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THE ATTITUDES OF AMOS, HOSEA, JEREMIAH AND DEUTERO-ISAIAH CONCERNING THE MAN/GOD RELATIONSHIP: A STUDY IN HEBRAIC MONOTHEISM

By

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ABSTRACT

THE ATTITUDES OF AMOS, HOSEA, JEREMIAH
AND DEUTERO-ISAIAH CONCERNING THE
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This study seeks to examine the nature of the Man/God relationship, specifically as it is treated by the literary prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah in their effort to forge a monotheistic faith. It is initially determined that the concept of monotheism, specifically as it is utilized by contemporary scholars, is not sufficiently full and complete, to be suitably employed in analytical investigations.

It is suggested that the meaning of this concept necessarily be expanded to incorporate treatment of the essential nature of the deity being investigated. The analysis of the prophetic perception of the Man/God relationship is predicated on the position, espoused by Ludwig Feuerbach, that the essential nature of God is isomorphically related to that of man.

The discovery of the essential nature of man is grounded in Aristotle's view that man, as man, has a proper and peculiar function. It is maintained that an analysis of the proper function of the ancient Hebrew, as perceived by Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, may be instrumental in disclosing their views as to what constitutes the essential nature of Yahweh. It is hypothesized that

if the prophetic position dealing with the nature of the Man/God relationship held that the ancient Hebrew shared the same essential nature with Yahweh and that this essential nature was determined to be simple and a unity, then the prophets' systems of belief could truly be designated as monotheistic.

Through an extensive analysis of the combined writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, it is determined that only the writings of Jeremiah warrant that designation. The point is made that, while not constituting monotheistic systems of belief, the writings of Amos, Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah display the efforts of each of these prophets to grapple with clarifying the nature of the Man/God relationship.

Chapter 1 seeks to establish the fact that the views of Old Testament scholars concerning the provenance and nature of Hebraic monotheism are divisive. The divergence of the opinions of Old Testament scholars concerning the origins of Hebraic monotheism is shown to range from claims that it was present in the beliefs of the Patriarchs to claims that an expression of true monotheism is to be found only in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah and perhaps those of Jeremiah. The lack of a consensus of opinion among Old Testament scholars as to when and with whom Hebraic monotheism may be said to have originated is attributed to the use, by these scholars, of the term "monotheism" along with its accepted definition. More precisely it is maintained that the accepted definition of monotheism lacks virtually any analytical value or discriminative function whatsoever, consequently it is contended that the use of the term

"monotheism" with its accepted definition by Old Testament scholars contributes more to the proliferation of problems in the field of Old Testament studies than to their solution.

Chapter 1 also analyzes the various types of monotheisms which have been promulgated by a number of contemporary scholars, especially in their attempts to characterize the writings of the literary prophets. The criteria adopted by contemporary scholars in order to determine the type of monotheism present in a given system of beliefs have been isolated and examined in an effort to determine their relative value. It has been shown that there does not exist a consensus of opinion, by these scholars, as to what criteria are deemed absolutely necessary for such a determination to be made unequivocally.

Chapter 2 seeks to develop theoretical support for the view that an expanded definition of the concept monotheism is absolutely necessary if that concept is to display any analytical utility. Three systems of belief concerning the nature of the Man/God relationship are examined in order to obtain a paradigm case which utilizes this expanded conception. A reconstruction of Aristotle's theology is adopted, as is his view that man, as man, has a proper and peculiar function. It is shown that his system of thought fulfills the criteria of the expanded concept and that the treatment of his system displays the utility of that expanded concept.

Chapter 3 contains the introduction to the analysis proper of the combined writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. Two hypotheses are submitted, the verification of which is held

necessary for the determination to be made concerning the monotheistic nature of their individual works. These hypotheses are: (1) the prophets hold that man, as man, has a proper function; and (2) the essential nature of Yahweh is held by the prophets to be simple, and a unity, and isomorphically related to that of man. Also, a Determinant Theory of Knowledge is developed, based on the ethical systems of both Plato and Aristotle, which is held to represent an epistemological theory present in the writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah.

Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the combined writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah. Thirty-one passages, taken from their combined works, are analyzed in an effort to substantiate the hypotheses put forth in Chapter 3. Also, it is shown that each of these passages is authentic, thus expressing the views of the prophets.

Chapter 5 summarizes the study as a whole and specifically the findings of Chapter 4. It is determined that only the position of Jeremiah is to be designated as a monotheism, for it alone, unequivocally, fulfills the criteria of the expanded formulation of that concept.

To

My Parents

Patricia Helen Verhage

and

William Ronald O'Neill

PREFACE

The value inherent in the creation of a scholarly work is perhaps best understood at least initially in terms of the immediate benefits which accrue to the individual researcher from the activities of critical study and analysis. Viewed objectively, however, the value of any scholarly work may be determined only through a critical assessment of precisely what contribution it makes to the solution of the problem it purports to address.

The particular problem which is treated in this dissertation deals with discovering the attitudes espoused by the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah in their attempts to illuminate the nature of the Man/God relationship. The vehicle through which the analysis of the respective attitudes of these prophets is attempted is the concept monotheism. In this dissertation, the concept monotheism is determined to be instrumental not only in describing man's perception of his God, but further, monotheism is held to be descriptive of man's perception of himself and not simply of himself as an instantiation of man generally conceived but as indicative of that which constitutes the very best in man, that which he perceives to determine his very humanity. Historically, the concept of monotheism has not been called on to perform this dual function.

Only a casual acquaintance with the writings of Old Testament scholars is necessary to insure the reader that the term "monotheism"

as it has been traditionally employed by Old Testament scholars has displayed a definite utility in assisting these scholars in advancing our level of understanding concerning the growth and development of the Hebraic religion from the time of Abraham down to and including the period of the exile. The fact that Old Testament scholars have heatedly debated the question of how the term "monotheism" is to be unequivocally employed is indicative of the awareness on the part of these scholars of the dynamic and ever evolving nature of our understanding of the ancient past rather than of any inability on the part of these scholars to clearly conceptualize the problem.

It is perceived to be the strength of this dissertation that it is imbued with a spirit which arises directly from its interdisciplinary approach. The eclectic manner in which the fields of Philosophy, History and Religion have been called upon to perform a certain task may be viewed by some as artificial and contrived. It is nonetheless the lot of interdisciplinary studies that there does not exist at present a well grounded tradition which may be used to guide the researcher.

There is present in every scholarly work the desire to discover the definitive solution to problems which have thus far eluded our colleagues. That that which is truly achieved falls well short of that goal should hardly give rise to despair. If this dissertation proves to offer but one small advance to that collective body of knowledge which presently constitutes the proper subject matter of the disciplines of Philosophy, History and Religion, its worth is assured.

There is present in this dissertation no radical or categorical rejection of the conclusions and views which have found acceptance in the fields of Philosophy, History and Religion. Rather there is present in this dissertation a blending of various ideas selected from those disciplines which has given rise, at the very least, to a new vantage point from which to consider and appreciate the manner in which ancient man came to terms with his God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness and express my gratitude to the members of my committee, Dr. Eleanor Huzar, Dr. Alford Welch, Dr. Harold Walsh and Dr. Robert Anderson, who, individually, extended their help and advice in the preparation of this dissertation. I would like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Walsh, whose enthusiasm proved to be quite infectious. I wish, also, to extend a special thanks to Dr. Anderson, without whose patience, understanding, and encouragement this dissertation may well have not come into being. Further I wish to acknowledge that it is to Dr. Anderson, primarily, that I owe my scholarly debt, for it was under his guidance that I have acquired any insights which may be present in this work. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to a personal friend and colleague, Mr. John A. Odell, whose continued encouragement often proved to be the best remedy for discouragement.

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Chapter 1

THE PROVENANCE AND NATURE OF HEBRAIC MONOTHEISM

The dual problem inherent in the study of Hebraic monotheism, viz., the accurate locating of its provenance accompanied by an intelligible discussion of its internal composition, has plagued Old Testament scholars for over a century.[1] While the problem dealing with the identification of the source of Hebraic monotheism has been vigorously attacked by Old Testament scholars, the problem of the nature of Hebraic monotheism has received far less attention.[2]

The solution to the problem of ascertaining the nature of Hebraic monotheism, as well as that of monotheism generally, would

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[1]Although the traditional view concerning the prophetic provenance of Hebraic monotheism had been propounded by Julius Wellbausen as early as 1878 in his Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel (New York: Meridian Books Library Edition, 1958), pp. 111-125, and apparently this view had gained acceptance by his contemporaries, see especially the views of A. Kuenen and C. G. Montefiore in the latter's Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews (London: William and Norgate, 1893), pp. 134-136, H. H. Rowley has stated in "Mose und der Monotheismus," Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, BAND 69, 1957, p. 1, "Eine der aktullen Fragen der alttestamentlichen Forschung betrifft das Alter des israelitischen Monotheismus."

[2]Raffaele Pettazzoni, in his Essays on the History of Religions (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 1-10, has leveled a quite similar criticism directed at scholars working on the problem of "primitive monotheism," however, and but with only a slight shift in meaning it may apply to Old Testament scholars grappling with the problem of identifying the origin of Hebraic monotheism, "The different theories (those concerning primitive monotheism) were not so much the resultant of research having for its object monotheism itself, as the indirect outcome of acceptance or rejection of evolutionism," p. 4.

appear to reside in the development of a clear and precise definition on the term "monotheism." However, it has been in the construction of such a definition that Old Testament scholars may be said to have failed.

The current, accepted definition of the term "monotheism," to wit, "The doctrine that there is only one God,"[3] which has been utilized by Old Testament scholars to ascertain the antiquity of Hebraic monotheism, has proved to be sufficiently vague as to have called for the use and invention, by Old Testament scholars, of a number of related terms, e.g., "henotheism" and "monolatry," which have themselves been employed by Old Testament scholars in an inconsistent manner.[4] Beyond having shown itself ineffectual in helping Old Testament scholars to solve the problem of unequivocally locating the origin of Hebraic monotheism, the accepted definition of that term, due to its absolute simplicity, is hardly suited to the task of helping to expose the internal structure of the Hebraic religion.

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[3]Oxford Universal English Dictionary on Historical Principles (New York: Doubleday, Doron and Company, 1937), p. 1276.

[4]See, Norman K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 547, where he defines "monolatry" as being "equivalent to henotheism"; Keith H. Beebe, The Old Testament (Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1970), p. 160, where he asserts, "We can conclude that Moses stood somewhere between totemism and monotheism. A term to describe this position is henotheism"; Robert J. Christen, Harold E. Hazelton, Monotheism and Moses (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company, 1969), p. xiv, have lamented the confusion connected with the proper use of the term "henotheism"--"This term is often used by many scholars, including Rowley, as synonymous with monolatry . . ."; Theophile James Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 206, "The two terms, 'monolatry' and 'henotheism,' are much confused by writers on religion and the present writer has been no exception. Max Muller was the inventor of the latter term and protested vigorously against its use in the sense of monolatry."

While it is not the intent of the author to offer here a new definition of the term "monotheism,"[5] it is my conviction that a number of the problems which have arisen in the study of Hebraic monotheism ultimately reduce to the problem of definition. Where Old Testament scholars have attempted to shroud the accepted definition of that term with a philosophical cloak,[6] the results have been particularly unsatisfactory. For any such an endeavor must be viewed as an attempt to salvage the accepted definition of that term by supplying it with a philosophical substructure and rationale which are not an explicit aspect of the definition itself. It is suggested here that any new definition of the term monotheism must contain an explicit reference to the nature of the Man/God relationship as it relates to the essential nature of the deity in question. However, the development of such a new definition must arise in response to an established need.

It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to establish the two following positions: (1) that the views of Old Testament scholars concerning the provenance of Hebraic monotheism are divisive; and (2) that where there does exist, more or less, a consensus of opinion among Old Testament scholars concerning the mere presence of monotheistic tendencies in the writings of the literary prophets, the nature of these phenomena have been so ill conceived by these Old Testament

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[5]The present author's definition of the term "monotheism" may be found in Chapter 2.

[6]H. H. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), p. 41, Rowley maintains that the accepted definition of monotheism is always understood "in an ontological sense," for "surely this is just what monotheism means"; Theophile James Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," Journal of Biblical Literature, 61 (1942), 22.

scholars as to have given rise to the doubtful practice of generating a veritable plethora of special types of monotheisms, to account for them. If these two positions are successfully established, the need for a new definition of the term "monotheism" should become self evident.

THE PROVENANCE OF HEBRAIC MONOTHEISM

That the term "monotheism" has been utilized by various Old Testament scholars to describe the nature of certain beliefs found in the Hebraic religion dating from the time of the Patriarchs down to and including those of the post exilic prophet Deutero-Isaiah should hardly be viewed as surprising, given the ambiguity inherent in the term. Though the immediate goal of this section is simply to establish the position that the views of Old Testament scholars concerning the question when Hebraic monotheism came into being radically differ, one from another, an unavoidable consequence of an examination of their views is to raise serious doubts as to whether or not there is any shared consensus of opinion among Old Testament scholars concerning the question of how and when the term "monotheism" is to be unequivocally employed.

Patriarchial Monotheism

One of the oldest positions which deals with the provenance of monotheism generally conceived is, as Pettazzoni points out, the ". . . doctrine of the Church, according to which belief in one God

was revealed by God Himself to the first man."[7] Keeping in accord with the "doctrine of the Church" a number of scholars, the most notable being Wilhelm Schmidt,[8] have attempted to scientifically establish the thesis that monotheism was the religion of primitive man. While still another group of scholars have attempted to locate the provenance of monotheism in the cultures of the ancient Near East.[9]

Writing in 1904, Alfred Jeremias was one of the earliest scholars to describe the religion of the Patriarchs as a monotheism.[10] Jeremias developed the position that while the antecedents of Hebraic monotheism were to be found in the civilizations of the ancient Near East, Abraham, acting as the author of a "monotheistic reform"[11] brought Hebraic monotheism into the land of Canaan.

Theophilus G. Pinches, in his work, The Old Testament: In Light of the Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia, held the monotheistic nature of the religion of Abraham to be self evident. Pinches, therefore, simply states that Abraham's religion was a

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[7]Pettazzoni, op. cit., p. 1.

[8]Wilhelm Schmidt, Origin and Growth of Religion (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1972).

[9]For a concise statement of this position see, S. H. Langdon in Problems in Ancient History, Vol. I, ed. by Donald Kagan (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 69-71; a critical review of this general position may be found in Meek, Hebrew Origins, op. cit., pp. 184-221.

