much less in detailing it to the people. Some matters would have been important to teach, however; particularly as to the offerings the people themselves were required to make, such as the sin offering, the trespass offering, and peace offerings.²

¹Found mainly in Leviticus, a sort of priestly handbook.

²The sin offerings and peace offerings had both a public and private aspect; i.e. certain of them were offered

Another aspect of the ceremonial law concerned the annual festivals. Three were of primary importance: the feast of Passover in the spring (Ex. 12:1-28; Num. 28:16-25; Deut. 18:1-8); the feast of Pentecost fifty days later (Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:10); and the feast of Tabernacles in the fall (Lev. 23:34-42; Num. 29:12-40). Two others also came in the fall: the feast of Trumpets (Num. 28:11-15; 29:1-6), and the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-34; Ex. 30:10-30; Num. 29:7-11). Then the Sabbath came weekly, when twice the number of animals were sacrificed as on ordinary days (Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 23:1-3); and there was the monthly observance of the New Moon, when yet more were required. The people had definite responsibility with all these matters, and so the priests would have had to spend considerable time with them.

Then, beside these broader areas, there were also more individual regulations. Among these, the matter of clean and unclean food would have been important to know;¹ also laws of purification, as for a new mother (Lev. 12:2-8), or for either a man or woman with a "running issue" (Lev. 15:2-33). Further, leprosy regulations were detailed (Lev. 13-14) and the priests were told to make these clear (Deut. 24:8).

regularly for all, collectively, and others were only offered on occasion by private individuals as need arose. For the most part, the peace offerings were entirely voluntary, being rendered at times of deep thanksgiving for some special blessing received.

¹Ezekiel, speaking of his predicted temple, states specifically that its priests will give instruction as to "the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezek. 44:23).

IV. History of Priestly Teaching

Some attention must yet be given to the history of the priests in their effectiveness as Israel's teachers. The information with which to work is meager, but sufficient for a general survey.

A. Until the Destruction of Shiloh

Some of the more important features of the earliest period have been cited in prior connections: namely, that the priests occupied cities evenly distributed throughout the land; that for at least eleven months of the year they could dwell in them and so be near the people for teaching; that the Canaanite influence was a major factor for them to combat from the first; and that they were in the main successful in this opposition.

Some defection arose among the priests during this time, as illustrated especially by the wandering Levite in the Micah story.¹ No indication is given that he had turned from Yahweh as his god, but it is clear that he had turned away from the normal life of a priest. He evidently had not liked his assigned city and so was out looking for a new one. His opportunist nature is revealed as he remained with Micah only until a more attractive situation presented itself with the moving Danites.

Later, defection of a yet more serious nature appeared at the central sanctuary itself. Hophni and Phinehas, two

¹Jud. 17-18. He must have moved first to Bethlehem, from which he had come, for this was not a Levitic city.

sons of the high priest, Eli, were the leaders in the lawless activity. They illegally seized much of the meat brought for sacrifice by the people (I Sam. 2:12-17); they "lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting" (I Sam. 2:22); and so caused men to abhor "the offering of Yahweh." People thus no longer wished to carry out their sanctuary responsibilities. Doubtless there would have been a resulting effect on priestly activities in the cities. Regular turns of service at the sanctuary certainly would have been interrupted, and a general lowering in sense of dedication may easily have come. Teaching efficiency likely reached its lowest point, consequently, at this time.

The climax came when the Ark was taken from Shiloh out to battle and then captured by the Philistines. The two wicked sons were killed in the conflict, and this left the time ripe for the emergence of Samuel, now of age and ready.¹

B. Destruction of Shiloh to David

Nothing more is heard of Shiloh as a place of worship after the loss of the Ark.² However, this loss did not mean the end of the Tabernacle, for the Chronicler states that in David's day "the tabernacle of Yahweh which Moses made in

¹The degree of dominance which the Philistines held over Israel here is strikingly indicated by the lack of retaliation on Israel's part. However, it must be remembered that the army had just been tragically defeated and no strong military figure was on hand to spark such retaliation.

²Jeremiah's word to Jerusalem is in keeping as he later stated that the same would happen to her for her sin as did to Shiloh (Jer. 7:12-14; 26:6-9; cf. Ps. 78:60).

the wilderness, and the altar of burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon."¹ It was at Nob slightly earlier when David fled from Saul, for it was there that Ahimelech, the high priest, gave him "showbread" to eat,² and where it is said Goliath's sword lay "behind the ephod" (I Sam. 21:4-9). Also it was to Nob that Saul sent, following this time, to bring Ahimelech "and all his father's house" for an accounting for this favor to David (I Sam. 22:11). It is likely, then, that the Tabernacle in substantial part had been rescued from Shiloh and moved first to Nob.³ Then with Saul's destruction of the priests there, as well as the city itself (I Sam. 22:17-19), it was moved to Gibeon where it stayed at least until the erection of the Temple.

It has been observed that during this in-between period, after the Ark's capture and prior to the Temple, the "high places (bamoth)" are mentioned favorably in the Old Testament, when otherwise the opposite is true.⁴ The torah dis-

¹I Chr. 21:29; II Chr. 1:3-6. R. de Vaux remarks, "During these troubled years, Gibeon seems to have taken the place of Shiloh"; Ancient Israel, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1961), p. 331.

²This "showbread" speaks of the "holy place" in the Tabernacle.

³Shiloh was then taken, but there would have been warning so that priests could have begun immediately to transfer the Tabernacle fearing just such an advance by the Philistines. Indeed, it is stated that a runner did reach the city quickly, at the report of whom Eli fell and died.

⁴Supra, chap. IV, pp. 106-107. R. de Vaux also observes this fact, op. cit., p. 288, though he does not believe they were condemned at any time priorly, rejecting the idea that the record in Numbers and Deuteronomy was early.

approves them, identifying them with the Canaanites (Num. 33:52; Deut. 33:29); and then following the building of the Temple they are condemned repeatedly. For instance, Solomon does evil in building a "high place for Chemosh" (I Kgs. 11:7); and Rehoboam's wickedness includes that he "built them high places" (I Kgs. 14:23).¹ But during this in-between time, no criticism is once heard. Instead, approval is given. Samuel is found by Saul ready to sacrifice at the "high place" (I Sam. 9:12); and Samuel then tells Saul to look for prophets who will be coming down from "the high place" (I Sam. 10:5-13). And Solomon is clearly approved in Yahweh's unusual message to him when he comes to sacrifice at "the great high place" in Gibeon (I Kgs. 3:4).

What accounted for this difference? The answer is implied in the context describing this last action of Solomon: "Only the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of Yahweh" (3:3). That is, the Shiloh center with the Ark was no more; and a new official center had not yet been instituted.² Thus, the "high places" were found to be the most available and suitable locations for the worship of Yahweh.

All of this would have had affect upon priestly activities. Before, there had been the routine attendance at Shi-

¹Notice also from the prophets: Amos 4:13; Hos. 10:8; Isa. 36:7; Mic. 1:3.

²It would appear that neither Nob nor Gibeon had been generally accepted as replacing Shiloh, and Samuel is never said to have been associated with either place.

loh. Now this was over. Some continued service may have been carried out at Nob and later Gibeon, but with the Ark¹ not in attendance it probably was not extensive. The priests from Nob slain by Saul appear to have been serving on a permanent basis, which would argue that others, from other cities, were not being used. It may be that many of the Levitic cities erected their own high places.

The teaching ministry of the priests would also have been affected. For with these changes in worship centers, people would have had many serious questions for them to answer. Indeed, it was a very crucial time. Variance among the tribes had been serious enough prior to this, when the central sanctuary had yet existed as a unifying influence.² But now this was gone. Then there was the continuing attraction of Canaanite culture, and this likely accentuated now due to the frightening menace of the powerful Philistines. And further, the Ark had been captured, the army shattered, and no strong leader existed.

¹The Ark was returned to the land only 7 months after capture (I Sam. 6), but so long as it remained at Beth-shemesh and then Kirjath-jearim, it never served in its former capacity, nor was it brought either to Nob or Gibeon. Three reasons for this may be cited: (1) a general apathy of the people in view of the Shiloh destruction and the prior defections of Eli's sons; (2) an employment now of high places for worship which made a central sanctuary less necessary; and (3) a fear of the Ark after word spread of many lives lost in connection with it at Beth-shemesh (I Sam. 6:19).

²M. Noth, A History of Israel (2d ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1958), p. 91, arguing from a comparison with the amphictyonic, Grecian alliances, where "the essential feature of the institutions of these tribal associations was always the central shrine," makes a strong point that Shiloh served similarly to unify the Israelite tribes.

Still there does not seem to have been panic, nor a spirit of revolution or secession on the part of the tribes. In contrast, it was right at this time when yet another foe, the Ammonites, rose to challenge one of the tribes, that Saul was able to effect a greater unification than ever before,¹ even forming the start of the monarchy.² Thus, there must have been a saving factor in all this,³ and it was likely the priests: those to whom the people would have resorted with their questions. For the common level of thinking becomes so important at such a time. And the priests, spread out in their cities, would have been able to work on just that level.

But how did the priests have sufficient vision and courage in this crisis? It has been observed that likely a general defection had set in among them due to the Shiloh situation. The answer to this is found in Samuel. As noted, when the Ark was captured, he was just coming to active age. The statement is significant: "And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet" (I Sam. 3:20). He knew the situation firsthand and so would have been in an advantageous position for bringing the needed remedy. It is easy to believe that he would have done all in his power to offset the damage done by the two wicked priests and encourage the priests to faithfulness in this crucial time.

¹Involvement Jabesh-gilead (I Sam. 11:1-11).

²Various steps involved, cf. I Sam. 10:17-27; 11:12-15.

³Cf. E. Leslie, Old Testament Religion (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 112.