[10]Alfred Jeremias, Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), p. 182.

[11]Adolphe Lods, Israel from its Beginning to the Middle of the Eighth Century (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948), p. 257.

monotheism and even goes so far as to claim that the religious beliefs of Terah, Abraham's father, may also have been monotheistic.[12]

Theophile James Meek has claimed, "No modern scholar of any standing today believes that the Hebrews of the Patriarchial Period were anything but polytheistic . . . ."[13] It would appear to be the case, however, that Meek's claim is at odds with the views of at least two "modern scholars."

Harry M. Orlinsky has asserted:

> It would be going too far to attribute to the patriarchial Hebrews a belief in the existence of one and only one God. In a sense they may be said to have practiced--but without defining--monotheism.[14]

The distinction Orlinsky draws between the practicing of a monotheistic religion by the patriarchial Hebrews and their failure to define their practicing of such a religion must be viewed primarily as a hedge employed by Orlinsky to escape the consequences of simply stating a position which he apparently feels unable to defend. The intent of his statement, however, viz., to attribute a practical or "practiced monotheism" to the patriarchial Hebrews, nonetheless, remains clear. Orlinsky's evasiveness concerning a straight forward assessment of the nature of the religious beliefs of the patriarchial Hebrews constitutes a prime example of the tensions inherent in the problem of locating the provenance of Hebraic monotheism. A further example of this

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[12]Theophilus G. Pinches, The Old Testament: In the Light of the Historical Records and the Legends of Assyria and Babylonia (New York: E. and J. B. Young and Co., 1902), p. 198.

[13]Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," op. cit., p. 21.

[14]Harry M. Orlinsky, Ancient Israel, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 28.

tension is expressed in the views of the second "modern scholar" who has grappled with the problem of assessing the nature of the religious beliefs of the patriarchial Hebrews.

Joseph Jensen has observed:

> Whether we call the faith of the Patriarchs monotheistic or not will depend largely on how we define that term. A covenant would seem to involve exclusive adherence to one God from whom all good things are hoped. The power of the God of the fathers extends to all places, all ages, and all men: Abraham hears His call in Haran and experiences His help in Egypt: He disposes of the land at His will and works out His plan in history. We find here no repudiation of the existence of other gods, but that is hardly to be expected at this point. On the other hand, there is no later moment at which Israel's developing faith switched from many gods to one God; that point has already been passed. It is reasonable to postulate revelation as the beginning of Israel's unique faith. Israel's tradition names the Patriarchs as the first recipients, and critical investigation finds no grounds for rejecting that tradition.[15]

Jensen's attempt to qualify his view of the Patriarchs as the founders of Hebraic monotheism by questioning the very meaning of the term "monotheism" reflects a concern quite prevalent in the field of Old Testament studies, viz., how the term is to be unequivocally employed. His apparent hesitancy in claiming that the religious beliefs of the Patriarchs were absolutely monotheistic is predicated upon the fact that there is to be found no explicit denial, issuing from the Patriarchs, of the existence of other gods. Though the value and absolute necessity of the presence of a statement which explicitly denies the existence of other gods in any system of religious beliefs purporting to be monotheistic is treated fully in a later section of this chapter, it may be instructive to note here that Jensen treats

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[15]Joseph Jensen, God's Word to Israel (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), p. 107.

the problem in a rather light manner, to wit, " . . . but that is hardly to be expected at this point."

Jensen's initial observation that the religion of the Patriarchs may or may not be labeled a monotheism depending on " . . . how we define that term," serves well to illustrate the point that as recently as 1968 the problem of having secured a viable and agreed upon definition for that term, by Old Testament scholars, was far from solved. The problem of locating the provenance of Hebraic monotheism does not end with an examination of scholarly opinion concerning the religion of the Patriarchs. Indeed, the controversy may reach its highest pitch when the origin of Hebraic monotheism is claimed to be found in the faith of Moses.

Mosaic Monotheism

The question concerning the nature of the faith of Moses has not been generally construed as one of polytheism versus monotheism, for to the best of my knowledge no Old Testament scholar either early or recent has maintained that Moses was a polytheist, but rather one of henotheism or monolatry versus monotheism. That is to say that those Old Testament scholars who have denied that Moses was the founder of Hebraic monotheism have labeled his faith either a henotheism or a monolatry in an attempt to establish the position that the faith of Moses is best characterized as an intermediate step between the polytheism of the Patriarchs and the monotheism of the literary prophets, especially as expressed in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah.[16]

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[16]The validity of employing either one of the terms "henotheism" or "monolatry" to describe a transitional or intermediate

The most noteworthy proponent of the position which holds that Moses was a monotheist, is William Foxwell Albright. In that his views concerning the nature of the faith of Moses are treated fully in the following chapter, his position concerning the nature of monotheism alone will be dealt with here.

One of the most instructive aspects of Albright's thought dealing with the nature of monotheism is his questioning of the viability of the accepted definition of the term itself.[17] Consequently, it is hardly surprising that the major detractors of his position have attacked this facet of his thesis with the greatest zeal.[18] In an effort to expand and clarify his own definition of "monotheism" found in his work, From the Stone Age to Christianity, Albright subsequently offered the following definition to Theophile Meek, one of his most ardent antagonists:

> Monotheism is the belief in one God. This does not imply anything about the essential nature of God, other than the universally held belief in the unique power and goodness of God. God may be represented or conceived to exist in any suitable form--anthropomorphic or celestial. God may be a simple or a complex essence; there is nothing in the definition, either historically or philosophically, to preclude trinitarian monotheism. Nor does monotheism exclude the coexistence of other spiritual or superhuman powers in the world, as long as these entities are in no way comparable with God in his essential qualities, such as power and goodness.[19]

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stage in the development of a religion from a polytheistic beginning to an eventual monotheism is at best questionable, for it presupposes a developmental process which is not readily demonstrable, at least as far as the religion of Israel is concerned. For a statement of this problem see Rowley, op. cit., p. 43.

[17]William Foxwell Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 271-272.

[18]Rowley, op. cit., p. 41; Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," op. cit., p. 23.

[19]Meek, ibid.

Though there are a number of claims present in this definition which the present author would wish to debate,[20] Meek's terse response has been, "To my mind this is not a definition of monotheism at all . . . ."[21]

One of the strongest supporters of the position which advances the view that the provenance of Hebraic monotheism is to be found in the Mosaic period is C. J. Labuschagne:

> Only in the Mosaic period do we find all the conditions required by true monotheism: the appearance of a revolutionary reformer, recognition of one single God, rejection of polytheism, intolerance of other religions, a complete negation of the significance of other gods, and a tendency toward universalism.[22]

Yehezkel Kaufmann is equally firm in his conviction that the provenance of Hebraic monotheism is to be found in the teachings of Moses:

> With Moses the sin of idolatry--particularly as a national sin--comes into existence. Before, idolatry was nowhere interdicted and punished. The stories depicting idolatry as a national sin presuppose the existence of a monotheistic people. Since such stories begin only with Moses, we infer that it was in his time that the great transformation took place. By making Israel enter a covenant with the one God, he made it a monotheistic people that alone among men was punishable for the sin of idolatry.[23]

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[20]What may well be the first "scientifically grounded" conception of monotheism may, in principle, represent a historical as well as a philosophical objection to any notion of a "trinitarian monotheism," see Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy, Vol. I (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), pp. 145-146.

[21]Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," op. cit., p. 23.

[22]C. J. Labuschagne, The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), pp. 148-149.

[23]Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), p. 230.

The views, then, of Old Testament scholars pertaining to the correctness of locating the provenance of Hebraic monotheism in the faith of Moses, may be roughly divided into two groups. In addition to the scholars noted above there exists a number of other Old Testament scholars who share the view that the faith of Moses was truly monotheistic.[24] The views comprising the second group hold that the faith of Moses was either a monolatry[25] or henotheistic[26] in nature. There does exist a third group of scholarly opinions, which question the meaningfulness of the problem of whether or not the faith of Moses is to be considered monotheistic. One of the major concerns of this group of Old Testament scholars is their shared belief that the problem is not one of history, but rather one of definition.[27]

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[24]See, E. Jacobs, Theology of the Old Testament (London: Hadder and Stoughton Ltd., 1958), p. 141; Harry M. Orlinsky, op. cit., p. 41; G. W. Anderson, The History and Religion of Israel (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 34; Georg Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 78; Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology (Wageningen: H. Veenman and Zonen, 1970), p. 23.

[25]See, Adolphe Lods, op. cit., p. 319; C. G. Montefiore, op. cit., p. 30; Meek, Hebrew Origins, op. cit., p. 208; George Mendenhall, in The Bible and the Ancient Near East, ed. by G. E. Wright (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 41; Max Weber, Ancient Judaism (Glenco: The Free Press, 1952), p. 138.

[26]See, Norman K. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 545; H. H. Rowley, op. cit., p. 43; H. Keith Beebe, op. cit., p. 160; Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 211.

[27]John Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1974), pp. 153-154; Bernard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 65; George Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 41.

Monotheism in the Monarchy
and the Former Prophets

Homer W. Smith has asserted:

> As time went on Yahweh disposed of competing gods by the simple expedient of absorbing them. Unlike other deities of the ancient world he was a very jealous god, and the first commandment given to Moses enjoined the Israelites from worshiping any other. Consequently, when the tribes were united under David, when Jerusalem was made the capital of Israel and when Yahweh was at last enshrined by Solomon in the holy of holies of the national temple, the religion of Israel was both monotheistic and purified of idolatry to the extent of having no graven images except the mysterious presence in the ark; nevertheless, Yahweh was still the ethnic god of one small tribe and his presence did not extend beyond the ark that had been his original abode. It required the physical destruction of this embodiment, in the calamity that was to come upon Jerusalem in the sixth century, to effect his liberation and transformation into an omnipresent, etherealized deity.[28]

Far more important than Smith's pinpointing of the exact moment Hebraic monotheism became a complete reality, is his observation that its origin and existence was not predicated on the Hebrews perception of the viability of the gods of their neighbors but rather upon their perception of the internal composition and nature of their own religion. The point being that even if the Hebrews at the time of Solomon had vigorously denounced the existence of all gods other than Yahweh, their perception of Yahweh, as being intimately associated with the ark, must be viewed as a limiting factor of the nature of Yahweh, which would preclude their religion being labeled an absolute monotheism. The attainment by the Hebrews of the sixth century of an absolutely monotheistic faith, depended not on the eradication of foreign gods but on the removal of the limits placed on Yahweh by the Hebrews themselves.

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[28]Homer W. Smith, Man and His Gods (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p. 107.

For Smith, then, the provenance of Hebraic monotheism, at least in principle, is to be located somewhere between the time of Moses and the reign of Solomon. In actuality, Smith holds that Hebraic monotheism arose in the sixth century after the destruction of the temple. In either case, it is Smith's contention that it arose as a function of the Hebrew's perceptions of the nature of Yahweh, rather than via their perceptions of the ontic status of foreign gods.

The view that the provenance of Hebraic monotheism is to be discovered in the beliefs of the ninth century prophets claims a number of adherents. Foremost among these is Th. C. Vriezen:

> With Elijah we stand, from a historical viewpoint, on the threshold of a new era. His creed ought not perhaps to be called in a theoretical sense monotheistic; but it sets the divinity of Yahweh so sharply over against Baal's that it does present monotheism as being, for Israel, the only right and proper thing.[29]

Vriezen's move not to overstate his case by denying that Elijah's creed should be considered, "in a theoretical sense monotheistic," clearly contradicts his assertion that Elijah's creed does "present monotheism as being, for Israel, the only right and proper thing." Further, it is to be wondered, precisely what "new era," if not one which clearly establishes Hebraic monotheism, Vriezen holds Elijah to have stood on the "threshold" of.

Vriezen's timidity in asserting in an unequivocal manner that the origin of Hebraic monotheism is to be found in the creed of Elijah, if this is truly his view, apparently springs from his cognizance of

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[29]Th. C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1967), p. 191.

the fact that there exists a correct usage of the term "monotheism" when applied in its "theoretical sense." But how this "theoretical sense" of the term differs from its common, accepted sense is not at all clear. For if, as Vriezen asserts, Elijah's creed presents "monotheism" to the Hebrews as "the only right and proper thing," it would appear that Vriezen is hardly in any position to maintain that Elijah's creed contained any views which could be construed as his allowing for a belief in the existence of any god other than Yahweh. Nor is it the case that Vriezen wishes to do so. However, Vriezen fails to offer a new definition of monotheism, taken in its "theoretical sense," and it must be concluded that he is using the term with its accepted definition. Consequently, Vriezen is forced into the position of maintaining that while Elijah is not to be considered a theoretical monotheist, he is to be considered a monotheist.

Walther Eichrodt has expressed a view, concerning the creative role played by Elijah in the development of the Hebraic religion, quite similar to that espoused by Vriezen:

> The struggle of Elijah against the Tyrian Baal marks an epoch. The memorable words which have been handed down as uttered by him at the climax of the conflict--"If the Lord be God, follow him"--as also the prayer, "Hear me, O Lord . . . that this people may know that the Lord art God" (I Kings 18:21, 37) show clearly that more is at stake than merely a trial of strength between two deities over the extent of their respective domains. This outlook, which was still very much alive in Jephthah's words in Judg. 11:24, is here completely superseded. The question is whether Yahweh or Baal is "God." Elijah's words embody the certainty, that apart from the God of Israel there are in reality no gods worthy of the name; in other words we are manifestly at the stage of practical monotheism.[30]

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[30]Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1961), pp. 227-225.

Clearly, Eichrodt has set forth the view, implicit in the position of Vriezen, that the efforts of Elijah were aimed at eradicating from the faith of the Hebrews of his time every trace of the notion that there truly does exist any god other than Yahweh. Given the accepted definition of the term "monotheism," one would have expected Eichrodt to have unequivocally declared Elijah to have been the founder of Hebraic monotheism. Such was not the case. Rather, Eichrodt has elected to temper his claim concerning the nature of the faith of Elijah claiming it merely represented what he has called "practical monotheism."