A word should yet be included regarding the Urim and Thummim. Until the Shiloh fall, its employment had been maintained there. However, as observed in chapter III, with the Ark's capture, change came. I Sam. 21:9 states that when David fled to Nob from Saul, the ephod, in which the Urim and Thummim was kept, was there. Prior to this, however, it had been taken by Ahimelech to battle with Saul's army, where inquiry was made (I Sam. 14:3,36-42). Later, Abiathar, son of the then slain Ahimelech, fled with it to David and consulted it for him (I Sam. 23:6-12). Thus, until the settlement of another central sanctuary in Jerusalem, the Urim and Thummim also experienced unusual employment. Priestly teaching would have been affected in that most priests no longer would have had access to it by which to have questions answered. Accordingly their teaching would have suffered this lack.

C. Organization with David

David brought the Ark to Jerusalem,¹ doubtless with the thought in mind of making the new political capital also the religious capital.² And another move to that same end was

¹II Sam. 6:12-18. The people did not object, for neither Nob nor Gibeon had ever been accepted as a substitute for Shiloh; and also David's popularity was at high tide, for he had recently won two signal victories over the Philistines (II Sam. 5:18-25) and wrestled Jerusalem from the Jebusites (II Sam. 5:6-8).

²He did not move the Tabernacle from Gibeon, however, likely intending soon to build the Temple. This he was refused through Nathan, but he then gathered materials for it at least, cf. I Chr. 22:1-5,14-16; 28:10-21; 29:1-9.

his organization of the priesthood in a more formal manner. This organization has been described,¹ with its twenty-four courses for the priests, and the division of Levites into singers, gatekeepers, "officers and judges," and regular sanctuary attendants.

This step of organization would also have had some effect on priestly teaching. As suggested, this teaching had taken on renewed impetus with Samuel's leadership. However, there had been no regular turn of service at a central sanctuary now for many years, and Samuel's influence could hardly have penetrated through all the country with equal effect. Hence, just such a move as this by David would have been needed to complete this work of Samuel. It would have affected everyone, for all received classifications. Indeed, a principal factor motivating David in this action may have been just to stir up and impart discipline to lax personnel in many of the more distant points. Accordingly, it may be concluded that priestly teaching did take on increased proficiency at this time; probably, in fact, the highest in all its history. And likely this condition continued through most of Solomon's reign as well, for it is stated that in these matters he continued "according to the ordinance of David his father" (II Chr. 8:14).

D. Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom

Jeroboam, in fear that his people might be lured back

¹Supra, pp. 160-61.

to Jerusalem, inaugurated a new religious program with centers at Dan and Bethel in place of the former capital (I Kgs. 12:26-29). As a result he found it necessary to break with the torah of Yahweh in some basic respects, one of which pertained to religious personnel. It is stated that he appointed priests "from all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi" (I Kgs. 12:31). Likely the former priests would not cooperate in this substitute program.¹

This would have brought great change for the rightful priests scattered through Jeroboam's territory.² Indeed, it is directly stated that many even left the country for Judah,³ where they likely joined forces with priests already there. Those who did not leave, would not have been permitted to continue their turns at the Jerusalem Temple, and, without assignment either at the new worship centers, they would have lacked any sanctuary service. They would also have been without contact with the Urim and Thummim in Jerusalem. And as to teaching, their ministry would have been severely restricted. Jeroboam would not have wanted any instruction which might lead people back to the former capital. If some tried to give such counsel, it would have been at great risk.

But if this teaching would have been hazardous under

¹Cr. II Chr. 13:9.

²Not many of the cities assigned to priests proper would have been in Jeroboam's territory, for those cities were only from Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. However, he could have used Levites who were available in large number.

³II Chr. 11:14.

Jeroboam, it would have been far more so after the Baal intrusion with Ahab's queen, Jezebel.¹ For under her vigorous leadership in this foreign religion, even Ahab's own prophets of Yahweh were killed (I Kgs. 18:4). What then would have been the lot of Levites in their cities trying to teach Yahseh's torah? Doubtless their teaching all but stopped. Perhaps many lost their lives.

E. Defection Also in Judah

In view of this lack of torah instruction in Israel, one is not surprised when Hosea laments regarding the northern kingdom that the "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (4:6). But with Judah also there is similar rebuke; not as general, but still very serious.

It begins already with the eighth century prophets, Micah and Isaiah. Micah reprimands the priests that they "teach for hire" (3:11).² Isaiah says that both prophet and priest err through strong drink, and compares them in this with Israel (28:7). In the seventh century, Zephaniah laments that the "priests have profaned the sanctuary" and "done violence to the law" (3:4).

But it is Jeremiah, also of the seventh century, who has the greatest rebuke. In 2:8 the priests are said not to ask, "Where is Yahweh?" In 5:31, the priests are said to

¹I Kgs. 16:31f. This was a diplomatic marriage. Jezebel brought her religion with her, and, being of forceful personality, was able to thrust it upon the country.

²The tithes of the people were to support them (Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:21-24).

"bear rule" because of the support of false prophets. In 6:13, priests, with these prophets, are said to practice "covetousness." In 20:1f, it is Pashur, a priest, who leads in opposing Jeremiah. In 23:11, he says that "both prophet and priest are profane." And on through the book these indications continue.¹

However, the picture is not complete by citing only criticisms. The majority of priests were good, and are often so indicated. For instance, when Uzziah attempted to intrude into the priest's office in burning incense, Azariah, the high priest, and eighty regular priests withstood him at the peril of their lives (II Chr. 26:16-21). Also in Hezekiah's reign, priests assisted in the reform and conducted the passover (II Chr. 29-31). Likely priestly behavior varied with who was then ruling, whether he was himself interested in allegiance to the torah or not. Accordingly, the criticisms of both Micah and Isaiah may have come during the reign of the wicked Ahaz, who, for instance, even gave specific directions to his high priest to build a foreign type altar (II Kgs. 16:9-16).

As for teaching, this situation would suggest that defection came regarding it after the same pattern. Infraction in one area would have led to the same in another. Likely the migration of northern priests in Jeroboam's rule would

¹Passages from Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah which criticised the manner of sacrifice of the day have not been included. They do not bear so directly on teaching and will be treated in the following chapter where prophets are the subject.

have increased zeal for teaching for some time. But by the time of Ahaz this could have been wearing off, and so account for the sharp words of Micah and Isaiah.

Then by the time of Jeremiah, especially in view of the sinful reign of Manasseh, the defection could have become far more serious. Josiah's reforms would have brought some counteraction, as he "put down the idolatrous priests . . . in the high places in the cities of Judah," who burned incense to Baal, etc. (II Kgs. 23:5), which would have given courage to good priests for increased activity in torah instruction.¹ But in the reign of Jehoiakim, and then Zedekiah, when Jeremiah's criticisms were mainly voiced, the situation had evidently deteriorated again, perhaps more than before. This does not mean that the priests had begun to advocate departure from worship of Yahweh, for even those opposed to Jeremiah were doing this in Yahweh's name.² But they were doing little teaching at all, spending their time rather in their own interest; and what was taught was only in the vein of the empty formalism decried by Jeremiah as characterizing the Temple ceremonies.³

¹Priests of Josiah's time are commendably noted as those "that taught all Israel" (II Chr. 35:3).

²Significantly, the Lachish Ostraca, when referring to deity, always refer to Yahweh, using the tetragrammaton, yhw, and not Baal or some other. Evidently, Josiah was quite successful in his eradication of Baal worship. The Ostraca date from c. 586 B.C.; cf. Harry Torczyner, Lachish I, The Lachish Letters (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938).

³Jeremiah writes, "Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me" (6:20).

Chapter VI

THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

I. Characterization

The subject now concerns prophets. They too had an important teaching function in Israel, and it differed from that of the priests. This difference can be seen in three basic areas: identity, mission, and method.

A. Identity

The first matter to consider concerns the classification and type of person who served as a prophet.

1. Office not inherited nor legally prescribed

It has been observed that priests received their office by inheritance. If a person was a descendant of Levi, he was constituted a Levite, and if in addition he descended from Aaron, he was a priest. But this was not so with prophets. There was no tribe nor family lineage devoted to prophets. They were individually selected, called by Yahweh to office. Moses was called while in the desert (Ex. 3:4); Samuel as a lad in the Tabernacle (I Sam. 3:1-21); Isaiah by a vision in the Temple (Isa. 6); Ezekiel by the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:1-2:3).

Levites were constituted by law for priestly service.

A large portion of the ceremonial law was given to the nature and description of this service. But the same was not true for the prophets. Neither their role nor duties were described in the torah, and even their existence was not really established there, though it was clearly recognized. This recognition comes in Deut. 18:9-22, which should be noticed.

The first eight verses of chapter 18 give further indication as to the Levitic office. But with vs. 9, a change comes which leads to this prophetic recognition. There Moses directs that the people, upon entering Canaan, should not try to communicate with God by any form of divination¹ after the pattern of other nations, for such is an "abomination to Yahweh"; but instead God would give this communication through a prophet. The word, prophet, is used in the singular, but it is commonly agreed that this was in representation of prophets generally.²

Thus, the prophet was legally recognized, and here especially for Divine disclosures,³ but not legally prescribed.

¹Various forms of divination are here listed; cf. E. J. Young, My Servants the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1952), pp. 21-22, for a discussion of each as well as the entire passage.

²Cf. Young, ibid., pp. 29-35; G. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (rev. ed., G. E. Day; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), pp. 362-63; C. Keil & F. Delitzsch, "The Fifth Book of Moses," The Pentateuch, KDC, III, p. 394. Each of these also discusses the messianic implications, which need not be treated here.

³See supra, chap. III, pp. 68-70 for the difference in type of information to be given through the prophet in contrast to that by the Urim and Thummim of the priests.

2. Courageous individuals

One reason why an inheritance relationship was not suitable for the prophets was that each had to be a special kind of person. Not just anyone would do. The priestly office did not find this nearly so true. A weak son could still carry on rather well, for the work was quite routine.

But the prophet did not act by pattern. He had often to chart his own course, and it might be different from any before. He might anoint a king to office, or bring him the severest reprimand. He might bring cheer, or cause for great sorrow. His assignment might lead to grave danger, or to high honor. He had to be prepared for suffering and injustice, as well as ease and plaudits. He had always to be an individualist in courage and ingenuity. There was no room for mediocrity.¹

The first act of young Samuel, as God's newly called prophet, was to tell no one less than the high priest that his house had been rejected by Yahweh (I Sam. 3:4-18). Later he was to anoint Israel's first king (I Sam. 9:15-21; 10:1-8), and still later to inform him that he too had been rejected (I Sam. 13:11-14). Nathan was instructed to rebuke David for his sin with Bathsheba (II Sam. 12:1-12). Gad was later sent to give David choice of three punishments for his sin in numbering the people (II Sam. 24:10-17). Ahijah had first

¹Says G. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 224, "The great personalities are to be sought among the prophets; the living force in times of crisis is theirs, but the maintenance of a permanent, ethical and religious tradition . . . was the task of the priest."

to promise the new nation of Israel to Jeroboam (I Kgs. 11: 29-39), and then to tell him that it was to be taken from him again (I Kgs. 14:6-16). The "man of God" was sent to reprimand Jeroboam for his false altar at Bethel (I Kgs. 13:1-10). Elijah warned of a famine and effected a remarkable contest on Mt. Carmel (I Kgs. 17:1; 18:25-38). Elisha anointed a foreign king and wept in doing so for the havoc he would bring on Israel (II Kgs. 8:7-13). Jonah was sent even to foreign Nineveh to preach repentance (Jon. 1:1-2; 3:1-2).¹

3. Not professionals

The matter is pertinent whether Israel's prophets were professionals, as the term has often been used regarding them. Many scholars believe they were. But the picture seen above as to their rugged individualism does not correspond to what is normally associated with this idea.

Those who believe they were view the prophets as having associated together first in bands.² At first these were energetic groups, quite in contrast to a priesthood which had become professionalized in manner. However, later these too lost this original spontaneity and became regulated and standardized in their functions, thus also falling into a professionalism. This became normal prophetism, which was not in

¹The Iliad presents an interesting parallel when the prophet, Calchas, rebukes Agamemnon for keeping the captive girl Chryseis. Agamemnon becomes angry but still obeys the order; Iliad, trans. S. Butler, ed. L. Loomis (New York: Walter J. Black, 1942), pp. 9-11.

²Of such, J. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, p. 109, writes, "'The sons of prophets' . . . lived together in a kind of monastery."

itself necessarily bad, but it led to lack of commitment and a willingness to cater to court pressures in a desire for position and money.¹ Accordingly, reactionary prophets would arise occasionally who would severely criticize such practices and denounce as false those who were involved.² A pioneer in this reaction was Micaiah, who withstood the 400 prophets of Ahab (I Kgs. 22:13-28).³ Such persons were the rugged individualists; not the normal prophets.

The present writer agrees with this position in that certainly there were two types of prophets in Israel and Judah. Micaiah contrasted strongly with those whom he opposed. And in Judah, the same was just as true, for instance, with Jeremiah. Micaiah and Jeremiah were the fearless individuals; the others, called false prophets, were the professionals who were concerned with pleasing the king.

¹T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (2d ed.; New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 174, says, "Thus did prophecy become commercialized and professionalized. It went the way of the priesthood, and for that matter of all institutions. It lost its spontaneous, inspired character and became in time as professional as the priesthood against which it was originally a protest."

²Cf. H. Knight, The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), pp. 83-84; C. Whitley, The Exilic Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 32-33; S. A. Cook, "The Prophets of Israel," CAH, III, p. 459.

³T. H. Robinson, Prophecy and the Prophets (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 39-40, writes, "The first person of whom this independence is recorded is Micaiah. . . . A century later the individual prophet had become a familiar figure. It was no longer on the crowds of ecstatics that men relied for the divine message. It was rather the single, independent speaker whose words they held to be due to the direct inspiration of Yahweh"; cf. J. Pedersen, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

However, he disagrees in respect to the historical background of both groups. The position presented sees the traditional group as the professionals. But this is not in keeping with the Old Testament evidence. For here the rugged individuals constitute the historical line. One does not read of "false" prophets before Micaiah;¹ but he does read of Elisha, Elijah, Jehu, Hanani, Shemaiah, Ahijah, Gad, Nathan, and Samuel. These were not professionals, seeking self honor, catering to a king. They were fearless and courageous, bringing rebuke more often than commendation. If Micaiah was the first "reactionary," how does one account for these before him?

A better answer is that, after Samuel and his band of young, training zealots, there continued a line of committed men, who could serve acceptably under the Yahweh-fearing David,² and later bring needed reprimand to apostatizing rulers. It is reasonable that only the more outstanding representatives of this line would have been mentioned, and also that all of the total group would not have been equally committed. As greater numbers of people came to turn from faithful allegiance to Yahweh, there came attraction for the weaker members of the group to seek self-advancement by play-

¹Indeed, in Judah this comes only with Isaiah and Micah, more than a century after Micaiah.

²Serving acceptably under David meant even willingness to bring rebuke to the king himself. In the instances when either Nathan or Gad brought such, David accepted it as from Yahweh, and without remonstrance to the prophets. The idea, thus, of professional king-pleasers does not fit the picture under David.

ing to the king. Thus came into being the "false" prophets, and their numbers grew until the regular, strong prophets found it necessary to bring the denouncements observed.¹

From this it follows too that false prophets would have been more numerous in Israel than in Judah. For there Jeroboam had made certain defections from the torah a matter of law, and so those who would not bring rebuke would have been the more welcome.² Judah remained legally true to the torah, but several of her kings also defected in spirit, which would have encouraged false prophets there as well. With strong Yahweh-followers recurring periodically on the throne, however, their number would have been curtailed in comparison with Israel to the north. In Judah, then, the actual number of false prophets at any given time likely depended, as with the priests, on who was ruling. It apparently was very high in the time of Jeremiah for he had the most to say about them.³

The answer, then, to the question as to whether or not

¹That Elisha had groups of prophets under his direction has also been used as evidence of large groups of training professionals (I Kgs. 20:35; II Kgs. 2:3-15; 4:38; etc.). They were in training, it would seem, but not as potential king-pleasers. Elisha was not such and so he would not have taught them to be such. Those who may have assumed this role later would have done so in spite of their teaching, not because of it.

²Consequently, Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah appear almost as solitary figures, against the false 400 of Ahab's time. Later, Amos is sent north from Judah to bring rebuke in Israel; as was true also of the "man of God" earlier in Jeroboam's day.

³Much less is said in the 8th century. What is said by Isaiah and Micah could well have come in the reign of Ahaz when false prophets would have felt quite at home.

the prophets were professionals is that the traditional group, the true prophets, were not. They were not mercenary men-pleasers. On the other hand, it should be recognized that many of these individuals likely were occupied full time in their work. To say, then, that they were not professionals does not mean that they were prophets only as a side line. Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Elisha, Isaiah, etc. do not appear to have had other occupations. They were called of Yahweh early in life to this service, and they gave themselves to it as their life work. There were exceptions, of course. Amos, for instance, says he was "no prophet" but rather a "herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees" (7:14). Likely his call was somewhat temporary.¹

4. Not another order of priests

A viewpoint, identified especially with Scandinavian scholars, holds that the prophets were really another order of priests, closely associated with cultic service. Priests proper engaged primarily in sacrificial activity at the altar, while prophets gave Divine oracles in response to questions of the people.² S. Mowinckel is credited with innovating this line of thinking.³ He took evidence from several psalms

¹R. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 577, thinks Amos' ministry lasted no more than a few months.

²O. Eissfeldt, "The Prophetic Literature," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. H. Rowley (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 113-61, gives an excellent survey of viewpoints.

³In his Psalmenstudien III: Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen (Kristiania: In Kommission Bei Jacob Dybwad, 1923).

which depict Yahweh speaking in the first person,¹ which Mowinckel says can have reference only to such prophets, speaking for Yahweh, giving reply to questions of inquirers. A. Haldar especially has sought support, as observed in chapter II, in a comparison of Israel's kohen and nabi with Babylonia's baru and mahhu.² Other leading exponents are I. Engnell and A. Johnson.³ The latter points to the following as evidence: (1) that the 70 elders, when they prophesied, were stationed near the sacred tent; (2) that Saul (I Sam. 10) found nebi'im coming down from a high place; (3) that Samuel the prophet was reared at Shiloh, a priest center; (4) that David was consulted by the prophet Nathan in reference to building the Temple (II Sam. 7:4-17); (5) that Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest cooperated in making Solomon king (I Kgs. 1:10-42); (6) that Elijah the prophet sacrificed on Mt. Carmel (I Kgs. 18:25-40); (7) that Elisha resorted to Mt. Carmel (II Kgs. 4:25) where was a high place (according to the Elijah episode); and (8) that Jehu called both prophets and priests of Baal to their temple, showing that they were both cultic officials for the Canaanites, which, then, could present a parallel to what was true also in Israel (II

¹Such as Psalms 60, 75, 82, 110, etc.

²Also shown in chapter II to be wanting for evidence.

³I. Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1943). A. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press Board, 1944).

Kgs. 10:19).¹

It is unnecessary to treat all of these arguments by Johnson separately for all but the last are of the same pattern and subject to the same rebuttal. They give only implied evidence from association. But just because 70 elders were near the sacred tent when they prophesied, or that ne-bhi'im were coming down from a high place, or that Samuel was reared at Shiloh, etc., does not prove that prophets were cultic personnel. It is only to be expected that they, being religious functionaries, would be interested in places of worship and so often found near them. Such proximity does not prove that they worked there as officials. The last argument, pertaining to a possible parallel with Canaanite personages, is again based on inference. But the likelihood is that these Canaanite officials were similar to those of Babylonia which have been shown not to be parallel with Israel's kohen and nabi'. And as to Mowinckel's argument, as to the "first person" passages in certain of the psalms, his interpretation of these is only one of others suggested, and so need not be, and is not here, accepted. The type of evidence which would substantiate the position would be a clear case of one or more prophets giving oracular utterances out of the central sanctuary. But this is not found.