While it is not the intent of the present section to discuss the views of Old Testament scholars concerning the nature of Hebraic monotheism, Eichrodt's designation of the creed of Elijah as representing the "stage of practical monotheism" calls for some consideration for it raises a very serious question; to wit, Is there a valid philosophical distinction of a qualitative nature to be drawn between an individual who practices a monotheistic religion, without conceptualizing it in theoretical terms, and another individual who does? If it is possible to draw such a distinction such that the faith of the theoretician is held to be in any way superior to or more monotheistic than that of the simple practitioner of a monotheistic religion, the consequences of such a distinction would be disastrous. For it is undoubtedly the case that the majority of practitioners of any one of the contemporary self avowed monotheistic religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity or Islam, are not theologians and have not conceptualized their faith in theoretical terms. Consequently, the number of true

monotheists presently existing in the world, must be very small indeed.

Eichrodt's labeling the faith of Elijah a "practical monotheism" is merely one instance of the somewhat doubtful practice of Old Testament scholars of generating types of monotheisms to account for phenomena which do not readily fall into one of their preexistent categories of thought. A fuller treatment of this confusion resulting from this practice will be deferred to a later section of this chapter.

Ignoring the question concerning the provenance of Hebraic monotheism as it relates to Elijah, Robert Gordis, nonetheless, asserts:

> He (Elijah) emerged suddenly from the wilderness and disappeared in a heavenly chariot. His meteoric career symbolized the two greatest Hebrew contributions to civilization, two that really are one: the faith in the One God and the passion for righteousness.[31]

It is one thing to "symbolize" something and quite another to create it. Gordis is of the opinion that Elijah's creed "symbolized" the "faith in the One God" irrespective of whether or not he created it. In any event, it is clearly Gordis' view that by the time of Elijah, Hebraic monotheism was a reality.

A straightforward assertion that the Hebraic religion of the ninth century was monotheistic may be found in J. Kenneth Kuntz's observation concerning the nature of the faith of the prophet Micaiah:

> It (Micaiah 22:21-23) attests that by the ninth century B.C. Yahweh was conceived as a heavenly being surrounded by a court

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[31]Robert Gordis, Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 20.

> of ministering spirits. This pluralism was a part of Israel's brand of monotheism, which embraced both the one and the many.[32]

Although Kuntz's apparent view that there exists various "brands" of monotheism, of which Israel's is but one example, may be somewhat unsettling, he is firm in his conviction that by the ninth century Hebraic monotheism had become "part and parcel" of the Hebraic Weltanschauung.

Monotheism of the Literary Prophets and the Authors of Deuteronomy

It is the view of the majority of Old Testament scholars, both early and recent, that the provenance of Hebraic monotheism is to be found somewhere between 755 and 539 B.C., in the writings of the literary prophets. Although there does exist a certain amount of controversy concerning which prophet is to be identified as the creator of Hebraic monotheism, there is a consensus of scholarly opinion, which holds that monotheism, of one type or another, was at the very least, an implicit aspect of the faith of each of the prophets found within the time period noted above.

Concerning the contribution of the literary prophets to the development of the religion of the Hebrews, Julius Wellhausen has noted:

> Thus, although the prophets were far from originating a new conception of God, they nonetheless were the founders of what has been called "ethical monotheism." But with them this ethical monotheism was no product of the "self-evolution of

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[32] J. Kenneth Kuntz, The People of Ancient Israel (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), pp. 250-251.

> dogma," but a progressive step which had been called forth simply by the course of events. The providence of God brought it about that this call came at an opportune period, and not too suddenly.[33]

Taking to heart Wellhausen's claim that the development of "ethical monotheism" was a creation of the prophets, a creation which occurred "not too suddenly," C. G. Montefiore has constructed the following developmental scheme, initially deferring to the view of Kuenen:

> When in the consciousness of the prophets, the central place was taken, not by the might, but by the holiness of Yahweh, the conception of God was carried up into another and higher sphere. From that moment it ceased to be a question of "more" or "less" between Yahweh and the other gods, for he stood not only above them, but in very distinct opposition to them. If Yahweh, the Holy One, was God, if he was God as the Holy One, then the others were not. In a word, the belief that Yahweh was the only God sprang out of the ethical conception of his being. Monotheism was the gradual, not the sudden result of this conception.[34]

In his own words, Montefiore has asserted, concerning the role of the eighth century prophets in this developmental scheme:

> . . . monotheism in explicit terms was not taught til the last quarter of the seventh century in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, but that implicitly it is to be found with unmistakable distinctness in the writings of our eighth century prophets.[35]

Expanding his view of the role of Jeremiah and the authors of Deuteronomy in this developmental process, Montefiore maintains:

> . . . it would appear that at the close of the seventh century or at the opening of the sixth the monotheistic position had been finally achieved . . . . Yet as the dates of great achievements, whether in material discovery or spiritual revelation, have a peculiar interest, it is worth remarking that the prophecies of Jeremiah and the writings of the later Deuteronomists scarcely

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[33]Julius Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 474.

[34]C. G. Montefiore, op. cit., p. 135.

[35]Ibid.

> admit of any other interpretation than that their writings had reached, though they may not have realized, the pure monotheistic conception.[36]

Finally, concerning the role of the post-exilic prophet, Deutero-Isaiah, in this process, Montefiore concludes:

> Deutero-Isaiah cannot justly be regarded as the first exponent of that unqualified and absolute monotheism which from his time became and remained the fundamental dogma of Judaism. In the last lecture we saw how an earlier writer had proclaimed the doctrine that "Yahweh is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath." (Deut. IV:39) But Deutero-Isaiah was the first to emphasize and make use of this plenary and unconditional monotheism. And as an integral position, or as the inevitable consequence, of his monotheistic doctrine, he adopts a novel attitude towards idolatry.[37]

It is Montefiore's view, therefore, that the provenance of Hebraic monotheism is to be found in the writings of Jeremiah and those of the later Deuteronomists.

Adolphe Lods is in general agreement with the developmental views thus far expressed by Wellhausen and Montefiore:

> It is to the prophets of the eighth and the following centuries that Judaism owes that unique and profoundly original element in the history of humanity: its ethical monotheism. Before they appeared the religion of Israel was an ancient religion, similar in all essential respects to the other national religions of the ancient world.[38]

However, he refrains from identifying which particular prophet is to be considered the founder of Hebraic monotheism.

H. H. Rowley, while holding an essentially developmental view concerning the inception and subsequent refinement of Hebraic

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[36]Ibid., p. 214.

[37]Ibid., pp. 268-269.

[38]Adolphe Lods, op. cit., p. 3.

monotheism, offers the following observation concerning the role of the literary prophets in his overall scheme:

> With the eighth and seventh century prophets we find incipient monotheism giving place increasingly to a more specific belief, and in Deutero-Isaiah we find the explicit formulation of monotheism with undeniable clarity. The antiquity of monotheism in Israel may therefore be dated from the time of Moses, provided it is recognized that it was but the germ of monotheism in his day, when a new impulse of incalculable significance to the world came into religion.[39]

Though it is not clear whether or not Rowley subscribes to a position that maintains that the "germs" of monotheism are scattered generally throughout henotheistic faiths, for this is his earlier description of the faith of Moses,[40] or rather that these "germs" are found only in the faith of Moses, it is, nonetheless, the case that Rowley embraces the view that it was through the efforts of the literary prophets, and especially those of Deutero-Isaiah, that the conception of Hebraic monotheism was forged.

The developmental thesis of Wellhausen finds another adherent in the person of Theophile Meek:

> Hebrew monotheism grew up in its own way with the Hebrew prophets, in and out of its own environment, influenced no doubt by world thought, but largely independent of it . . . . It was not until the time of Jeremiah and Second Isaiah that a thoroughgoing monotheism was possible with the Hebrews.[41]

In identifying which prophet is to be given credit for casting Hebraic monotheism in its final form, Meek is of the opinion that this undertaking was accomplished mainly through the efforts of Deutero-Isaiah.[42]

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[39]H. H. Rowley, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

[40]For Rowley's views concerning the nature of the faith of Moses see above p. 11.

[41]Meek, Hebrew Origins, op. cit., p. 227.

[42]Ibid.

Breaking somewhat with the developmental position of Wellhausen concerning the provenance of Hebraic monotheism, George A. Barton has stated:

> The insight of four great men, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, who lived and preached between 755 and 690 B.C., carried the work begun by Elijah to much higher levels. While they presented no philosophical theory of monotheism, each one of them was a practical monotheist.[43]

The validity of the distinction sometimes drawn by Old Testament scholars between the "practical monotheist" and the theoretical monotheist, having been discussed above, it is enough merely to state Barton's view concerning the nature of the faith of these prophets. It is somewhat curious, however, while it is Barton's contention that the works of these four prophets "carried the work begun by Elijah to much higher levels" he nonetheless designates these prophets "practical monotheists," a term which Eichrodt held to be accurately descriptive of Elijah and his creed.

Without further belaboring the point that the views of Old Testament scholars concerning when Hebraic monotheism came to exist are divisive, it should only be necessary to point out that some Old Testament scholars have identified Amos as the founder of Hebraic monotheism,[44] while others have given the credit to Jeremiah.[45] At least one Old

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[43]George A. Barton, The Religions of the World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1919), pp. 66-67.

[44]See, J. M. Powis Smith, The Prophets and Their Times (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 204-205; Louis Wallis, Sociological Study of the Bible (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1913), p. 204.

[45]John Punnett Peters, The Religion of the Hebrews (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1914), p. 278; William Frederic Bade, The Old Testament in the Light of To-Day (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), p. 217.

Testament scholar has advanced the view that the source of Hebraic monotheism derives from Deutero-Isaiah's extension and refinement of the thought of Job.[46] By far and way, however, it is undoubtedly the case that there is a general consensus of opinion among Old Testament scholars who embrace the developmental position of Wellhausen concerning the inception and subsequent development of Hebraic monotheism, that this concept attains complete fruition in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah.[47] In an effort to round off this section it should be noted that one Old Testament scholar holds the view that the literary prophets ". . . did not give expression to a philosophical doctrine of monotheism, even if we qualify it by the word 'ethical.'"[48] Further, that it is the view of William Frederic Bade

> . . . that Deuteronomic theology has not advanced to the point of absolute monotheism is proved by the crass particularism of supplementary parts of Deuteronomy, like the fourth chapter.[49]

It has been the intent of this section to establish the position that the views of Old Testament scholars concerning the provenance of Hebraic monotheism are divisive. It has also been pointed out that where a few Old Testament scholars have declined to identify a particular person or period with the inception of Hebraic monotheism, their

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[46]See, Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), pp. 474-475; Robert H. Pfeiffer, "The Dual Origin of Hebrew Monotheism," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVI (1927), 193ff.

[47]See, Gerhard von Rad, op. cit., p. 212; R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1947), p. 106; George Moore, History of Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 28; Gerald A. Larve, Old Testament Life and Literature (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), p. 310.

[48]Norman W. Porteous in Record and Revelation, ed. by H. Wheeler Robinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 242.

[49]William Frederic Bade, op. cit., p. 217.

hesitancy was founded on their concern that the problem was essentially one of definition.

However, the majority of Old Testament scholars have confidently utilized the term "monotheism" with its accepted definition to draw their conclusions concerning the provenance of Hebraic monotheism. The employment of the term "monotheism" along with its accepted definition by Old Testament scholars has led to the creation of a diversity of opinions which would place the provenance of Hebraic monotheism anywhere from the time of Abraham up to and including that of Deutero-Isaiah.

Clearly the value of the accepted definition of the term "monotheism," as it has been utilized by Old Testament scholars as an analytical tool, is highly questionable. And the need for a new definition should be somewhat apparent.

The following section attempts to further substantiate this need by establishing the position that where Old Testament scholars have been faced with the problem of describing various systems of belief, which they have observed contain monotheistic tendencies, the lack of an adequate nomenclature has forced these scholars to generate novel variations on the monotheism theme. However, the task of creating and giving meaning to these new terms has been left to the individual scholar. Consequently, there is no general conformity in the use and meaning of these terms in the field of Old Testament studies generally. What is not needed in the field of Old Testament studies is a plethora of terms based on a term which is already vague and ambiguous. What is needed is a new and precise definition of the term "monotheism" itself.

MONOTHEISTIC TENDENCIES IN THE WRITINGS OF THE LITERARY PROPHETS

Theophile James Meek has asserted:

> If a belief is not monotheistic in the strict sense of the word, I do not see what we have gained by calling it monotheistic, unless we do this as a sop to orthodoxy.[50]

This assertion would seem to imply that theistic beliefs, by the nature of their content, should be classifiable under one of the major headings, pantheism, polytheism, atheism, monotheism, monolatry or henotheism. However, there seems to exist, especially from the perspective of the Old Testament scholar, a body of beliefs which defy being classified under any of these recognized headings. These are the collective beliefs of the literary prophets, with the possible exception of the beliefs of Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah.

It was pointed out in the previous section that it is the view of a number of Old Testament scholars that the work of Elijah ushered in a new era in the development of the religion of Israel. Elijah's beliefs were held to constitute a break with the earlier monolatry or henotheism of the Hebraic religion, and at the very least to have laid the groundwork for the subsequent development of Hebraic monotheism.[51]

The further position was established that it is the view of another group of Old Testament scholars that the complete and final expression of that monotheistic religion was formulated by

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[50]Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," op. cit., p. 23.

[51]See above, Monotheism of the Monarchy and the Former Prophets, pp. 12-17.

Deutero-Isaiah.[52] However, the period beginning with the writings of Amos and ending with those of Jeremiah, has generally been characterized by the majority of Old Testament scholars as embodying monotheistic tendencies.

Each of the prophets present in this period was held to have contributed some ingredient essential to the formation of a monotheistic faith, but, for the most part, none was credited with the absolute formation of such a faith. Consequently, Old Testament scholars have encountered great difficulties in describing and classifying the faith of these prophets.

In an attempt to describe the nature of the faiths of these prophets, Old Testament scholars have resorted to the practice of generating a plethora of supposedly descriptive terms, e.g., "incipient monotheism," "speculative monotheism," "implicit monotheism," "empirical monotheism," etc. Though these terms have found their way into the literature of Old Testament studies, they have neither been standardized nor has their meaning been generally agreed upon by Old Testament scholars. Rather, every Old Testament scholar has been free to coin a new term and endow it with whatever meaning he has chosen.

The unfortunate result of this practice has been to ground the belief that each of the writings of the prophets constitutes a special case, virtually indescribable through the nomenclature which has developed in the field of Old Testament studies. A belief which does not bear close examination.

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[52]See above, Monotheism of the Literary Prophets, pp. 17-23.