¹Ibid., p. 26f. These arguments are taken from the period preceding the writing prophets. He also treats their writings in detail, the arguments of which are too lengthy to be enumerated here. Suffice it to say that their evidential value is no more direct than of these mentioned. One must admire, however, the great care which Johnson gives to this analysis.

In contrast, what is found is an attitude on the part of the prophets which is sometimes even highly critical of current, cultic practices. Isaiah, for instance, quotes Yahweh as saying, "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? . . . I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams. . . . Bring no more vain oblations," etc. (1:11-13). A few years ago, many scholars thought this and similar passages¹ indicated a definite anti-cultic attitude on the part of the prophets.² This one-sided viewpoint is not shared by many today, but it is another thing to swing to an opposite extreme and see these same prophets as themselves playing a prominent role in the cultic service.

Particular occasions also give evidence to the contrary. For instance, even in Israel, which had defected greatly from torah regulations, Ahab's 400 prophets do not seem to have been connected with the Dan and Bethel sanctuaries. They gave their counsel to Ahab and Jehoshaphat in "the gate of Samaria," not either Dan or Bethel.³ In the reign of Jeroboam II, Amos came north to rebuke Amaziah the priest and the cultic service in general at Bethel (Amos 7).

¹Amos 5:21-25; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8; Jer. 6:20; 7:21-23.

²For a recent discussion of these passages, cf. R. Anderson, Attitudes of the Pre-Exilic Canonical Prophets Toward the Cultus (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1957).

³I Kgs. 22:10. Vs. 6 states too that all 400 were present. It is not likely that the whole group would have walked from Bethel to Samaria.

And yet later in Judah, Jeremiah rebuked the priests for their manner of sanctuary service and general behavior.¹

Further, the torah neither prescribes nor recognizes any such activity on the part of the prophets. Great detail is given too regarding sanctuary regulations, but prophets are not once named in connection with them. Thus, lacking both legal reason and historical example for so conceiving of Israel's prophets, the conclusion is warranted that Israel did not include prophets in her sanctuary service. They were not another order of priests.²

B. Mission

1. Not innovators, but reformers

Until recently, a majority of scholars saw Israel's writing prophets as innovators of new teaching. They introduced new ideas of monotheism and ethical requirements.³ But of late, many are calling them reformers, saying that their message was not new, but had been implicit in the torah and the ministry of earlier prophets from early in Is-

¹The false prophets he similarly rebuked may have been linked in some manner to the cultic service, but, even if so, still they are rebuked; cf. 6:13,20; 8:10; 13:13; 23:11; etc.

²O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 122, touches upon the main weakness of adherents of the position, as he says that in their books "the external analogies have been given precedence over the illustrative material to be found within the Old Testament itself."

³For instance, cf. R. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 520; or Oesterley and Robinson, Hebrew Religion (2d ed.; London: SPEK, 1937, pp. 234f,299.

rael's history.¹

With this position, agreement is here accorded. Amos was reiterating what his predecessors had stated often before. The torah had presented it, in its own way, from the first; and the priests, scattered in their cities, had been teaching it from the days of the conquest. The people had often failed to live up to it; and in the time of Amos, this failure was on the increase. But the basic instruction of Amos was the same as it had been, only adapted to current conditions.

Eichrodt investigates this matter with particular care. He finds basic similarity between the late and early prophets, not only as to message, but also as to the manner in which they received the revelations, the inner compulsion to speak, and the principal wrongs they desired to remedy; in other words, in all ways fundamental to showing continuity between the early and later prophets.² And the message that

¹John Bright's comment, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 246, is typical: "The classical prophets represent, indeed, a novel phenomenon in Israel. Yet they were certainly not the spiritual pioneers, specifically the discoverers of ethical monotheism, that they have so repeatedly been made out to be. Although the originality of their contribution is not to be questioned, they were nevertheless not innovators, but reformers who stood in the mainstream of Israel's tradition and adapted that tradition to a new situation." Cf. A. Welch, Prophet and Priest in Old Israel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 35.

²Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), pp. 339f, 345f. Eichrodt says the main change with the later prophets was their greater understanding of the reality of Yahweh's presence, which gave them greater urgency for their task and increased concern for the pending judgment on the people.

all brought, he says, was that of reform. The people needed to be brought back to the teachings of the torah.

2. Relation to the torah

This leads now to a closer consideration of the prophets' relation to the torah. If they were not opposed to it, or assigned to give additional instruction to what it contained, what did they do which was not already done by the normal teachers, the priests?

a. Taught in keeping with the torah

It is well first to settle the matter that they did teach in keeping with the torah. A few pertinent texts will show this. In Isa. 30:8-10, the people of Judah are described as "rebellious" who will "not hear the law (torah) of Yahweh" and who accordingly say "to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things." Thus, the law is made equivalent to the "right things" which the prophets were prophesying to the people. II Kgs. 17:13 states that "Yahweh testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law (torah) which I commanded." And Daniel laments before God, "Neither have we obeyed the voice of Yahweh our God, to walk in his laws (toroth), which he set before us by his servants the prophets" (9:10).¹

b. Did not teach the torah as such

¹Cf. Jer. 26:4-5; Zech. 7:12.

The prophets did not teach the torah as such, however. This was the task of the priests, who taught "precept upon precept; line upon line; . . . here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:10). This kind of teaching required a classroom situation, continuous contact with students, and permanence of residence. These things were true of priests in their cities, but normally not true of prophets who moved about. Elijah, for instance, is seen first before a king, then by a remote brook, later with a widow at Zarephath, again on Mt. Carmel in a contest, and still later on Mt. Horeb far to the south (I Kgs. 17-19). Besides this, what was taught, at least by the writing prophets, is revealed in their books; and, though they speak about the torah, they never state its precepts in any "line upon line" form.¹

c. Urged reform in view of the torah

What they did do has already been suggested: they urged reform in view of the torah. The priests also urged the people to conform their lives to the teaching; but the prophets took note of where this was not being done, and then urged in stronger tones that correction be made. Two matters related to this basic mission should be observed.

The first is that this reform so advocated was both

¹Writes Walter Williams, The Prophets, Pioneers to Christianity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 39, "Traditionally the priest had been the educator. . . . As a teacher, the priest knew how to work painstakingly with people, leading them step by step in the direction of prophetic ideals." A. Welch, op. cit., p. 77, says, "The difference between priest and prophet was one of tempo; rather than of principle."

social¹ and religious in kind. The writing prophets have much to say on both counts. Regarding the social, Amos, for instance, cries, "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, that oppress the poor, that crush the needy, that say unto their lords, Bring, and let us drink" (4:1). And Isaiah proclaims, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, . . . To turn aside the needy from judgment and to take away the right from the poor of the people, that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless" (10:1-2). Regarding the religious, they call the people back to God. N. Gottwald rightly says, "Everything in their outlook was grounded in Israel's relation to Yahweh, in the persistent preaching of religious meaning into every facet of life."² Hosea, for instance, urges, "Come and let us return unto Yahweh: for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up" (6:1). And Micah pleads, "Hear ye now what Yahweh saith" (6:1).

The second matter is that, not only were the writing prophets such reformers, but so too the earlier representatives. Samuel's inauguration into the reformer's role came early in life as he was called upon to tell Eli of God's judgment upon his wayward household (I Sam. 3:1-18). His

¹W. Eichrodt observes that also the priests were concerned with right social conduct, but differed still from the prophets in two respects: (1) they held to supremacy of outward obedience over heart attitudes; and (2) they failed to see the ethical aspects as having absolute supremacy over cultic operations; op. cit., p. 415.

²A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 276.

persistent efforts in this respect with the people was crowned with success in a clear decision for Yahweh on their part at Mizpah (I Sam. 7:1-14).¹ The "man of God" urged reform on Jeroboam (I Kgs. 13:1-10). Hanani did the same with Asa (II Chr. 16:7-9). And Elijah's efforts on Mt. Carmel are well known (I Kgs. 18). In fact, the reason for mention of most of these earlier prophets is some occasion in which they urged reform on one or more individuals.

d. Infrequent mention of the torah

The prophets do refer to the torah, but not often. The question rises as to why. Eichrodt supplies a reasonable answer. He says the mention of the name, torah, was reduced to lessen the danger of "dead externalism in religious practice and mechanical routine in religious thought."² The people tended to think of the ceremonies as effective in themselves, and priests did little to correct this. Thus, the prophets wished to do nothing which might foster this error yet more, such as undue use of the name, torah. For Eichrodt believes that to many of the people this name had come to mean in large part just such outward ceremony. Hence, the prophets proclaimed the torah message, but with little use of the name. And in keeping are the passages mentioned above³ in which the prophets directly speak against this

¹This was a crucial occasion for the Ark had been taken and Philistine dominance was strong.

²Op. cit., p. 304.

³Supra, pp. 4-5, 208.

"dead externalism" in sanctuary service.

e. Lack of prescription in the torah

It has been observed that prophets are only recognized in the torah, not legally prescribed as are the priests. The reason may be found in the fact that prophets were reformers, not prime teachers. The torah was laid down for the ideal state of the people. And in that ideal state, they would be taught the torah by the priests; hence, priests needed legal establishment. But reformers would then not be needed, and so no legal prescription was called for. Apart from the strict, legal provisions, however, it was evident that this ideal state would not be achieved and so reformers would be necessary. Accordingly, at least a more unofficial recognition was given to them, as recorded in Deut. 18.¹

f. Need for means of revelation

As such reformers, the prophets had a provision for revelation as well as the priests. The priests had been given their torah through Moses, and then the Urim and Thummim provision for additional information on detailed decisions. But, in that the prophets were primarily reformers only, thus to urge return to the priestly torah, the question arises as why they needed an information source also.

One reason is that this reformation ministry itself re-

¹In keeping with this distinction is a parallel fact that prophets were not anointed to office either, as were the priests. B. D. Eerdmans, Religion of Israel (Leiden: Univ. Pers Leiden, 1947), p. 51, gives some discussion of this matter.

quired certain information, not given in the torah, by which to carry it on. For instance, there was need for Samuel to warn Eli of the consequences of his son's actions, but Samuel could not have known of what to give warning apart from the revelation. David was to have selection from three possible punishments, but Gad would not have known their identity except again for the revelation. Isaiah and Jeremiah were thus informed of the coming Babylonian captivity that they might warn the people and so more strongly urge reform. Also the prophets needed direction as to what specifically to say in the reformation ministry, and where and how to say it.

And another reason is that there was need in Israel of an information source of greater compass than supplied in the Urim and Thummim. As indicated in chapter III, the Urim and Thummim was limited to giving or withholding an affirmation. Hence, a source was needed for descriptive information, and this the prophetic source gave. This information was sometimes needed for the reformation function, as noted; but sometimes the need lay elsewhere. For instance, Samuel needed to know of Saul's coming to see him the following day so that he might be prepared to anoint him as the new king of Israel (I Sam. 9:15-22; 10:1-8). Isaiah needed to know what was to happen to Sennacherib's army that he might encourage the heart of Hezekiah (II Kgs. 19:32-34).¹

¹It is significant that the privilege of prophet's receiving this type of information, rather than other persons, is recognized in the Old Testament. For instance, in this last example, Hezekiah prayed to God for this deliverance, but the answer was given through Isaiah; cf. II Chr. 20:14.

C. Method

What now was the prophetic method in this reformation ministry? Three observations provide the answer.

1. Preaching

In contrast to the "line upon line" instruction of the priests, the prophets brought their messages more by preaching.¹ This was in keeping with their reformation purpose. Careful analysis of legal precepts was unnecessary here; but rather strongly worded exhortation, inspiration, and warning. The need was to solicit action. Not people's minds so much, but their emotions and wills were the objects of interest. People needed to be taught love for God and then impelled to live accordingly. Thus, Hosea shouts forth: "Hear the word of Yahweh, ye children of Israel" (4:1), and again, "Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king" (5:1). Amos tells Amaziah, priest of Bethel, that Yahweh had taken him from following the flock to "prophecy unto my people Israel" (7:15). Isaiah's orders were to "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, . . ." (6:9). Jeremiah is told to "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem" (2:2). Later, upon at least two different occasions, he is told to do this standing "in the gate of Yahweh's house" where the people passing by would have to

¹J. Hoschander, The Priests and Prophets (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1938), p. 69, states, "Preaching was the special function of the prophets for whom the absolute truth was the supreme law, and who cared for nothing if thereby they aroused against themselves the hostility of the people."

listen (7:1). Another time he was to preach in the valley of Hinnom which was by the "gate Harsith" (19:2).

This ministry was carried on not only with the large audience, but also with the small and even separate individuals.¹ The purpose was the same in each case: change in behavior rather than knowledge. With the earlier prophets, the single individual type of contact seemed to predominate, with large audiences seldom implied.² However, the motivation was still no different: people needed to conform their lives to Yahweh's will.

2. Key individuals

Any reformation movement depends in large part on the leadership of those in authority. If they are sympathetic, the people will likely give heed. Hence, another aspect in the prophetic method was to contact key individuals and urge reform on them, both as to their personal behavior and the conduct of their office. Kings, of course, were especially sought out.³ To Saul came Samuel; to David, Nathan and Gad; to Rehoboam, Shemaiah; to Jeroboam, Ahijah and the "man of God"; to Ahab, Elijah and Micaiah; to Jehoram and Jehu, Elisha; to Asa, Azariah and Hanani; to Jehoshaphat, Jehu; to Joash, Zechariah; to Amaziah, "the prophet"; to Uzziah, Zech-

¹As Jeremiah with Pashur (ch. 20) or Hananiah (ch. 28).

²However, Samuel preached to many at Mizpah (I Sam. 7: 3-9) and Elijah on Mt. Carmel (I Kgs. 18).

³Cf. J. Pedersen's discussion of prophets contacting kings; Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1926-40), I-II, p. 109.

ariah; to Ahaz and Hezekiah, Isaiah; and to Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, Jeremiah. Of such individual contacts, one reads more than of the preaching occasions, but this does not mean they were more frequent. Rather, they were more unusual and significant for mention.

3. Object lessons

The prophets often used object lessons for illustration. This served to make their messages more concrete and meaningful. Amos used a "basket of summer fruit" to illustrate that Israel was ripe and in line for soon judgment, parallel to the fruit being soon to experience rotting and corruption (8:1-2). Hosea used his own wife's unfaithfulness to illustrate how unfaithful Israel had been to Yahweh.¹ Isaiah walked about without shoes or outer garment to show how Egypt would be shamed before the invasion of Assyria (Isa. 20:2-6). Jeremiah hid his linen girdle by the Euphrates River until it was marred and then used it to illustrate that God would similarly "mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem" (Jer. 13:1-11). Ezekiel saw dry bones restored to life by the blowing of wind upon them and was told that in like fashion God would breathe upon dead, captive Judah and restore the people again to their land (Ezek. 37:1-14).

II. Content of the Teaching

The matter now concerns the content of the prophetic

¹The entire book of Hosea works with this comparison, but especially chapters 1 and 3.

teaching. It has been observed that the prophets taught in keeping with the torah, with the purpose in mind of reformation, but of what they spoke in so doing has not been discussed. As to the message content of the writing prophets, there is abundant evidence in their books. Of the earlier prophets, the evidence is much less, but still sufficient for specific conclusions. It is helpful to divide the consideration between these two groups.

A. Early Prophets

The prophets of the early period fall also into two groups: those active before the monarchy, and those after. The task of reformation changed substantially with this major change in government.

1. Pre-monarchy period

From the nature of the case, the interest here must be historical as well as in relation to subject matter. That is, it is necessary to know who was prophesying as well as what they said, for often the two questions are interrelated.

a. Identification

Not many prophets are named in the Old Testament prior to the monarchy establishment. Moses is so called, but he died before the conquest; and this was true also of his sister, Miriam, called a prophetess (Ex. 15:20). Joshua may be included for, though not called a prophet, he served in that capacity, receiving Divine communications and relaying them

to the people.¹ Deborah, one of the judges, is called a prophetess (Jud. 4:4). In Gideon's day, a prophet is mentioned, though not by name, as having warned the people of their sinfulness (Jud. 6:8). Samuel is the prophet best known, and recognized as such even early in life by "all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba" (I Sam. 3:20). And he, in turn, superintended a group of young prophets, evidently stationed at Naioth near Ramah, where Samuel maintained his headquarters (I Sam. 10:5-10; 19:18-20). They appear to have been members of a training school which probably Samuel himself had started.

These are all the prophets definitely indicated. However, a few clues suggest there were more. First, Moses' own prediction that other prophets like himself would arise, to whom the people should go for Divine communication,² is hardly fulfilled by these alone.³ Second, the manner of mention regarding Deborah as prophetess implies others were living. This identification is uncalled for in terms of the story related, for it depicts her only as a judge. The thought must be, then, that she was also a prophetess like others of whom the people would know. Third, there is the prophet in Gideon's

¹Other scholars refer also to Balaam, but he was earlier, before the conquest, and was not a member of any of Israel's tribes. N. Gottwald, for instance, so discusses Balaam at some length; A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 254.

²Deut. 18:9-22; cf. supra, p. 199.

³On the basis of the early date of the Exodus, the time involved was over 300 years; indeed, a long time for these few names.

time, mentioned casually, and not at all like he was a unique person for his time. Fourth, there is the well-known verse from Samuel's time, which implies that the prophet, or seer,¹ was customarily in people's thinking: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer" (I Sam. 9:9). If there had been only a few individuals of this kind by this time, such a customary manner of speaking would hardly have arisen. And fifth, there is no reason why all should have been mentioned. Not all are presented in any other period either, but only those involved in the history related.

b. Message

The message of these early prophets may be determined both from the need of the day and from what record is directly given. The great need of the day was resistance to Canaanite influence which urged allegiance to Baal in place of Yahweh. And there were many attractions for doing so, as has been observed. Many people wanted to, and, indeed, too many did. Thus it follows that this would have comprised a main area of attention in the prophet's thinking. The people should not turn from their own Yahweh and His law. They should not follow the Canaanite Baal.

Two of the prophets mentioned supply testimony: namely

¹The offices of prophet and seer have been shown in chapter IV to have been basically the same, only with names of different connotation.

Samuel and the anonymous figure of Gideon's time. And the message from each shows the same stress. For instance, Samuel urged the people, "If ye do return unto Yahweh with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Yahweh, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines" (I Sam. 7:3). And the prophet of Gideon's day first reminded the people of Yahweh's past deliverances, then of Yahweh's command that they "not fear the gods of the Amorites," and then reprimanded them for not obeying. The "gods" to which he referred were the same Baal and Ashtaroth mentioned by Samuel. Thus, the message of the early prophets is made clear: do not follow the foreign Baal; follow Yahweh.