It is the intent of this section, then, to critically examine the nature of the types of monotheisms, generated by a few Old Testament scholars, in order to determine their value in terms of their descriptive and discriminative functions. In undertaking this analysis it is important to keep one fact in mind that often seems to escape certain Old Testament scholars, viz., the Hebrew prophets were not philosophers, nor did they consider themselves as such; consequently, it would be ludicruous to expect their writings to resemble a philosophical work or to examine them as if they were. The writings of our contemporaries, on the other hand, and especially those approaching the present topic in a scholarly manner, may be treated in no other manner.

Incipient, Implicit, and Speculative Monotheisms of H. H. Rowley

H. H. Rowley has correlated different levels of Hebraic theological development with the concepts of "incipient monotheism," "implicit monotheism," and "speculative monotheism." One would expect, in the face of such a clear delineation, three distinct sets of criteria by which their respective construct is identifiable. However, it appears to be the case that the first two concepts are defined by the absence of certain criteria, and it will, consequently, be necessary to start with the fullest concept, i.e., "speculative monotheism" and work our way backwards in order to get a "handle" on all three concepts. It is Rowley's opinion that "speculative monotheism" is a phenomenon which is found soley in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah, and precisely what constitutes speculative monotheism may be gleaned from the following:

> Repeatedly it is declared here that Yahweh alone is God, and all other gods are nonexistent and their idols symbols of unreality. Moreover, the same prophet taught the corollary of monotheism in universalism. If there is but one God, then he must be the God of all men.[53]

Three necessary assertions emerge from this passage which may be explicitly formulated: (1) Yahweh is the only God; (2) there are no gods other than Yahweh; (3) Yahweh is the God of all peoples. These assertions then represent actual statements which must be expressed either verbally or in written form, repeatedly, by anyone who would like to consider himself a monotheist. And this is to say that "speculative monotheism" may be operationally defined by the verbalization of a few simple sentences. And although criteria two and three seem a bit gratuitous, given the overall structure of Rowley's scheme, discussion of this will be deferred to a later point.

"Implicit monotheism" is held by Rowley to be descriptive of the period and writings of the prophets from Amos to Jeremiah and may be said to exhibit the three criteria made manifest in "speculative monotheism," only in implicit form. Without going into an exhaustive analysis of this position, by way of repudiation, it should be generally noted that the criterion felt to be lacking in the writings of the prophets, prior to Deutero-Isaiah, is, first and foremost, the explicit and repeated denial of the existence of other gods, while secondarily, it is felt that the notion of universalism is not stressed to the degree it should be. However, Albright makes the following points concerning these drawbacks in the pre-exilic prophets:

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[53]H. H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1956), p. 72.

> Unmistakable claims of world-power and uniqueness for Yahweh appear with the earliest known rhapsodist prophets, Amos and Hosea, and become frequent in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Along with them appears outspoken repudiation of pagan deities and their claims. For instance, Amos and Jeremiah call pagan deities "lies" and "falsehood"; Isaiah and Jeremiah call them "vanities" and "illusions"; Jeremiah and the Deuteronomic school call them "no-gods"; Ezekiel, the Deuteronomists, and Jeremiah call them gillulim, which seems to mean properly "pellets of dung." This list is surely opposed to the idea that pagan deities were conceded real existence by the prophets.[54]

In the Meno, Plato draws the distinction between true opinion and knowledge, that while both relate to the same object to the same degree of correspondence of truth, the former is held to be a weaker form of the latter for the want of a tether.[55] This is to say that true opinion may shift its locus, whereas as knowledge is secure and not subject to change. Unless Rowley is equating "implicit monotheism" with the concept of true opinion it is difficult to see exactly what he means by that term. However, it would be hard to believe that he holds the position that the views of the prophets were of such an unstable nature that they would have been subject to radical revision, for whatever reason.

All in all, his tri-partite formula for "speculative monotheism" seems a bit lacking even in its internal composition. For instance, criteria one and two appear to assert the same thing, and from either criterion, one or two, the remaining two criteria are easily inferred. Only criterion three does not allow one to infer the necessity of criteria one and two. With this criticism in mind, let us turn to the

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[54] W. F. Albright, op. cit., p. 32.

[55] B. Jowett, The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 377-378.

notion of "incipient monotheism" to see how it differs from the first two types.

Although one might expect that the term "incipient monotheism" would apply to what has earlier been referred to as the Mosaic period, such is not the case. Rowley is quick to point out and quite firm in his conviction that Moses was a henotheist and that the era prior to the literary prophets was immersed in henotheism.[56] So the term "incipient monotheism" relates, once again, specifically to the works of the literary prophets. But beyond referring to the process of certain "seeds" having been sown, which come to maturity in Deutero-Isaiah, Rowley gives the term no distinct and intelligible meaning.[57]

What, then, constitutes, for Rowley, the essence of monotheism, apart from his delineation and subdivision of that concept, which result mainly in vague and euphemistic imagery coupled with what appears to be a somewhat sympathetic-magical recitation of vituperative remarks aimed at the disparagement of the deities of other nations? The answer to this question is found in his attack on the criteria offered by Albright and is stated simply and bluntly:

> Most of the elements of this definition are irrelevant to the question of monotheism and of the one vital element there is no evidence. For nowhere in the Pentateuch is Moses credited with the formal denial that any other gods exist, such as we find in Deutero-Isaiah, save in passages such as Dt. 4:35, 39; 32:39, which quite certainly did not issue from Moses.[58]

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[56]Rowley, op. cit., p. 43.

[57]Ibid., p. 72.

[58]Ibid., p. 42.

It is finally clear, then, that one of the most, if not the most important criterion, necessary for a system of beliefs to be designated as constituting a monotheism, is that it contain an explicit "formal denial" of the existence of all other gods. Which may, and perhaps should take the form, "of the class of potential gods A, B, C . . . X, Y, Z, X is the only god and the gods A, B, C . . . W, Y, Z, are non-gods." The initial and most obvious drawback of this approach is that it is ultimately grounded on the negation of a class of objects the existence of which it must first presuppose, in order to express the class negation in the ritualistic "formal denial" statement.[59] Nonetheless this criterion is the well spring from which contemporary scholarship draws its dictums concerning the monotheistic status of various world views.[60]

Empirical and Philosophical Monotheisms of Ivan Engnell

The set of beliefs expressed by the prophets has been held by Ivan Engnell to constitute what he has labeled "empirical monotheism."[61]

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[59]Raffaele Pettazzoni, op. cit., p. 8, defends this activity, for he maintains, "The affirmation of monotheism always is expressed by the negation of polytheism, and this negation is never anything but the verbal symbol of a combat in which no quarter is given, the combat between a faith in its death-agonies and a new religious consciousness affirming itself." But Pettazzoni is also quick to add, "The verbal formula is not in itself a sufficient indication of monotheism," p. 8.

[60]Meek, "Monotheism and the Religion of Israel," op. cit., p. 38, expresses the view that once monotheism is an established fact, it is quite acceptable to speak of the "gods" "as if they existed."

[61]Ivan Engnell, A Rigid Scrutiny (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), p. 144.

And he contrasts this prophetic "empirical monotheism" with what he calls, ". . . thought-out, well-reasoned, rationalistic, philosophical monotheism."[62] While the former is dependent upon "(the prophets) own affective experience with God,"[63] the latter may be said to rest on a system of thought, philosophical or otherwise, which attempts to systematize divergent or disparate facts or statements, into a cohesive system which accounts for the apparent phenomenon. The real difference may reduce to the difference between the modes of inductive versus deductive inquiry. Consequently, Engnell is not denying that the heart of prophetic thought is at root monotheistic but affirms rather that it rests on individual experience, which, while being persuasive for the individual concerned, is not readily expressible and cogent for the bulk of individuals, who have not had the experience. The chief benefit of a "philosophical monotheism" is that it is understandable by anyone capable of reasoning, and its conclusions, supposedly, are inescapable. Had, then, the prophets been aware of Aristotle's theology, in spite of the fact that it too was grounded in empirical observation, they could have ensconced their views within philosophical verbage, adding to their value immeasurably.

The main problem with Engnell's position is that it rests upon an incorrect conception of the nature of what it means to be philosophical. Although it is true that philosophical systems generally, which is to say not always, are characterized by a certain degree of systematicity, their thrust is characterized by a probing dialectic, e.g.,

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[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

Plato's early dialogues, which are as much geared at the uprooting of incorrect views as offering new ones. That the prophets may be said to have taken both these tasks to heart, and that their mode of expression embodied a certain urgency are only to their credit, and are in no way an indication of an inability to conceptualize and formulate their messages in any other than a personal manner. The prophetic message was geared to action and not simple reflection. Their success was gauged by their ability to motivate individuals to act, and not by their acceptance by the prevailing intellectual community. And the truth is that the desired end of all philosophical thought has been action, of one sort or another. In the final analysis, where truth is the object most sought, the different modes of the expression of that truth may, at best, represent esthetic predilections.

Engnell's dichotomy, then, seems to lack any instructive qualities, and the only new criterion he offers concerning a definition of monotheism generally, i.e., "(an) affective experience of God," is of such a highly subjective nature as to be of no use in an analytical definition of monotheism.

Theoretical and Practical Monotheism of Theophile Meek

Theophile Meek distinguishes between "theoretical monotheism" on the one hand, and "practical, thoroughgoing monotheism" on the other.[64] "Theoretical monotheism," he maintains, best describes prophetic thought, prior to Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. The nature of this thought he holds to be as follows:

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[64]Meek, Hebrew Origins, op. cit., p. 226.

> So far as we can discover Amos was the first to regard Yahweh as the god of peoples other than the Hebrews, but he nowhere denies the existence of other gods nor does he say anywhere that Yahweh alone is god in the world. Neither does Hosea, nor Micah, nor First Isaiah nor Zephaniah. More and more, however, the prophets were underrating the alien gods, ... To save Yahweh from the oblivion of his people the prophets had to liberate Yahweh from his people and make him the god of the world, who for his own beneficent purpose exalts, now this people, now that people, to the end that all may know him and obey him. To Isaiah, accordingly, the rival gods were but "elilim, worthless creatures, vain and unavailing" (Is. 2:8, 18, 20; 10:10 f.; 19:1, 3; 31:7). This was theoretical monotheism . . . .[65]

There are two criteria present, then, in Meek's conception of "theoretical monotheism" which are deemed as necessary but not sufficient for the production of a "practical, thoroughgoing monotheism." The first is the notion of universalism, the idea that Yahweh is the god of all peoples. The second involves the demotion, but not the eradication, of pagan deities to the status of "worthless creatures." And beyond the fact that Meek's view of the degree to which the prophets held that Yahweh was universal and alone in the world differs from that of Albright,[66] it is curious that Meek would call their positions even theoretically monotheistic when they allow for the existence of competing deities regardless of the latter's inability to compete successfully. According to Meek, the prophets, whose systems he has labeled theoretically monotheistic, have drawn a quantitative rather than a qualitative distinction between Yahweh and other gods, certainly along the existence continuum. That is to say that for all of their worthlessness, they still exist and must be taken into account. And it would seem that this mere taking into account of other gods is, prima

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[65]Ibid., pp. 225-226.

[66]Albright, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

facie, an admission of polytheism, which ultimately reduces to an admission that massive differences exist between peoples and that the needs of the separate groups, being unique and distinct, can only be satisfied by each group's special god or gods. This sort of admission would, however, conflict with the first criterion, i.e., universalism of Yahweh, which is held to be a necessary condition of a monotheistic system. However, the question arises, to what degree and what sort of universalism is a necessary part of a monotheistic system? If it is Meek's contention that Yahweh was considered universal by the prophets, in that he had a vested interest in all peoples, then there is some doubt that the prophets held truly universalistic views concerning the nature of Yahweh. If, on the other hand, Meek's claims rest on the perception by the prophets of Yahweh's claim to absolute might as sole creator and ruler of the universe, the construct of universalism takes on a more theoretical and abstract nature.

Kaufmann clarifies this distinction in the following manner:

> Universalism in religion may mean either that the dominion and power of the deity are world wide, or that his favor and self-revelation are world wide. The first meaning involves the essence and nature of the deity; the second involves his manifestation among men. Since monotheism asserts that there is but one creator and ruler of the universe, it is perforce universalistic in the first sense. But there is no inner necessity that compels it to distribute the favor of the one God equally among all men. That one God creates and governs all does not of itself imply that all are equal in his sight. Nothing prohibits his choosing a particular group among men as his elect. Indeed the monotheistic religious have always assumed that he does just that. This idea circumscribes the realm in which God's favor is manifested without, however, affecting the universality of his dominion.[67]

The type of universalism Meek attributes to the prophets whose system he holds to be indicative of "practical, thoroughgoing monotheism," is

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[67]Kaufmann, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

evident from the following:

> It was not until the time of Jeremiah and Second Isaiah that a thoroughgoing monotheism was possible with the Hebrews. Imperialism was in the air, and "monotheism is but imperialism in religion." There had been a succession of world empires--first the Assyrian, then the Babylonian, and now the Persian. Was there likewise a succession of World Gods? Or was there one World God directing the course of world history? It was left to Second Isaiah to answer this and he did so in no uncertain terms, particularly in chapters 41 to 48. Over and over again he ridicules the idea that there can be more gods than one and for the first time in history we have a man preaching the religious solidarity of mankind, as much interested in the well-being of other peoples as in his own.[68]

And although it is clear that Meek holds that Deutero-Isaiah was concerned with the welfare of other peoples, it is not obvious that Deutero-Isaiah held that Yahweh shared this concern. However Yahweh's concern for all peoples may be viewed as secondary to his holding the position of sole God of the Universe. And it is the serving in this position of preeminence for Yahweh that separates "thoroughgoing monotheism" from all other types, for it would seem to be easier to reason from the idea that there is but one god to the idea that that god has a vested interest in all peoples, than vice versa. And that it is upon this notion that "thoroughgoing monotheism" stands or falls, for Meek, is clear from his assertion:

> . . . Jeremiah and Second Isaiah, . . . declared in most emphatic terms that Yahweh alone was God and all the so-called gods had no real existence at all; they were merely figments of the imagination, the creation of man himself (see, e.g., Jer. 5:7; 10:2 ff.; 16:20; Is. 41:21 ff.; 44:9 ff.).[69]

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[68]Meek, Hebrew Origins, op. cit., p. 227.

[69]Ibid.

The primary difference, then, between "theoretical monotheism" and "thoroughgoing monotheism" is that where the former seems to concede some minimal degree of existence to a number of gods the latter explicitly denies their existence, whereas both embody tendencies towards universalism. Meek's criteria for "thoroughgoing monotheism" appear to be identical with those which constitute Rowley's conception of "speculative monotheism."[70] And the objection voiced concerning the validity of Rowley's criteria apply with equal force to those offered by Meek.[71] The true significance of this denial has been brought into question by T. E. Peet, who points out, concerning the meaningfulness of the denial statement:

> 'Sole God beside whom there is no other' proves nothing, this being used quite impartially of various deities in polytheistic Egypt.[72]

Furthermore, examples of denial and exclusivity statements are common in Assyrian and Babylonian prayers:

> Lord, who surpasses thee? Who can equal thee?
> Great Hero, who surpasses thee? Who can equal thee?
> Lord Nanna, who surpasses thee? Who can equal thee?[73]

and

> In heaven, who is exalted? Thou, thou alone are exalted.
> On earth, who is exalted? Thou, thou alone are exalted.[74]

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[70]See Chapter 1, p. 27.

[71]Ibid., p. 30.

[72]T. E. Peet, Cambridge Ancient History Vol. II (Cambridge: The University Press, 1931), p. 206.

[73]Labuschagne, op. cit., p. 34.

[74]Ibid.

It should be clear, then, that the denial statement was not the unique possession of the Hebrews, and its inclusion in certain prophetic books does not prove nor necessarily imply the existence of a monotheistic world view. As pointed out above, the presence of monotheism in the prophetic conceptual schemes is only to be discovered through the examination of the internal structure of the views contained in their works.

However, to examine the works of the literary prophets using the term "monotheism" with its accepted definition would hardly be a profitable endeavor, as was shown in the first section of this chapter. Likewise, to examine the views of the prophets with an eye toward the creation of a new term which would apply in some unique way to the prophetic works would also constitute a task with little merit. Consequently, before the works of the prophets are analyzed, a new definition of the term "monotheism" must be forged, and this is the task of the following chapter.

This is not to say that the views and conclusions of those Old Testament scholars thus far examined are without merit. Indeed, each has offered a valuable contribution not only to the clarification of the concept monotheism, but further to our general understanding of the thought of the ancient Hebrews. Thus, the new definition of the term "monotheism" which is attempted in the following chapter must be viewed as extending rather than replacing the cumulative efforts which have come before it.

Chapter 2

TOWARD A NEW DEFINITION OF MONOTHEISM

THE NATURE OF THE MAN/GOD RELATIONSHIP

A number of philosophers and theologians, throughout history, have been intensely aware of the pervasive tendency among different groups, and indeed among men collectively, to create either a number of gods or a single god, in their own image. The earliest recorded protest against such a practice is found in Xenophanes' reductio ad absurdum:

> But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves.[1]

Xenophanes' contempt for anthropomorphizing the gods is offset by his positive hypostatization of "One god, greatest among gods and men, in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought."[2] And although there is a certain epistemological naivete inherent in any position which initially posits an entity which is "in no way similar" to man, and then goes on to explain that entity in terms which are considered intelligible to human ways of thinking, it was

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[1]G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, The Presocratic Philosophers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 169.

[2]Ibid.

Xenophanes' intention to glorify his god rather than to derogate the collective nature of mortals.

Another early Greek philosopher, Protagoras of Abdera (e.c. 490 B.C.-421 B.C.), was also surely aware of the egotism involved in any anthropomorphic approach to the world at large. However, his response to this tendency is quite the reverse of that expressed by Xenophanes, as is apparent from his observation that "man is the measure of all things, of things that are that (or "how") they are and of things that are not that (or "how") they are not."[3]

The combination of these two positions, as antithetical as they may appear, has given rise to the thesis postulated in this dissertation which states: Man, naturally, fashions his gods or god in his own image, and that it is man's perception of his own essential nature which determines the essential nature of his gods or god. One refinement of this rather general position, which will be examined most closely in this chapter, holds that monotheism is possible only where man's essential nature is perceived as simple and a unity. This is to say that the current definition of monotheism as the belief that there is only one god is found wanting in that it deals only with the notion of numerical status, rather than also with the notion of essential nature.

It is contended here that where man's essential nature has been perceived as manifold and fragmented, the consequent god derived, in the case where one god has been derived, is also perceived as

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[3]G. B. Kerferd, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. VI (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972), p. 505.

having a manifold and fragmented essential nature, each is called "one" as a function of syncretism. On the other hand, where man has identified his essential nature with the totality of "being," while it seems to be the case if his essential nature is held to be simple and a unity, as would the essential nature of everything be held to be in terms of this position, that a monotheism would appear as a necessary consequent. However, it is more likely that this position collapses into a monism, as in the case of Parmenides' conception of to on.

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, a number of thinkers have commented on the relationship which has existed between man's conception of his own essential nature and the essential nature of his gods or god. However, few have dealt with the subject as candidly as Ludwig Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity. Feuerbach has characterized the man-god relation in the following manner:

> . . . the object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively. Such are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self consciousness, knowledge of God is self-knowledge. By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical. Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; and conversely, God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man.[4]

And although Feuerbach's analysis may ultimately speak to the subjectivism of each individual, taken as a creator of his own conception of god, there is, perhaps, a larger arena or collective within

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[4]Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 12.

which there is some expressed consensus as to what constitutes the essential nature of man and consequently the essential nature of god.

The remainder of this chapter, then, aimes at exploring the positions of three distinct schools of thought, all of which have at one time or another been held to be expressions of monotheism.

IN SEARCH OF A PARADIGM

The first form of monotheism to be considered is that which may be gleaned from the early books of the Pentateuch. And although there has been sufficient controversy over whether or not Mosaic monotheism was indeed truly monotheistic, the bulk of criticism concerning the affirmation of Mosaic monotheism has centered on the lack of an explicit denial, either clearly on the part of Moses himself or the presence of such a denial, which could be shown to be of sufficient antiquity as to be present within the general Mosaic conceptual scheme, of the existence of other gods.[5] This objection is felt to be somewhat simplistic and perhaps a bit arbitrary. For the notion of an explicit denial of the existence of other gods, on the part of a monotheist, may be, at best, gratuitous. And Gregory Vlastos has maintained as much by asserting:

> . . . a monotheist would express his faith by saying that he believes in "one god," and would have no reason for saying "just one God," unless he were addressing persons who he thought might suspect that polytheism remained a live option for him.[6]

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[5]R. J. Christen and H. E. Hazelton, Monotheism and Moses (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1969), pp. 68-77, 79-87.

[6]G. Vlastos, Platonic Studies (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 356.

It is the contention, then, of this chapter that Mosaic monotheism, expressly as put forth and understood by William Albright, is predicated upon a conception of man which is diverse and fragmented. And that, in terms of the general thesis stated earlier, this fragmented conception of man can give rise only to a fragmented and diverse conception of god. Consequently, the essential nature of the Hebraic deity is not simple and a unity, but rather is divided into or comprised of idealized attributes which find their counterparts in the self-perceived essential nature of the Hebrews as a collective. And this multiplicity of idealized attributes which comprises the essential nature of the deity gives rise, at best, to a monotheism by syncretism or rather a parsimonious polytheism.

The second form of monotheism to be examined in this analysis is the radical monotheism of H. Richard Niebuhr. This position offered by Niebuhr is of interest because it posits a simple and unitary essential nature of man. As one would initially suspect, Niebuhr's conception of the essential nature of his God is also simple and a unit. The problem with his position is that it predicates the same essential nature of everything which comprises the universe. Which is to say that for Niebuhr "being" constitutes the essential nature of everything, with the only distinction drawn between his God, which is the idealized cause of "being," and all other things, which when taken individually are instantiations of "being" or the "principle of being." It seems that the universe of apparent diversity collapses on that predicate, giving rise to a Parmenidean monism rather than a monotheism.

The third and final position to be examined here deals with Aristotle's functional analysis of man by which he isolates man's essential nature and then goes on to identify it with the essential nature of his God. Even though Aristotle recognizes that man functions within a variety of contexts and suffers from a number of emotions and dispositions, his form/matter distinction allows him to identify man's essential nature with his form. And beyond simply positing the existence of a single deity whose essential nature he arbitrarily identifies with the essential nature of man, Aristotle illustrates the necessity of such a deity, given his overall view of the universe.

Mosaic Monotheism

William Foxwell Albright, in his From the Stone Age to Christianity, has attempted to make a case for the relative antiquity of Hebraic monotheism generally and Mosaic monotheism specifically. It is curious that Albright seems to feel that "monotheism" is a rather elastic term, for he admits that the position of Moses, when contrasted with the views of "Philo Judaeus or Rabbi Akiba, of St. Paul or St. Augustine, of Mohammed or Maimonides, of St. Thomas . . ."[7] would not qualify the former to be classed with the latter given the accepted definition of monotheism. On the other hand, this class exclusion does not necessarily preclude Moses from being a monotheist if that term is simply recast to fit the particular position of Moses. This recasting, for Albright, entails the following:

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[7]W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 271.

> If . . . the term "monotheist" means one who teaches the existence of only one God, the creator of everything, the source of justice, who is equally powerful in Egypt, in the desert and in Palestine, who has no sexuality and no mythology, who is human in form and cannot be represented in any form--then the founder of Yahwism was certainly a monotheist.[8]

Albright's reworked or enlarged definition of a "monotheist," at least in the case of Moses, involves the predication of at least four attributes to the Hebraic deity. These are: (1) the creator of everything; (2) the source of justice; (3) who is universally powerful; and (4) human in form. The three negative predicates--asexuality, the lack of a mythology, and unrepresentable in any form--will not concern us here.

The first three positive predicates may be seen as serving the function of setting the stage for the fourth and, from the human point of view, most critical predicate. For by predicating a human form of their deity, the Hebrews insured their connection with that deity. Before examining the human form predicate, let us first recreate the scenario within which the fourth predicate is made intelligible.

The two creation stories in Genesis serve the primary function of attributing the existence of everything to the deliberate and intentional act of a divine creator. Their further function is to define man's relatively superior place among the universe of objects created. A variation on this theme is heard in Exodus 3:14 where it is pointed out that the Hebraic deity's very name is indicative of its causal role in the ongoing history of the universe. Albright makes this point by asserting:

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[8]Ibid.

> Many different meanings have been attributed to YAHWEH by scholars who recognized its relative antiquity, but only one yields any suitable sense: "He causes to be."[9]

This recognition and consequent affirmation of their deity's causal role in the history of the universe, on the part of the Hebrews, may be seen to have initially instituted a type of reciprocity which was grounded in the relational context of created to creator. However, implicit in the notion of a deliberate creation is the notion of a teleology. While the creation stories tend to make it clear that the universe was, at least for the most part, created to serve the end or ends of man, what is critical to ferret out is how man is to serve the end or ends of God. That their deity created men to serve its end, and what that end is, are brought out in Gen. 3:23, where it is seen that conformity to God's will is the very reason for man's existence. However, conformity to God's will must be grounded in the firm conviction that that will is not at root capricious, but rather that it is the well spring of justice itself. The combination of the affirmation that that will is the ultimate cause of justice serves to engender a certain confidence in subjugating one's personal will to that of his deity as a function of choice. However, these two concepts, coupled with the notion that the deity is also universally powerful and is not above bringing its power to bear on those that do not willingly subjugate their will to its own, are, indeed, convincing arguments for bringing one's personal will in line with the divine will.

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[9]Ibid., p. 259.

This complex of teleology and equity, then, determined the arena into which the Hebrews were thrust to examine their own essential nature, and then develop an appropriate conceptualization of the essential nature of their deity. And this is where the predication of a human form to their deity becomes important.

There is nowhere in the Pentateuch, to the best of my knowledge, any concise statement concerning the essential nature of man. Rather, the work as a whole may be considered a composite depiction of the multifaceted essential nature of man as it relates to the multifaceted essential nature of the Hebraic deity. Man is cast in a variety of unique roles and placed in a variety of different ways, as a function of his multifaceted essential nature. God then responds to man by adjudicating the correctness of man's actions, in terms of their degree of correspondence to the divine will. The degree of diversity of human activity found in the Pentateuch led Nietzsche to comment:

> I have the highest respect for that book. I find in it great men, a heroic landscape, and one of the rarest things on earth, the naivete of a strong heart. What is more I find a people.[10]

What exactly, then, this "people" held to constitute the essential nature of man is woven within the larger tapestry of the Man/God relationship. Any attempt to extricate a complete and readily understandable conception of man, as man, is, at best, a task in its own right. Suffice it to say, then, that man manifests a manifold nature

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[10]F. Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and the Geneology of Morals (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1956), p. 281.

in the Pentateuch and, further, that this manifold nature is projected onto or becomes embodied in his conception of his God. That this is the case is substantiated by Albright's claim that:

> . . . it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the anthropomorphic conception of Yahweh was absolutely necessary if the God of Israel was to remain a God of the individual Israelite as well as of the people as a whole . . . . For the average worshiper . . . it is very essential that his God be a divinity who can sympathize with his human feelings and emotions, a being whom he can love and fear alternately, and to whom he can transfer the holiest emotions connected with memories of father and mother and friend. In other words, it was precisely the anthropomorphism of Yahweh which was essential to the initial success of Israel's religion. Like man at his noblest the God of Israel might be in form and affective reactions, . . . All of the human characteristics of Israel's deity were exalted.[11]

This phenomenon of "exalting" "all the human characteristics of Israel's deity" speaks initially to the manifold essential nature of Israel's deity and secondly makes somewhat suspect the intention motivating such an exaltation. In terms of the latter, it is Feuerbach's contention that:

> The Homeric gods eat and drink;--that implies eating and drinking is a divine pleasure. Physical strength is an attribute of the Homeric gods: Zeus is the strongest of the gods. Why? Because physical strength, in and by itself, was regarded as something glorious, divine. To the ancient Germans the highest virtues were those of the warrior; therefore their supreme god was the god of war, Odin,--war "the original or oldest law." Not the attribute of the divinity, but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being.[12]

Feuerbach essentially identifies the human with the divine. And Albright has correctly noted that the "average worshiper," among the Hebrews, perceived his deity as a manifestation of "man at his

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[11]Albright, op. cit., p. 265.

[12]Feuerbach, op. cit., p. 21.

noblest." Whereas, however, in the case of an obviously polytheistic system, individual human attributes are seen to be embodied in their respective divine beings, the situation becomes somewhat hazy where all of these attributes are manifested by or are embodied within a single deity. In truth, the question may be seriously asked--what is the significant difference between one system in which the complex of human attributes is distributed among a number of deities, and another system which simply merges these attributes into a single deity? If the obvious answer, that where you once had many you now have one, is also the only answer, it would seem a bit premature to assume that the latter system is truly monotheistic in design. For even in the shift to the one embodiment of these attributes, you still have the many.