2. Monarchy prophets

a. Identification

A much larger number of prophets are identified for the monarchy period. They are: in the time of David, Nathan (II Sam. 7:2; 12:25) and Gad (II Sam. 24:11), with Zadok, the priest, being called a "seer" upon one occasion (II Sam. 15:27) and the Levite, Heman, being also referred to by the same designation (I Chr. 25:5);¹ in the time of Jeroboam, Ahijah (I Kgs. 11:29; 14:2-18), a "man of God" who spoke against Jeroboam's altar (I Kgs. 13:1-10), and an "old prophet in Beth-

¹Samuel was also both a Levite (I Chr. 6:27,28,33,34) and a prophet. There was nothing to prohibit one from the priestly family from also serving in the prophetic office.

el" who tricked him (I Kgs. 13:11-32); in Rehoboam's reign, Shemaiah (II Chr. 11:2-4; 12:5-15), and Iddo (II Chr. 9:29; 13:22);¹ in Asa's reign, Oded (II Chr. 15:1-8), and Hanani (II Chr. 16:7); in Baasha's reign, Jehu, son of Hanani (I Kgs. 16:1-12); in Jehoshaphat's reign, Jahaziel (II Chr. 20:14) and Eliezer (II Chr. 20:37); in Ahab's reign, Elijah (I Kgs. 17-19, etc.), Elisha (I Kgs. 19:19-21),² one simply called "the prophet" (I Kgs. 20:13-28), and Micaiah (I Kgs. 22:8-28); in the reign of Joash of Judah, Zechariah (II Chr. 24:20); and in the reign of Amaziah "a prophet" (II Chr. 25:15).³

Twenty different prophets are here designated and the time runs from the establishment of the kingdom until the reign of Jeroboam II, or approximately two and one-half centuries.⁴ In this span of time, were there more prophets than this? It is certain that there were. Indeed, it is directly stated that groups of prophets, probably in training, lived in Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal.⁵ And some of them are also

¹Iddo was also active already in Solomon's reign.

²Elisha's ministry continued into the reigns of Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash (II Kgs. 2-13).

³The next prophet to be mentioned in the Old Testament is Jonah in Jeroboam's reign (II Kgs. 14:25), one of the writing prophets, and so here this period stops.

⁴Latter half of the 11th century to the first half of the 8th.

⁵Mentioned especially in II Kgs. 2:1-7. Elijah may have renewed the training school idea of Samuel, and Elisha then continued it. It is said that some 50 watched as Eli-

seen in action in certain of the Elisha stories.¹ Then a few incidental clues also exist. For instance, if there happened to live an "old prophet" in Bethel at the time when the "man of God" denounced the altar there, it is likely that other cities would have housed the same.² Also in the reign of Joash, following the death of the high priest, Jehoiada, it is stated that "prophets" were sent to reprimand the faithless princes of the day (II Chr. 24:19). But there is only one prophet named for the time, Zechariah. And further, the same observation is again in order that one could not expect all representatives to have been recorded.

b. Message

More information is given for this period as to the content of the messages which these prophets brought. Not all they said is included, for many carried on long service records; but there is good representation. Four main subject areas are involved.

1) Social reform.--The writing prophets, who come later, have more to say as to social reform than the prophets of this period, but still some clear references are included here. Two

jah and Elisha made their way across the Jordan (II Kgs. 2:7), and the implication is made later that 100 lived at Gilgal (II Kgs. 4:43). They seem to have grown in number so that new quarters near the Jordan were needed (II Kgs. 6:1-2); cf. G. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, ed. G. E. Day (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), pp. 392-93.

¹For instance, II Kgs. 4:1; 4:38; 6:1; 9:1.

²II Kgs. 13:11-32. He is described as being old and so no longer active in prophetic service.

come in David's time and involve David himself. Nathan brings the first, rebuking the king for sinning with Bathsheba and then ordering the murder of Uriah her husband (II Sam. 12:1-14). Gad brings the second, reprimanding the king for taking a census, and then offering David three choices of punishment (II Sam. 24:10-14). A third is brought by Elijah to Ahab for an injustice with Naboth in seizing his vineyard (I Kgs. 21:17-26).¹ And a fourth is brought by Eliezer in reprimanding Jehoshaphat for joining himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, in a maritime venture (II Chr. 20:37).²

Three observations are in order. The first is that these social messages are never given only as such. Each is delivered because the person involved has sinned against Yahweh. And Yahweh each time sends corresponding punishment. The second is that each message concerns some specific occasion of wrongdoing, with the person involved being directly rebuked. This will be different with the writing prophets, who speak generally, to the people as a whole, talking about types of social wrongs rather than specific cases. The reason for this difference is that the latter preached more to the crowds, being more nationalistic in outlook, whereas the

¹Though Jezebel directed the actual injustice with Naboth, still Ahab was in charge of his kingdom and so responsible for the action.

²Jehoshaphat made such an alliance with Israelite kings three different times: first, with Ahab for the Ramoth-gilead battle (I Kgs. 22), this one with Ahaziah, and the third with the second son of Ahab, Jehoram, in his venture against the Moabites (II Kgs. 3).

earlier worked mainly with individuals and were concerned with personal deficiencies.

The third observation concerns chronological placement of these instances; namely, that they predominate with kings otherwise approved by Yahweh. Two occur with David and one with Jehoshaphat. The reason certainly is not that social wrongs existed more in their times, or that either David or Jehoshaphat personally fell short of standards with other rulers. In fact, quite the opposite was true. The most likely reason is that during the reigns of "wicked" kings other matters took precedence. That is, prophets considered it more serious that a ruler should prove unfaithful to Yahweh than that he should commit some social injustice.

2) Unfaithfulness to Yahweh.—There are four occasions in which general rebuke is administered for disobedience to the requirements of Yahweh. Shemaiah brought such to Rehoboam, warning that, because of his disobedience, Yahweh had "left" him in the hand of Shishak, king of Egypt, who was then invading the land. Rehoboam and his princes showed a repentant spirit for which, it is stated, Yahweh granted some reduction in the extent of destruction Shishak would bring (II Chr. 12:1-8). Oded brought reprimand to Asa and found a repentant heart also with him, as the King "put away the abominations out of all the land" and "renewed the altar of Yahweh" (II Chr. 15:1-8). Hanani was less successful at a later time, however, with the same king, for Asa then responded by

imprisoning the prophet. The rebuke had concerned Asa's trusting in his own abilities rather than in the delivering hand of Yahweh (II Chr. 16:7-10). And then Zechariah suffered even worse in the time of Joash, when he rebuked the priests for transgressing "the commandments of Yahweh," for they "conspired against him with stones at the commandment of the king" (II Chr. 24:17-21).

These four instances show that the prophets were concerned that the kings conduct their office in a manner pleasing to Yahweh. The kings involved, being all of Judah where the full torah continued in effect, should have known how to rule properly. These prophets believed that Yahweh's blessing depended upon this being done, and accordingly brought their reprimands. Two suffered greatly for their effort.

3) False worship at Dan and Bethel.—The third subject area relates to the religious centers of Dan and Bethel in Israel, where Jeroboam instituted the substitute worship of Yahweh. The first reprimand for this defection from the torah came from one simply called "a man of God" sent north from Judah.¹ Jeroboam was personally addressed as the prophet predicted that a future king, Josiah, would one day offer upon the Bethel altar the bones of "the priests" there officiating.² Jeroboam, stretching forth his hand in rebuke, found his hand

¹It is significant that a prophet had to be sent from Judah. True prophets were very few in Israel at this time.

²This was fulfilled by Josiah (II Kgs. 23:15-16) as he dug up the bones of these priests, buried near the altar, and burned them as predicted.

suddenly withered and had to ask the prophet to pray for its restoration (I Kgs. 13:4-6).

The second reprimand also concerned Jeroboam. This came from Ahijah, who had earlier foretold to Jeroboam that he would rule (I Kgs. 11:29-38). This time, however, he told him, through his wife, that Yahweh had now rejected his family from longer holding the throne. The reason was that Jeroboam had "done evil above all that were before" him, particularly in respect to the substitute worship (I Kgs. 14:6-16). This prediction was fulfilled when his son, Nadab, was killed in office. Then his assassin and successor, Baasha, in turn, received the third rebuke. Jehu brought it, forewarning a similar end for Baasha's dynasty since he was continuing to walk "in the way of Jeroboam" (I Kgs. 16:1-12). And the fourth rebuke is the well known word of Micaiah to Ahab. He did not speak directly of the substitute worship, but he implied it in his withstanding the 400 prophets associated with it (I Kgs. 22:8-28).

4) Worship of false gods.—The fourth area concerns, not only the forsaking of Yahweh, but the giving of positive allegiance to other gods. Both Judah and Israel were involved.

The first rebuke was given in reference to Solomon. Ahijah brought it at the time he foretold Jeroboam's coming rule over ten of the tribes. He cited as a reason the fact that Solomon had forsaken Yahweh and "worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom the god of the chil-

dren of Ammon" (I Kgs. 11:29-38). A second rebuke in Judah came a century and a half later when "a prophet" reprimanded Amaziah on a similar count. Amaziah had recently returned from a victory over the Edomites and brought back with him some of their "gods" and set them up as his own. The prophet asked the question, "Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people which have not delivered their own people out of thy hand?" (II Chr. 23:15).

In Israel the occasions of these reprimands concerned Baal worship, introduced by Jezebel. The instance with Elijah on Mt. Carmel is well known, as he solicited and received the committal of the people that Yahweh is God and not Baal. Elisha following did not have as much to say of Baal worship, but in at least two instances his implications regarding it are clear enough. One occurred in southern Moab as three kings resorted to his counsel in their dire need for water. Jehoram, son of Ahab, was one, and to him then Elisha significantly stated, "Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother." In other words, since Jehoram had been holding these Baal prophets in such high regard before, why did he not resort to them now? (II Kgs. 3:9-14).¹ The other occurred in the anointing of Jehu as successor to Jehoram. One of Jehu's actions in his blood purge of Ahab's house was the slaughter of the Baal prophets. Since Elisha

¹Jehoram may have had some of these prophets with him. If so, Elisha was referring to them. If not, he was chiding him for not having brought them for such an emergency. Did not Jehoram have such confidence in them after all?

had directed his anointing, instructing him to destroy "the house of Ahab," it is likely he included this destruction of the Baal prophets as well (II Kgs. 9:1-10; 10:19-28).