It is my contention, then, that there is no really significant difference between a monotheism by syncretism and outright polytheism. Consequently, the former, rather than representing monotheism at all, is simply a variation on the polytheism theme. The ease with which the Hebrews collectively slipped into obvious polytheism at various times, may indeed simply point to the inability of the character of Yahweh to assimilate new attributes which the Hebrews wished to "exalt." Rather than denying the value of the attribute, the Hebrews would adopt, in addition to Yahweh, whatever god happened to embody the particular attribute in question. For, as Feuerbach has pointed out, what is primarily important is the attribute and of less consequence is the divine being within which it is embodied.

Mosaic monotheism, then, appears to be actually a conglomeration of human attributes stuck on to or located within one personality. Albright's contention that Moses taught "the existence of only

one God,"[13] does not allow him to claim that Moses was a monotheist or put forth a monotheistic system, given the manifold essential nature of that one God, Yahweh. Let us now turn to an examination of the "radical monotheism" of H. Richard Niebuhr.

Radical Monotheism

In his book Radical Monotheism and Western Civilization, H. Richard Neibuhr has made the following observation:

> It is very questionable, despite many protestations to the contrary, despite the prevalence of self pity among some modern men because "God is dead" that anyone has ever yearned for radical faith in the One God.[14]

Rather, it is Niebuhr's contention that collectively men have instituted closed systems of society and thought which have been productive of:

> . . . henotheism or the social faith which makes a finite society whether cultural or religious, the object of trust and loyalty, and which tends to subvert even officially monotheistic institutions such as the churches.[15]

Niebuhr has isolated one of the causes of this behavior by illustrating that men have traditionally perceived the apparent diversity in the universe and set about cataloging this diversity into more or less manageable groups. This myopic delight in diversity has, for the most part, prevented any universal synthesis grounded in the similarity which exists among all things.

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[13]Albright, op. cit., p. 271.

[14]H. Richard Niebuhr, Radical Monotheism and Western Civilization (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p. 14.

[15]Ibid., p. 1.

The extent or degree to which one forms "value centers" as a function of extricating a certain part of the universe from the totality is the extent or degree to which one expresses a "henotheistic or social faith." Conversely, the degree to which one is able completely to identify his "value center" with the totality is also the degree to which one expresses a monotheistic faith. That this is Niebuhr's position is apparent from his assertion:

> For radical monotheism is no closed society or the principle of such a society, but the principle of being itself; its reference is to no one reality among the many, but to the One beyond the many, whence all the many derive their being, and by participation in which they exist.[16]

Monotheism, or radical monotheism, then is defined by Niebuhr as the belief in the "principle of being" which refers to the "one," which, although it is beyond the "many," is nonetheless causally productive of the "many." By the "many" it is safe to assume that Niebuhr means the collection of individual instantiations of "being."

The question which arises here is what does Niebuhr feel constitutes the essential nature of man and how does he identify it with the essential nature of God? If he maintains that the essential nature of man is simple and a unity, it follows that his God also possesses an essential nature which is simple and a unity. Consequently, his system fulfills the criterion set down at the beginning of this chapter and qualifies as a monotheistic system. Perhaps the best way to get a "handle" on his position concerning man's essential nature is to examine how he thinks an individual should be perceived by fellow individuals. To this end he draws the following conclusion:

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[16]Ibid., p. 27.

> Love of the neighbor is required of every morality formed by a faith; but in a polytheistic faith the neighbor is defined as the one who is near me in my interest group, when he is near me in that passing association. In henotheistic social faith my neighbor is my fellow in the closed society. Hence in both instances the counterpart of the law of neighbor love is the requirement to hate the enemy. But in radical monotheism my neighbor is my companion in being.[17]

Man's essential nature, then, may be said to be comprised of "being" alone, which is indeed a simple and unitary construct. This is to say that man as man is an instantiation of "being." Niebuhr, having isolated this predicate, has made it qualitatively distinct from all of the other predicates which potentially could comprise man's essential nature. It only follows that his God, as an idealized man, should manifest this predicate in an ideal fashion. This is the case, for Niebuhr identifies his God as the cause of the "being" of the many.

As far as we have explored Niebuhr's system, it seems to be an almost ideal form of monotheism. And if he had stopped at this point, it could indeed stand as a model system. However, rather than stopping here, he extends the use of his concept of "being" as comprising both man and God's essential nature to include the essential nature of the totality of the many. From his point of view this is not only a logical but a necessary extension in that, perhaps, his main motivation in undertaking his project was to undermine the perpetuation of henotheistically based systems and world views. This is clear from the following:

> A radical monotheism would include reverence for the dead and that not simply because they were once alive; it would include

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[17]Ibid., p. 30.

> reverence for beings, inorganic, perhaps ideal, that though not living, claim the wondering and not exploitative attention of us other creatures that have the will to live.[18]

Clearly, then, Niebuhr seems to have no vested interest in man as man, that is, apart from his general participation in the larger community of "being." Even if he feels that man possesses any substantial characteristics which are peculiar to him, they would undoubtedly have second order importance in determining his essential nature; for ultimately man is held to be at one with the totality simply as a function of his participation in "being."

It will be remembered that the major difficulty confronting the question of Mosaic monotheism was its fragmented approach to man and consequently to God. The difficulty which Niebuhr faces is the antithesis of the Hebrew difficulty. Although it is not entirely clear what Niebuhr means by either "being" or the "principle of "being," it does seem to be the case that where one predicate is not only shared by the component parts of the totality but also comprises the essential nature of each component, a complete collapse of diversity ensues, and one is left with a simple monism. This is to say that all that is, is being and being is all that is, which is perhaps meaningful from a Parmenidean point of view, but such a view entails the virtual dismissal of the simply phenomenal as illusion. Aristotle makes this point when he asserts:

> Again, if there is to be absolute Being and absolute Unity, it is very hard to see how there can be anything else besides these; I mean how things can be more than one. For that which

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[18]Ibid., p. 34.

> is other than what it is, is not; and so by Parmenides argument it must follow that all things are one, i.e. Being.[19]

Niebuhr's radical monotheism seems to collapse into a monism of "being." This is undoubtedly due to his radical rejection of the apparent diversity inherent in the universe. For to deny that man is unique among the manifold objects which constitute the totality is simply to deny man. And to deny man is to deny man's God and to replace it with the meaningless concept of "being": meaningless because it includes everything and lacks any discriminative function; it may serve simply the ends of man as theoretician but not necessarily the ends of man as man.

Aristotle's theology is seen to represent a synthesis between the Hebraic system and the system of Niebuhr; so let us now turn to an examination of that system:

Aristotelian Monotheism

Aristotle begins his analysis of man with the following question:

> . . . the goodness or efficiency of a flute player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort, and in general of anybody who has some function or business to perform, is thought to reside in that function; and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man if he has a function.
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> Are we then to assume that, while the carpenter and shoemaker have definite functions or businesses belonging to them, man as such has none, and is not designed by nature to fulfill any function?[20]

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[19]Aristotle, Metaphysics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 135.

[20]_____, Nichomachean Ethics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 31.

By way of answering this question it becomes clear that Aristotle is searching for that "function" which is "peculiar to man." This leads him to reject the simple "act of living," which plants also partake in, and the "sentient life" as it is shared by all animals. He goes on to answer his question as follows:

> There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the rational part of man . . . . Rational life again has two meanings; let us assume that we are here concerned with the active exercise of the rational faculty, since this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. If then the function of man is the active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle, . . . (and) if this is so, and if we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence--from these premises it follows that the Good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them.[21]

For Artistotle, then, man's essential nature is known through his function, and that function turns out to be an activity of the soul in accordance with the "best or most perfect" of the human virtues. He goes on in Book X of the Nichomachean Ethics to isolate the most perfect activity, of which man is capable, when he asserts:

> . . . the activity of philosophic wisdom is the pleasantest of virtuous activities . . . . And this activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake; for nothing arises from it apart from the contemplating.[22]

Man as man, therefore, or man's essential nature is comprised of an activity, and this activity is the act of contemplating. This

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[21]Ibid., p. 33.

[22]R. McKeon, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 1104.

is, indeed, the case; for Aristotle flatly states, "reason more than anything else is man."[23] And while it is true that Aristotle distinguishes between the moral and intellectual virtues, he clearly considers the former to be of secondary importance when one is considering the essential nature and, hence, function of man as man. For he draws a distinction between simply human activities, to which the moral virtues attend, and divine activity. Even though man, for the most part, partakes of the former, due to his composite nature, it is towards the latter which man should strive. He drives this point home by asserting:

> If reason is divine, then in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us being men, to think of human things and being mortal, of mortal things, but must so far as we can make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. This would seem, too, to be each man himself since it is the authoritative and better part of him.[24]

And if it may be made any more explicit what one predicate describes man as man, we may refer back to Feuerbach's claim that "not the attribute of the divinity; but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being." And then note what Aristotle says about the activities associated with the moral virtues, to the effect that:

> For the moral activities are purely human: Justice, I mean, Courage and the other virtues we display in our intercourse with our fellows, when we observe what is due to each in contracts and services and in our various actions, and in our emotions also;

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[23]Ibid., p. 1105.

[24]Ibid.

> and all of these things seem to be purely human affairs . . . now the virtues of our composite nature are purely human.[25]

Many predicates pertain to man as a composite, but man as man is identified as "reason," and consequently man's essential nature is simple and a unity.

The task which remains is to illustrate that Aristotle held the position not only that God is numerically one and comprised of an essential nature which is simple and a unity, but also that its simple and unitary essential nature embodies the single idealized predicate which comprises man's essential nature.[26]

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, Aristotle does not simply posit the existence of a Supreme deity, but rather argues for the necessary existence of such a deity as well as the simplicity and unity of that deity's essential nature. Aristotle's argument for the necessary existence of his God is grounded in his conception of motion, and it is essentially a reductio ad absurdum argument which begins with the inductively derived observation that things move. In an attempt to trace to its beginning the origin of movement, he declares that this process must not regress infinitely. Consequently, there must be a first mover, which itself is not moved nor be moveable by its very nature. For if it were moveable, it would be potentially other than it is, but as pure actuality it

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[25]Aristotle, Metaphysics, op. cit., p. 619.

[26]W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 159, has maintained the following concerning the nature of the relationship which exists between the essential nature of man and that of Aristotle's God, "the difference lies in this, that the best in him (man)--that which is in the fullest sense his own true nature--is identical with the nature of that which is above him, with the nature of God."

possesses no potentiality. Also if it were moved, something prior to it must move it, and it would not then be the first mover.

Also it must move things without itself moving. This end is accomplished in that the prime mover "produces motion as being loved."[27] And although this is a rather cursory examination, it is Aristotle's conviction that "the first mover, then, exists of necessity."[28]

Concerning the prime mover's essential nature, given that it is pure actuality, it will manifest itself in activity. Aristotle identifies that activity by maintaining, "therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative."[29] One could conceptualize, then, Aristotle's God as--thought thinking thought. In order to insure the simplicity and unity of the essential nature of his God, Aristotle asserts: "Therefore it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking,"[30] and finally,

> A further question is left--whether the object of the divine thought is composite; for if it were, thought would change in passing from part to part of the whole. We answer that everything that has not matter is indivisible.[31]

Aristotle's conception of God, then, coupled with his views concerning the essential nature of man, appear to be productive of a

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[27]McKeon, op. cit., p. 879.

[28]Ibid., p. 880.

[29]Ibid., p. 1107.

[30]Ibid., p. 885.

[31]Ibid.

truly monotheistic system. And his approach to the problem seems to have avoided the pitfalls one encounters in the Hebraic system and the system of Niebuhr.

The intention of this chapter has been to illustrate that the traditional definition of "monotheism" is too narrow in that it speaks simply to the numerical status of any given deity. It has been suggested that the meaning of "monotheism" be expanded to include also the essential nature of the deity. Also the task was undertaken to show that man's formulation of the essential nature of his deity is a reflection of his self-perceived essential nature. As a consequence of this last assumption, the question concerning the nature of God in himself, has been purposely avoided. Perhaps it is fitting to end this chapter with an observation, on the meaningfulness of this question, offered by Feuerbach:

> If God were an object to the bird, he would be a winged being: the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful, than the winged condition. How ludicrous would it be if this bird pronounced: To me God appears as a bird, but what he is in himself I know not. To the bird the highest nature is the bird nature; take from him the conception of this, and you take from him the conception of the highest being. How then, could he ask whether God in himself were winged? To asked whether God is in himself what he is for me is to ask whether God is God, is to lift oneself above one's God, to rise up against him.[32]

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[32]Feuerbach, op. cit., p. 17.

Chapter 3

THE NATURE OF THE TASK

The task of isolating and describing the essential nature of the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C. Hebrews, let alone that of their god, may, on the one hand, be viewed, initially, as an insurmountable project, due simply enough to the plethora of predicates utilized by the prophets to describe their fellow man and their god, present in the prophetic literature of the period.

THE PROPHETIC CONCEPTION OF THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF MAN

Taking, collectively, these descriptions of their fellow man and combining them with the list of attributes predicated of Yahweh by the prophets would certainly yield an unwieldy conglomerate, which by its very size and apparent lack of homogeneity should cause considerable anxiety and no small degree of perplexity for the scholar who attempts to identify and isolate a single predicate, which is univocally predicable of both man and god; and who further wishes to assert that it is this one predicate which is responsible for determining the essential nature of each.

The alternative to the successful completion of this task would involve denying that both the people of this period and their faith were monotheistic, at least as far as that concept has been put

forth and is understood here. Methodological considerations seem further to cloud the issue when one attempts to justify the appropriate starting point for such an investigation. That is to say, that it is not obvious whether the investigation should begin with an examination of the essential nature of Yahweh, as espoused by the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, and descend to that of man, or vice versa. Feuerbach's contention, "By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical,"[1] would seem to be of little or no help in adjudicating the more appropriate starting point. Aristotle, on the other hand, offers a solution to this problem when he states:

> There are two senses in which things are prior and more knowable. That which is prior in nature is not the same as that which is prior in relation to us, and that which is (naturally) more knowable is not the same as that which is more knowable by us. By "prior" or "more knowable" in relation to us I mean that which is nearer to our perception, and by "prior" or "more knowable" in the absolute sense I mean that which is further from it. The most universal concepts are furthest from our perception, and particulars are nearest to it; and these are opposite to one another.[2]

While it may certainly be argued that both the essential natures of god and man constitute "universal concepts," the relative proximity of our neighbor coupled with our individual capacities for reflection would seem to provide a quite plausible rationale for initiating the analysis with an examination of the essential nature of the latter, ascending to that of the former.