5) Summary.—A summary now of the message of these monarchy prophets reveals it to have been quite different from that of the pre-monarchy period. Then, the one main theme of resistance to Canaanite influence predominated. But here, this was no longer heard. The reason is that this problem no longer existed, with Canaanites having been well subdued. The message now concerned the four aspects noted. One involved social wrongs; the others pertained to religious matters. In Judah, there was the general area of failure to please Yahweh, and also that of giving allegiance to foreign deities. And in Israel, there was the matter of Jeroboam's institution at Dan and Bethel, in addition to the Baal inroad under Ahab. The messages were given almost exclusively to individuals for specific wrongs, rather than in general, public denouncements.

B. The Writing Prophets

The interest now turns to the writing prophets, commonly called the greatest of the prophets. Certainly they are the best known, and their preaching and writings stand in a class by themselves for the world of their day. They were great spirits, with great minds and hearts. The glory of their message was only rivalled by the courage with which they gave it.

Little need be said as to their identification, for they are simply those whose messages are recorded in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.¹ There were others who lived contemporaneously, some of whom are mentioned,² but the concern here is with those who wrote.

Whereas in both periods thus far considered the material for conclusions is meager, the opposite is true here. For complete books now contain the messages preached. Indeed, it is so much that anything like an adequate survey lies beyond the scope of this writing. What can be done is to give an analysis of main themes developed by four representatives; namely, the well known eighth century prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. They are among the more important of the group, and their themes are in large part only restated and amplified by the others. They stress three broad areas.

1. The area of rebuke for sin

The first area is identical in type to the whole message of the prior period; namely, rebuke for sin. And the kinds

¹It is unnecessary here to discuss the matter of how much of their prophecies these prophets themselves wrote. Baruch clearly wrote much of what Jeremiah preached (Jer. 36:4). Some scholars believe that the prophets wrote very little, but that their followers later recorded most of what came to comprise their books. The evidence cited is not great, however. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, "The Prophetic Literature," The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. H. Rowley (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), pp. 126-34 for an excellent survey of representative thinking.

²For instance, in Manasseh's reign it is said that "Yahweh spake by his servants the prophets" (II Kgs. 21:10), and only Nahum is otherwise known for the time. Jeremiah mentions Urijah for his time (Jer. 26:20-23). Huldah is listed as a prophetess in Josiah's reign (II Kgs. 22:14). And Isaiah refers to his wife similarly (8:3).

of sins dealt with are also basically the same. Two differences exist, however: first, they are dealt with more as sins of people generally speaking, rather than of specific individuals; and second, this being so they are described in greater variety.

a. Social sins

Social sins again come in for attention, but now in much greater degree than before. Here too they are wrong basically because of being sins against Yahweh.¹

1) Oppression of the poor.—The most common rebuke concerns the oppression of the poor.² Amos, for instance, warns that judgment will fall on those "that oppress the poor, that crush the needy" (2:7). Again, he warns those "that trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat," saying that consequently they will not dwell in the fine houses they have built nor drink wine from the vineyards they have been able to plant (5:11). Further, he describes such oppressors as those who "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, . . . that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the

¹N. Gottwald's comment, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 276, is of interest here: "While reformers talk of 'the rights of men,' the prophets speak of 'the Word of Yahweh.' . . . Everything in their outlook was grounded in Israel's relation to Yahweh, in the persistent preaching of religious meaning into every facet of life."

²Amos particularly stresses this matter, and so citations are limited to his book; but see also: Isa. 2:7; 3:15; 5:7,8,23; Mic. 2:2; 3:2,3; 6:12; Hos. 12:7,8.

chief oils" (6:4-6). Amos is not thus condemning riches as such, but rather the injustice which is commonly meted out by those of wealth, and also that they so often neglect the true meaning of Yahweh's torah. This last is made clear as he depicts the rich asking when the sabbath and new moon festival will be passed so that they can again "sell grain" and once more "set wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit" (8:4,5).

2) Pride.—The sin of pride is mentioned especially by Isaiah and Hosea. Writes the former, "The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down" (2:11; cf. 2:17); and again, speaking of people generally, that "their glory and their multitude and their pomp" shall be swallowed by Sheol when she opens her "mouth without measure" (5:14); and still again, that "the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty are humbled" (5:15). He further exclaims, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (5:21). And then he speaks more specifically of the pride of fancy apparel, saying that in a day to come "The Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets," etc. Hosea, writing to the northern nation collectively, says, "And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity" (5:5);

and again, "The pride of Israel doth testify to his face: yet they have not returned unto Yahweh their God" (7:10).

3) Intoxication.--Isaiah often mentions the sin of intoxication. For instance, he says, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them" (5:11). And again he sees Yahweh calling to a time of seriousness and instead finding "Joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die," with Yahweh seen consequently saying that this "iniquity shall not be forgiven (22:13,14).¹

4) Other sins.--Hosea gives a sort of miscellaneous listing of sins prevalent in his day, saying "There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery" (4:2). Again he writes, "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the understanding" (4:11). He may have cultic prostitution in mind when he states, "I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery: for the men themselves go apart with harlots, and they sacrifice with the prostitutes" (4:14). And Amos may be thinking similarly as he says, "A man and his father go unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name" (2:7).

b. Unfaithfulness to Yahweh

¹Cf. Isa. 28:1,3,7 further.

With the earlier monarchy prophets, division was made between the sin of forsaking Yahweh generally and that involved particularly with the substitute worship of Jeroboam. That division was called for in view of the newness of Jeroboam's innovation, which made it a special kind of unfaithfulness for rebuke. By the time of the writing prophets, however, that newness seems to have worn off in part;¹ for Hosea, who ministered in the northern kingdom, speaks usually of unfaithfulness only in general.² For instance, he writes, "There is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land" (4:1); and again, "They have left off taking heed to Yahweh" (4:10). In other places he says, "They have dealt treacherously against Yahweh" (5:7); "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant" (6:7); "They have spoken lies against" Yahweh (7:13); and they have "counted as a strange thing" the "ten thousand things" of Yahweh's law (8:12).

Isaiah also, writing to Judah, has similar general references. He says, for instance, that the people honored Yahweh "with their lips" but "their heart was far from" Him (29:

¹More than one and one-half centuries had elapsed; from about 931 B.C. to approximately 750 B.C.

²Hosea speaks more in this way than does Amos. Amos does have that worship in mind when he writes, "The high places of Isaac shall be desolate and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword," which thing is clear from Amaziah's reply, "Go, flee thou away into the land of Judah. . . But prophesy not again any more at Bethel" (7:9-13). In one place, Hosea too speaks of it particularly: "He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria; . . . the workman made it, and it is no God: yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces" (8:5-6).

13); and again he calls them "a rebellious people, lying children, that will not hear the law of Yahweh," and accordingly bids the prophets not to preach to them (30:9-11). He also rebukes them for seeking Yahweh in the wrong way, calling them "soothsayers like the Philistines" (2:6).

Then in this same category must be placed the general denouncements of sacrifice voiced so strongly by these prophets. As observed in prior connections,¹ these did not constitute rejections of sacrifice as such, but criticisms of the manner in which they were performed: as empty, formal ceremonies rather than exhibitions of faith. Micah, for instance, asks, "Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . What doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (6:6-8). Words from Isaiah (1:11-15), Amos (5:21-23), and Hosea (6:6) are similar.

c. False gods

Rebuke for worship of false gods also carries on from the earlier prophets. It is more strongly emphasized by Hosea in the northern kingdom, but it is also sounded by Isaiah and Micah in Judah. Hosea uses the illustration of harlotry. He writes, for instance, "The spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have played the harlot, departing from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and pop-

¹Supra, pp. 208, 214.

ulars and terebinths" (4:12). And again he says, "The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images" (11:2). He could give particular force to this language for his own wife, Gomer, had similarly been unfaithful to him. Thus, his presentation was: as Gomer had left him for other lovers (2:5), so Israel had gone from Yahweh after other gods.

Speaking of Judah, Micah writes, "All her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her hires shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate" (1:7). Later he is a bit more specific as he says, "And I will pluck up thine Asherim out of the midst of thee" (5:14). Isaiah states, "They shall be utterly put to shame, that trust in gaven images, that say unto molten images, Ye are our gods" (42:17).

2. The area of punishment

A second general area treated by these prophets concerns impending punishment. The people had sinned and therefore God would punish them. The earlier prophets had spoken of punishment also, but not nearly so much nor on the same collective, national level. Then it was punishment of a person or family for individual infraction of Yahweh's law. Now it was punishment for the entire nation.

Notes of such warning come often in general terms. Hosea, for example, says, "For they sow the wind, and they

shall reap the whirlwind" (8:7). Amos uses strong imagery as he writes, "But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem" (2:5). Micah warns that Yahweh "will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings" (3:4). And Isaiah states, "For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord, Yahweh of hosts make in the midst of all the earth" (10:23).

Both Isaiah and Amos speak of the judgment time as the "day of Yahweh." Amos declares, "Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! Wherefore would ye have the day of Yahweh? It is darkness, and not light" (5:18). Isaiah, early in his book, uses the term as he speaks of punishment on the proud: "For there shall be a day of Yahweh of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up" (2:12). Later he states more generally, "Wail ye; for the day of Yahweh is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (13:6).