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[1]See Chapter 2, p. 40.

[2]Aristotle, Posterior Analytics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 31-32.

The task of ascertaining the essential nature of the Hebrews of the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C., as described by the prophets of the period, may be greatly facilitated by reasking the question earlier offered by Aristotle:

> Are we then to assume that, while the carpenter and shoemaker have definite functions or businesses belonging to them, man as such has none, and is not designed by nature to fulfill any function?[3]

For the sake of clarity, this question may be paraphrased as follows --Given that the eighth through sixth centuries Hebrews recognized that a number of arenas existed within which various utilitarian and social functions of man were displayed (e.g., man as shepherd cared for his flock, man as priest maintained the temple and the rituals associated with it), did they not also recognize an arena wherein the activities, associated with this particular arena, made manifest the peculiar function of man as man? And if this question is answered in the affirmative, as it is contended here that it must be, the further question arises--Who, either individually or as a group, took the responsibility for elucidating the nature of man's peculiar function and instructed the people in how best to fulfill this function?

Just as the task fell to the master craftsmen of various trades to instruct the novices by relating the activities associated with their particular trade, so it fell to the prophets to instruct the people, collectively, in the field which most truly dealt with developing and refining their peculiarly human function. For, whereas the priests dealt with man in his relation to temple ritual,

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[3]See Chapter 2, p. 53.

or man as worshiper, the prophets dealt with man in his relation to his god. And for the ancient Hebrews, it was most surely the case that there was no other arena within which the human drama revealed more truly the absolute essence of the essential nature of man. This is to say that the possible objection, that the human/divine relationship deals primarily with man as worshiper, is dispelled due to the contention here that the ancient Hebrews' relation to Yahweh is not only best understood as, but in reality consisted of man's relation to man as well as man's relation to himself. In other words the locus of the divine for the ancient Hebrew had shifted from its heavenly abode to his neighbor, and, in a very real sense, to himself.

It is the further contention of this chapter, support of which is the substance of the following chapter, that the literary prophets, especially Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, held and developed the position that man as man had one unique function which was grounded in a single attribute. This one attribute was held to comprise the essential natures of both man and Yahweh. And in the most simple terms this attribute may be called the Ethical.

The justification for this position depends primarily on the confirmation of the following two hypotheses: (1) that the prophets, listed above, maintained that the most important activity their fellow Hebrews could engage in, involved the acquisition of a knowledge of Yahweh; and (2) that, at least for these prophets, the concept of Yahweh, as the object of an epistemological inquiry, was isomorphically related to a knowledge of the Ethical. This is to say that

knowledge of Yahweh did not manifest itself through achieving a cognitive state wherein the Ethical was reflected upon or contemplated in an abstract or theoretical form. Rather, knowledge of Yahweh was manifested through the active display of ethical behavior.[4] All of which reduces to the straight-forward position that, for the ancient Hebrew, to know Yahweh was to act ethically, and conversely, to act ethically was to know Yahweh. This position may become clearer through a brief sketching of the four prophets who will be dealt with more fully in the following chapter.

By and large, the combined works of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah have been historically, and may so still today, viewed as scathing indictments of a people who, though continuously having been nurtured and supported by their deity, nonetheless have returned evil for good and injustice for justice. Of these four prophets two, Amos and Jeremiah, lament the sins the rich perpetrate against the poor and the evil against the righteous. In other words, they seem particularly concerned with the injustices men commit against one another. On the other hand, Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah seem most concerned with the sins man commits against Yahweh, the foremost of which is that of idolatry.

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[4]Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1961), p. 359, where Eichrodt expresses a view which is quite close to the view offered here:

> The strong emphasis which we find in Hosea and Jeremiah on the "knowledge of God" does not, according to the generally agreed opinion, equate this da'at Yhwh with intellectual contemplation or theoretical knowledge of the divine will, but with the act whereby man admits the nature and will of God as these have been revealed into his inmost spiritual self, with the

Amos (5:12) clearly isolates those who sin against their fellow man:

> For I know how many are your
> transgressions
> and how great are your sins--
> you who afflict the righteous, who
> take a bribe,
> and turn aside the needy in the
> gate.

and further:

> Hear this, you who trample upon the
> needy,
> and bring the poor of the land to
> an end,
> saying, "When will the new moon
> be over,
> that we may sell grain?
> And the Sabbath
> that we may offer wheat for sale,
> that we may make the ephah small
> and the shekel great,
> and deal deceitfully with false
> balances,
> that we may buy the poor for silver
> and the needy for a pair of
> sandals,
> and sell the refuse of the wheat?
> (8:4-6)

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result that that self now seems permeated and conditioned by the essential character of God. Again Amos, even though he has no word for "ingratitude," is able to make the idea clear enough (2:9-12), and to characterize the essential nature of sin against God as precisely this utter insensitivity to all benefits. But what does all this mean, if not that the knowledge of God can only be achieved by a real act on the part of man?--an act, moreover, which is something quite different from mere cerebration, namely a real personal decision and acknowledgement, and not knowledge in the ordinary, neutral sense of the word.

For a further examination of Eichrodt's position, see Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. II (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1961), pp. 291-293. For the opinions of other Old Testament scholars concerning the meaning of the prophetic concept "knowledge of God," see: James Luther Mays, Hosea (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1969), pp. 62-64; James Luther Mays, Amos (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1969), pp. 56-67; Erling Hammershaimb, The Book

However, the identification of those who sin against man is only half the task which Amos sets for himself. His primary mission lies in instructing the people how to avoid these pitfalls. And it is with Amos that the first inkling of the belief that sin springs essentially from ignorance becomes apparent. Amos' development and treatment of this theme is at best, however, brief.

Implicit in Hosea's characterization of the people as a harlot is the notion that the sin of adultery is most truly a crime against the individual who commits the act and only in some secondary way against the person who finds himself associated with that individual. And as adultery is essentially the product of ignorance of what is truly the good, idolatry is seen as even more pathetic for its object, in reality, does not even exist. And there is a certain sorrow, rather than wrath, contained in Hosea's observation of the frivolity of his people, as is apparent in his statement:

> Wine and new wine
> take away the understanding.
> My people inquire of a thing of
> wood,
> and their staff gives them oracles.
> (4:11-12)

However, it is quite clear that Hosea is not seeking simply to alter the object of the people's worship. Rather, his goal is to alter the people's relationship to the divine altogether as is apparent from his assertion of Yahweh's plea:

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of Amos (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1970), pp. 56-57; James M. Ward, Hosea: A Theological Commentary (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 85-87; Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 142-143; Joseph Jensen, God's Word to Israel (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 201-202.

> For I desire steadfast love and not
> sacrifice,
> the knowledge of God, rather
> than burnt offerings.
> (6:6)

It is with Hosea, as is apparent from the above, that the concept of acquiring knowledge of Yahweh, actually "gets off the ground." And, as will be seen in the following chapter, Hosea treats this concept in a rather full manner.

The strongest support for the above stated thesis is found in the book of Jeremiah. With remarkable clarity and untiring persistence he drives home, repeatedly, the message that an acquisition of knowledge of Yahweh constitutes the proper and most perfect function of man. He further asserts that knowledge of Yahweh is irrevocably tied to and absolutely identified with knowledge of the Ethical, manifested through the display of ethical behavior. Jeremiah's teaching represents the complete fruition of this concept. And the thesis espoused in this chapter stands or falls on the work of this prophet.

The work of Deutero-Isaiah appears at first somewhat anachronistic. For, rather than being an extension of the position put forth by Jeremiah, it hearkens back to Amos in outlook and Hosea in content. This is to say that while being almost completely obsessed with the idolatry of the people, his basic response to that idolatry is first to deny the existence of other gods, time and time again, and secondarily to threaten a mighty display of the wrath of Yahweh. There is further, in Deutero-Isaiah, the initially complete usurpation, by Yahweh, of the attributes, divine sexuality being noticeably absent, of the gods of the Hebrews' neighbors. This excessive

anthropomorphization of Yahweh is a drastic departure from the subtle ethical position present in the works of his predecessors. And it is almost with a certain resignation toward the incorrigible nature of the people that Deutero-Isaiah reverts to earlier and more graphic modes of expression. There is, however, a small continuing thread of the ethical position offered by his predecessors, and this must be examined.

Aside from these various indictments, found in the collected writings of these prophets, there exists a body of literature comprised of commands to practice justice, display righteousness, practice steadfast loyalty, etc. And the question arises--if the Hebrews were specifically commanded to practice justice, why is it not, taken as a separate attribute, identified with their essential nature? And further why not the attributes of righteousness, loyalty, charity, etc. In other words, why is not the total complex of ethical concepts identified as comprising, as a collective, the essential nature of the ancient Hebrew? This is, indeed, a pertinent question which at the very least raises the suspicion that the essential nature of man, as viewed by these prophets, was indeed multifaceted. The only correct answer to this question is that supplied by the prophets themselves, that each instance of ethical behavior is held to be a manifestation of knowledge of Yahweh. And where the appropriate ethical behavior is absent from a given situation, they hold that it is due to an ignorance of Yahweh. The point here is that numerous individual commands to be just, righteous, loyal, etc., ultimately reduce to the overriding command to know Yahweh.

It would be tempting to argue that the prophets were advancing a philosophical argument which held that the individual virtues of justice, righteousness, loyalty, etc. are so called not as a function of representing individual and discrete human capacities, but rather as a function of representing a manifestation of knowledge of Yahweh, i.e., the Ethical. It is, however, assuredly the case that their perceptions of Ethics as an abstract, theoretical discipline had not reached the level of Plato's, for whom such an argument was quite feasible.[5]

This is not to say, however, that an apparent effort, conscious or not, is not present in their combined writings to collapse the various, so called, virtues under the rubric, knowledge of Yahweh. This effort seems to issue less from a zeal for parsimony, itself, than from their rigorous insistence that knowledge of Yahweh is not only a sufficient condition for insuring man's position as an ethical being, but also a necessary condition for bringing to perfection his essential nature.

A DETERMINANT THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

The English word "philosophy" is made up of the combination of the two Greek words "philos" and "sophia" and may be rendered literally into English as "love of wisdom." A philosopher, in the broadest sense of the term, is any individual who loves and seeks wisdom. As a scholarly discipline, the field of philosophy may be roughly

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[5]See especially the Protagoras, 360 d.

divided into three major areas of study; namely, logic, ethics, and metaphysics. Metaphysics, in turn, may be further subdivided into the areas of ontology and epistemology. While ontological questions deal primarily with the problem of existence or being, epistemological questions are addressed to the problem of knowledge. Thus, ontologies may be thought of as categories or lists of entities which are held to exist while epistemological theories attempt to supply a rational account of the meaning present in the statement--I know X, where X is understood as a given entity held to be present in any given ontology.

Rarely have the practitioners of any of the special fields of philosophy attempted to isolate themselves through the development of a unique and restricted subject matter. Rather philosophy, perhaps best understood as a critical methodology, has been broadly conceptualized and utilized by philosophers to critically examine quite diverse fields of study which has subsequently given rise to a plethora of special types of philosophy; e.g., philosophy of religion, philosophy of law, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, etc. In a very real sense, then, it may be maintained that philosophy does not contain its own unique subject matter for there does not exist a field of study which may be aptly described as philosophy of philosophy. Consequently, if one is willing to grant the view that a philosopher is essentially one who loves wisdom and searches for truth, and that those individuals who, historically, have addressed themselves to the problem of existence and have attempted to discover and describe how knowledge is related to ethics, are lovers of wisdom, the

conclusion that the literary prophets were, in a very real sense, philosophers is inescapable.

That these prophets, historically, have not been described as such may be due primarily to the fact that they held their God and the welfare of their fellow man to be of far greater importance than, from their point of view, the pale products of a life devoted simply to reason. Their apparent disdain for natural philosophy or science, which was later to be shared by Socrates,[6] coupled with their complete obsession with their task of bringing to their fellow man a heightened awareness of the nature of his relationship to his God, may seem to lead to the conclusion that they are best described as quasi-theologians. However, if only through a consideration of their ethical views, these prophets would easily find their way into the company of philosophers such as Socrates[7] and Plato. Beyond the construction of an ethical doctrine, although inextricably bound to it, these prophets must be credited with the formation of a unique theory of knowledge, from which they derived their basic conclusions concerning the nature of the Man/God relationship.

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[6]Plato, The Collected Dialogues, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 5-6, 78-79.

[7]Ibid., pp. 16-17, where the comparison between the prophets and Socrates is highly instructive:

> For this reason, gentlemen, so far from pleading on my own behalf, as might be supposed, I am really pleading on yours, to save you from misusing the gift of God by condemning me. If you put me to death, you will not easily find anyone to take my place. It is literally true, even if it sounds rather comical, that God has specially appointed me to this city, as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which because of its great size

The elucidation of the prophetic usage of the concept "knowledge of God" will depend primarily on discovering the meaning of the word "knowledge" when Yahweh was held to be the entity to be known. It is the contention here that the prophets gave a new connotation to the verb "yada" and the noun "da'at" when Yahweh was the object of knowledge. The verb "yada" is most often translated in English as "to perceive, to understand, to know; to be acquainted with."[8] However, none of these meanings approach the sense of action or doing found in the prophets' declaration to man--to know the Lord. Likewise, the noun "da'at" when translated as "knowledge, insight"[9] lacks the notion of the causal role such knowledge, when taken as knowledge of God, plays in determining the actions of man.

Simply stated, it is being maintained here that the new connotation which the prophets gave to "yada" and "da'at" may best be

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> is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation of some stinging fly. It seems to me that God has attached me to this city to perform the office of such a fly, and all day long I never cease to settle here, there, and everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving everyone of you.

and further, p. 68:

> I (Socrates) believe that the swans, belonging as they do to Apollo, have prophetic powers and sing because they know the good things that await them in the unseen world, and they are happier on that day (the day of their death) than they have ever been before. Now I consider that I am in the same service as the swans, and dedicated to the same god, and that I am no worse endowed with prophetic powers by my master than they are, and no more disconsolate at leaving this life.