Several indications as to the nature of this punishment are given. Amos speaks a word regarding the Bethel altar in particular: "For in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Bethel" (3:14). Hosea says it will include famine: "And they shall eat, and not have enough" (4:10); and again, "Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of rebuke" (5:9). This concept of desolation is further developed by Isaiah: "Behold, Yahweh maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhab-

itants thereof" (24:1).¹

This punishment will even issue in captivity for the people. Both Amos and Hosea make this clear regarding Israel. Amos writes, "For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith Yahweh, the God of hosts: and they shall afflict you from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah" (6:11-14). And Hosea says, "But I will drive them out of my house; . . . My God will cast them away, . . . and they shall be wanderers among the nations" (9:15-17). Hosea also implies that Assyria will be the country to affect this captivity, warning that Israel would "eat unclean food in Assyria" (9:3), and that the "calves of Beth-aven"² would be carried "unto Assyria" (10:6).

Both Micah and Isaiah state that Judah will also suffer captivity, and both indicate Babylonia as the country to bring it. Writes Micah, "Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and shalt dwell in the field, and shalt come even unto Babylon" (4:10). And Isaiah states, "Behold the days are coming, when all that is in thy house, . . . shall be carried to Babylon" (39:6; cf. 13:5).³

¹To stress that all will be affected, he continues by even listing the various groups to be afflicted; naming people and priests, servants and masters, the maid and her mistress, the buyer and seller, the creditor and debtor, the taker of interest and the giver of interest.

²Meaning the calves of Dan and Bethel.

³Jeremiah, writing later, gives yet greater detail, even naming the number of years the captivity will last (25:11; cf. 29:10).

3. The area of deliverance and hope

The last area is that of future deliverance and hope. This aspect did not come at all within the view of the earlier prophets. But the writing prophets bring it as a joyful note of bright prospect.

Amos sounds it as he predicts release from the captivity, saying, "And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof" (9:14). And Micah announces the same, as, speaking of Babylon, he says, "There will Yahweh redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies" (4:10).

Hosea speaks of a time when the land will be rid of Baal worship: "For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be mentioned by their name" (2:17); and also of a day when "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols" (14:8).¹ Isaiah tells of a time of spiritual enlightenment: "They all that err in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmur shall receive instruction" (29:24).

The same two prophets speak of blessing in general to come upon the people. Hosea writes, "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (14:5). Again, he depicts Israel as saying, "Come, let us return unto Yahweh: for he hath torn

¹This last is a reference to the Dan and Bethel calves.

and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up" (6:1). And Isaiah promises, "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint for our walls and bulwarks" (26:1).

Micah becomes enthusiastic in viewing other nations as then desirous of coming to this blessed land: "But in the latter days it shall come to pass that the mountain of Yahweh's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, . . . and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh" (4:1-2). He sees it also as a time of world peace, as people are described as beating "their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (4:3).

And Isaiah predicts that, in contrast, Babylon, who had taken Judah captive, will herself then experience punishment: "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, . . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited" (13:17-20). Later he says that because this oppressor has ceased, "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet" (14:7).

4. Summary

In summary, then, these prophets taught particularly in three subject areas: rebuke for sin, warning of punish-

ment due to it, and promise of deliverance and hope. In their role as reformers, they placed greatest stress on the first. Three types of sin received the most attention: social sins, unfaithfulness to Yahweh, and worship of false gods. Regarding social sins, they spoke mainly of oppression of the poor, pride, intoxication, and a miscellaneous group. Their message of warning was also in keeping with the reformation interest. If the people did not heed the call from sin, they would be punished; even by captivity to a foreign land. This was a new note in the prophetic history. Also new was the promise of better things to come. This did not fit logically in the reformation theme; but went beyond the punishment announcement to give hope for a brighter future following the punishment.

Chapter VII

SUMMATION

The main conclusions of this dissertation follow.

A. Priests and Prophets Were Teachers

Both priests and prophets were teachers in Israel, with priests as well as prophets spending a major portion of their time in this work.

B. Priests Were the Normal Teachers

1. The priests inherited their position, being called Levites if they descended from Levi, and priests if in addition Aaron, in the Levitic line, was their ancestor. The difference in teaching function, whether a Levite or a priest, was negligible.
2. The priest's office was legally prescribed in the torah, both as to character and function.
3. The priests lived in the evenly dispersed Levitical cities which gave them close access to the people for their teaching.
4. The subject matter taught was primarily the torah, which was believed to have been given by Yahweh through Moses, and which the Old Testament presents as having existed for this

teaching from Israel's early tribal days.

5. Besides this teaching, the priests had an important, periodic responsibility to serve at the central sanctuary.

This, however, took something less than one month per year which left ample time for this instruction.

6. The remarkable fact that Israel, in her early history, was not engulfed by the advanced Canaanite culture is best explained in terms of this continuous teaching by the priests.

7. Israel's history shows that the priests functioned in this activity with varying degrees of dedication and success. (a) During tribal days, their success was commendable as shown especially by the basic resistance to Canaanite influence. Against their record, however, are the facts that this foreign influence did make some inroads, and also that the people too often demonstrated an unfaithful spirit toward Yahweh's requirements, especially during the decadent regime of Eli. (b) Under the inspiration of Samuel, efficiency was restored in large part; and during the united monarchy period it reached its zenith. (c) With the kingdom division, decline came. In the northern nation, the traditional priests left for Judah in large numbers, and those who stayed were not used at the substitute centers of worship. They doubtless expressed antagonism at Jeroboam's innovation, and accordingly were severely repressed in their teaching. In Judah, priestly efficiency varied with the manner of the

king then ruling, whether himself a loyal follower of Yahweh or not.

C. Prophets Were Special Teachers

The prophets were special teachers who functioned mainly as reformers, and were needed because either the priests did not do their work satisfactorily, or the people, in spite of their efforts, still did not obey the instruction.

1. The prophets did not inherit their office, but were especially called by Yahweh in view of need and personal qualifications.
2. The prophets were not legally prescribed in the torah, as were the priests, though they were recognized there, which fact is in keeping with their "extra" type of function.
3. The prophets did not teach the torah as such, in a "line upon line" fashion, but did teach in keeping with it as they urged people to conform their lives to it.
4. The prophets did not have designated cities in which to live and teach, but were free to move about according to need.
5. The prophets were usually persons of outstanding courage and faith, who could be entrusted with missions both difficult and dangerous.
6. Prophetic teaching was often in the manner of preaching, in which exhortation was the stress rather than factual infor-

mation. Their audiences were sometimes large, but often small; and even many times one person only.

7. Many of the prophets considered this activity their life occupation. Some, such as Amos, were called from other labor for a short time. In either case, as prophets they had no other task than proclaiming Yahweh's message, as did the priests with their additional sanctuary responsibilities.

8. Israel's history shows some change in method and message on the part of the prophets. (a) Though few prophets are named for the early tribal period, still many did live then and found their main task, much as the priests, in resisting Canaanite influence. (b) With Samuel's "schools," the number increased. During the monarchy, and preceding the writing prophets, Canaanite resistance no longer required attention, but rather certain social ills, unfaithfulness to Yahweh, and worship of false gods. The main work consisted in personal reprimands. In Israel, following the kingdom division, where certain defections from the torah were made a part of law, true prophets, who might bring rebuke for the same, were few in number. (c) With the writing prophets, a broader, national approach was taken. The same basic sins were rebuked, and in addition a warning given as to impending punishment, as well as a promise of deliverance following.

D. Divine Disclosure Means

Both priests and prophets had a special means of Divine

disclosure related to their teaching functions.

1. Priests had Urim and Thummim

a. The Urim and Thummim consisted of two stones, likely precious, carried in the pouch at the front of the high priest's ephod.

b. The high priest alone could make the consultation.

c. He did this by taking a stone in each hand from the pouch, holding both before Yahweh, speaking the question to be answered, and watching them for a glow of light which would indicate an affirmation.

d. Thus the possible message was limited to an indicated or withheld affirmation.

e. Consultation had to be made in a situation where attention would be called to Yahweh as the one supplying the answer: either by proximity of the Ark, so long as that was possible, and at least in connection with the ephod.

f. This function was related to the priest's teaching in that they presented questions from the people for answer and relayed the decisions back to them again. It was related too in that, as they did this, a continual reminder was supplied the people of their authority as Yahweh's teachers.

2. Prophets had "direct contact"

- a. The prophets did not employ physical instruments, such as the Urim and Thummim stones, nor inebriating devices such as gases or narcotics to lose self-consciousness.
- b. The disclosure came through Spirit possession by which a meeting of the Divine and human was effected within the personality of the prophet, so that, without sensing any negation of his own rational powers, he came to know more than he had before, and was given the conviction that he had received Yahweh's message. Ecstasy thus was involved only in that more than natural power was concerned, but not in any form of frenzy or loss of consciousness.
- c. This means made a descriptive type of message possible.
- d. This means did not vary in any significant way during all of prophetic history, being employed with Moses, Samuel, Nathan as well as Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah.
- e. This means was related more fully with the prophet's teaching, than the Urim and Thummim with the priest's, in that by it the prophet often received both the message and method for his assignments.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. The text suggests that organizations should implement robust systems to track and document every aspect of their operations, from procurement to sales.

2. The second part of the document addresses the challenges of data management in a rapidly changing environment. It highlights the need for flexible and scalable solutions that can adapt to new technologies and evolving business requirements. The author argues that investing in modern data infrastructure is crucial for staying competitive and making informed decisions based on real-time information.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of leadership in driving organizational success. It stresses that effective leaders must possess strong communication skills, strategic vision, and the ability to inspire and motivate their teams. The text provides practical advice on how leaders can foster a culture of innovation and collaboration, encouraging employees to take ownership of their work and contribute to the organization's growth.

4. The fourth part of the document explores the impact of external factors on business performance. It discusses how economic conditions, market trends, and regulatory changes can influence an organization's operations and financial outcomes. The author suggests that businesses should conduct regular risk assessments and develop contingency plans to mitigate potential threats and seize opportunities in a dynamic market.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and improvement. It encourages organizations to embrace a growth mindset, where they constantly seek new knowledge, skills, and technologies to enhance their performance. The text concludes that by committing to ongoing development, businesses can achieve long-term success and resilience in a competitive landscape.

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