[8]Karl Feyerabend, Langenscheidt Pocket Hebrew Dictionary to the Old Testament (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), p. 122.

[9]Ibid., p. 72.

described as representing a determinant theory of knowledge,[10] where the force of the term "determinant" is closely associated with Aristotle's conception of "efficient cause," "the primary source of the change or coming to rest . . . generally what makes of what is made and what causes change of what is changed."[11] This is to say that the view is derivable from the writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah that, for man, a "knowledge of God" was held to be absolutely determinant and causally productive of man's performance of acts of an ethical nature. Or, in other words, that for these prophets "knowledge of God" is identified with an indwelling ethical principle which both constituted man's essential nature and was deemed the absolute cause of his living an ethically-based life.

An important consequence of this position, if it is the case that the prophets held such a view concerning the nature and role man's "knowledge of God" played in determining his actions, is that the prophets must have necessarily rejected any notion of a dual potentiality of action which could arise from such knowledge, such that a man may be said to truly possess "knowledge of God" and yet act in an unethical manner. Essentially this view reduces to the position that evil or sin is the product of man's ignorance of God,

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[10]The label Determinant Theory of Knowledge has been chosen to avoid any confusion with the current epistemological theory known as "A Causal Theory of Knowing." For a treatment of the latter theory, see Alvin I. Goldman, Knowing: Essays in the Analysis of Knowledge, eds. Michael D. Roth and Leon Galis (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), pp. 67-88.

[11]Richard McKeon, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 241.

and culpability attaches to man's rejection of knowledge rather than his conscious desire for evil.

The proof for the position that the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah embraced the view that the highest good for man resided in his acquiring a "knowledge of God" which would enable him to live an ethical life and the further view that Yahweh was to be identified with the Ethical itself, is only to be gained from an examination of the writings of these prophets. This, however, is the task of the following chapter. Theoretical justification for the positing of a determinant theory of knowledge is to be gained from an examination of the ethical views of both Plato and Aristotle. For there exists a high degree of similarity between the position here ascribed to the prophets concerning the nature and function of man's "knowledge of God" and Plato's views concerning the role played by knowledge in determining that man act in an ethical manner. Aristotle's ethical views offer added support for the general position here attributed to the prophets.

Plato is credited with the refinement of the position, the origin of which has been attributed to Socrates, that it is impossible for man to know the right and yet do the wrong. The cornerstone of his ethical system, however, is contained in his view that all men desire the good and that man's doing of evil is grounded in his ignorance of that which truly constitutes the good. While it is true that Plato's Ethics does not contain a specific theory of action which clearly defines the relationship of knowledge to action, it is his general view that the just man, ruled by reason and in possession of knowledge of what constitutes the good, will act accordingly.

Which is to say that for Plato, reason is held sufficient to determine the just man's actions. Aristotle, while voicing general agreement with the position of Plato, reinforces the view that man's knowledge of the good will determine his acting on the basis of that knowledge.

Although the position has been stated above that the prophets conceptualized Yahweh as an indwelling ethical principle which they identified with the Ethical itself, it is the view of Abraham Heschel that the prophets were not concerned with discovering that which constituted Yahweh's essential nature:

> Overwhelmingly, mysteriously different from man, God was not the object of imagination. He could not be captured in a myth or comprehended in a concept or a symbol. Challenging, involved, and concerned, His presence pierced the impregnable walls of His otherness. The dilemma was overcome by abstaining from any claim to comprehend God's essence, His inmost being, or even to apprehend His inscrutable thoughts, unrelated to history, and by insisting upon the ability to understand His presence, expression or manifestation. The prophets experience what He utters, not what He is.
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> Ontologically, the distinction between being and expression is rooted in the distinction between essence and relation. The theme of prophetic understanding is not the mystery of God's essence, but rather the mystery of His relation to man. The prophet does not speculate about God in Himself; in thinking about Him, the world is always present. His message does not seek to disclose or to impart new truth concerning the divine Being. What the prophet knows about God is His pathos, His relation to Israel and to mankind. God can be understood by man only in conjunction with the human situation.[12]

In his remarks, Heschel has addressed himself to the issue briefly dealt with at the end of the preceding chapter; namely, adjudicating the appropriateness of man's attempt to discover the nature of God's

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[12]Abraham Heschel, The Prophets, Vol. II (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 264-265.

essence. Clearly, Heschel has taken the position that the prophets did not endeavor to discover what God is in Himself.

Stressing the prophetic concern for illuminating the nature of the Man/God relationship, Heschel has apparently overlooked the fact that the nature of that relationship may be rendered intelligible only after the essential natures of both man and God have been endowed with some common form; some common or shared basis upon which a relationship may be seen to exist. The discovery of this common or shared basis, as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, must first issue from man's self perception and recognition of his own essential nature. Only after man has recognized that part of himself which truly constitutes his essential nature, only then may he grapple with the problem of discovering how he is related to his God. It is only within this context of man's heightened self awareness of that which comprises his own essential nature that the prophetic command--know the Lord--acquires its true significance. For this "knowledge of God" was held by the prophets not only to determine man's actions, but also was held to constitute his essential nature, thereby securing the common basis upon the Man/God relationship could be firmly founded.

Plato's and Aristotle's Ethics

Any system of Ethics which is predicated upon a determinant theory of knowledge would hold the following proposition to be true: If P knows X to be the right thing to do in situation Y, P's knowledge will determine that P perform X. Though this proposition is not present in the works of either Plato or Aristotle, certain of their

ethical positions approach it to the degree of offering historical and philosophical justification for the development of such an epistemological theory to account for the epistemological views present in the writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah.

Plato's views concerning man's attempt to live an ethical life are best summed up in his claim that it is impossible for a man to know the right and yet do the wrong. This claim represents, for Plato, a conclusion which is derived from a number of his thoughts concerning the nature of man and the relationship which exists between knowledge and right action. Plato holds, as fundamental, the position that man, as man, has a unique function. Man's unique function is seen to reside in his living a life which will lead to his gaining happiness. Just as man has a unique function, so, too, does he possess the peculiarly human virtue--justice--which enables him to fulfill his function well. Plato is firm in his conviction that all men desire the good and that man's evil is due to his ignorance of what truly constitutes the good. By combining these aspects of Plato's thought, the position emerges, to wit: If a man is living a just life which is determined through his use of reason and is cognizant of that which constitutes the good, he will act accordingly. This position should become clearer after Plato's thoughts have been examined more closely.

In Book I (352e-353e) of his Republic, Plato poses the question that if horses, eyes, and pruning knives may each be said to have a proper work or function, is it not also the case that man, as man, must not also be said to have a proper work or function? And

if it may be agreed that man, as man, has a proper work or function, does he not also possess a unique virtue which enables him to perform his function well? Francis MacDonald Cornford has offered the following observation concerning Plato's answer to these questions:

> The argument (found in the Republic, Book I, pp. 352e-353e) turns on the doctrine (adopted as fundamental in Aristotle's Ethics) that man, like any other living species, has a peculiar work or function or activity, in the satisfactory exercise of which his well-being or happiness will consist; and also a peculiar excellence or virtue, namely a state of his soul from which that satisfactory activity will result.[13]

If Cornford's remarks were applied to the works of the prophets, clearly the prophets' exhortations for man to do that which is ethical would seem to support the view that the ancient Hebrews were deemed, by these prophets, to have a peculiar work or function. Also the point may be made that the ancient Hebrews' successful performance of their ethical activities depended directly on the state of their souls. This is to say that when the "soul" of the ancient Hebrew was illuminated with "knowledge of God," then, and only then, could he perform his function in a satisfactory manner.

It is undoubtedly the case that the product derived from man's satisfactory performance of his work or function is held to be the same for both Plato and the prophets; namely, man's securing his "well-being or happiness." While the prophets would identify man's specific "excellence" with "knowledge of God," Plato claims that it is justice:

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[13]Francis MacDonald Cornford, The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 36.

Then next consider this. The soul, has it a work which you couldn't accomplish with anything else in the world, as for example, management, rule, deliberation, and the like? Is there anything else than the soul to which you could rightly assign these and say that they were its peculiar work?

Nothing else.

And again life? Shall we say that too is the function of the soul?

Most certainly, he said.

And do we not also say that there is an excellence or virtue of the soul?

We do.

Will the soul ever accomplish its own work well if deprived of its own virtue, or is this impossible?

It is impossible.

Of necessity, then, a bad soul will govern and manage things badly while the good soul will in all things do well.

Of necessity.

And did we not agree that the excellence or virtue of soul is justice and its defect injustice?

Yes, we did.

The just soul and the just man then will live well and the unjust ill?

So it appears, he said, by your reasoning.

But furthermore, he who lives well is blessed and happy, and he who does not the contrary.

Of course.

Then the just is happy and the unjust miserable.[14]

Clearly, Plato's conception of justice transcends the common view in which justice is understood in terms of interpersonal relationships.

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[14]Plato, op. cit., p. 604.

When describing a just individual, Plato utilizes his tri-partite conception of the soul. Plato divided the soul into three parts: the rational part, the spirited part, and the appetitative part. Plato understands the just man to possess a soul in which each of the three parts is performing its own function:

> Then it applies to justice: we shall conclude that a man is just in the same way that a state was just. And we have surely not forgotten that justice in the state meant that each of the three orders in it was doing its own proper work. So we may henceforth bear in mind that each one of us likewise will be a just person, fulfilling his proper function, only if the several parts of our nature fulfill theirs.
>
> Certainly,
>
> And it will be the business of reason to rule with wisdom and forethought on behalf of the entire soul.[15]

The just man, then, for Plato, is one in whom the three parts of his soul are performing their proper functions. The soul of the just man is one in which reason is held dominant.

Earlier in his Republic (Book I, 350d), Plato identifies justice with wisdom and injustice with ignorance:

> But when we did reach our conclusion that justice is virtue and wisdom and injustice vice and ignorance, Good, said I, let this be taken as established.[16]

In identifying justice with wisdom and vice with ignorance, Plato broaches the issue concerning the relationship which exists between knowledge and action. Clearly Plato's conclusion sets the stage for asking the question--Is it possible that a man knowing X to be an evil, nonetheless desires X? In his dialogue, the Meno, Plato offers the following answer to this question:

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[15]Cornford, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

[16]Plato, op. cit., p. 600.

Socrates: Then do you think some men desire evil and others good? Doesn't everyone, in your opinion, desire good things?

Meno: No.

Socrates: And would you say that the others suppose evils to be good, or do they still desire them although they recognize them as evil?

Meno: Both, I should say.

Socrates: What? Do you really think that anyone who recognizes evils for what they are, nevertheless desires them?

Meno: Yes.

Socrates: Desires in what way? To possess them?

Meno: Of course.

Socrates: In the belief that evil things bring advantage to their possessor, or harm?

Meno: Some in the first belief, but some also in the second.

Socrates: And do you believe that those who suppose evil things bring advantage understand that they are evil?

Meno: No, that I cannot really believe.

Socrates: Isn't it clear then that this class, who don't recognize evils for what they are, don't desire evil but what they think is good, though in fact it is evil; those who through ignorance mistake bad things for good obviously desire the good?

Meno: For them I suppose that is true.

Socrates: Now as for those whom you speak of as desiring evils in the belief that they do harm to their possessor, these presumably know that they will be injured by them?

Meno: They must.

Socrates: And don't they believe that whoever is injured is, insofar as he is injured, unhappy?

Meno: That too they must believe.

Socrates: And unfortunate?

Meno: Yes

> Socrates: Well, does anybody want to be unhappy and unfortunate?
>
> Meno: I suppose not.
>
> Socrates: Then if not, nobody desires what is evil, for what else is unhappiness but desiring evil things and getting them?
>
> Meno: It looks as if you are right, Socrates, and nobody desires what is evil.[17]

Plato's position thus far examined, illustrates the view that when man possesses knowledge of the good, he will desire it and it is only due to ignorance that man chooses evil. However, Plato has yet to make clear that action is the direct result of man's possession of this knowledge of the good.

Plato expands his view concerning the relationship of knowledge to action in his work the Protagoras:

> What is your attitude to knowledge? Do you share the common view about that also? Most people think, in general terms, that it is nothing strong, no leading or ruling element. They don't see it like that. They hold that it is not the knowledge that a man possesses which governs him, but something else--now passion, now pleasure, now pain, sometimes love, and frequently fear. They just think of knowledge as a slave, pushed around by all other affections. Is this your view, too, or would you rather say that knowledge is a fine thing quite capable of ruling a man, and that if he can distinguish good from evil, nothing will force him to act otherwise than as knowledge dictates, since wisdom is all the reinforcement he needs?
>
> Not only is this my view, replied Protagoras, but I above all men should think it shame to speak of wisdom and knowledge as anything but the most powerful elements in human life.
>
> Well and truly answered, said I. But I expect you know that most men don't believe us.[18]

In this passage Plato declares that knowledge of the good is all a man needs in order to do the good. Indeed the just man who is ruled by

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[17]Ibid., pp. 360-361.

[18]Ibid., p. 344.

reason and who "can distinguish good from evil" will act "as knowledge dictates." The question may now be raised--If a man is performing his unique function, guided through the use of reason, is it possible that he may err and choose evil in the place of good? The following line of reasoning, expressed by Thrasymachus in the Republic, may suggest Plato's response to this question:

> Why, to take the nearest example, do you call one who is mistaken about the sick a physician in respect of his mistake or one who goes wrong in a calculation a calculator when he goes wrong and in respect of this error? Yet that is what we say literally--we say that the physician erred, and the calculator and the schoolmaster. But the truth, I take it, is, that each of these in so far as he is that which we entitle him never errs, so that, speaking precisely, since you are such a stickler for precision, no craftsman errs. For it is when his knowledge abandons him that he who goes wrong goes wrong--when he is not a craftsman.[19]

Just then, as Plato has Thrasymachus assert that the craftsman errs "only when his knowledge abandons him" and that when his special knowledge abandons him that he is not really a craftsman, so too is man something less than man when bereft of that special knowledge which enables him to perform his function well.

Aristotle's reaction to Plato's line of reasoning concerning the relationship of knowledge to action at first appears to be negative:

> How can a man fail in self-restraint when believing correctly that what he does is wrong? Some people say that he cannot do so when he knows the act to be wrong; since, as Socrates held, it would be strange if, when a man possessed knowledge, some other thing should overpower it, and "drag it about like a slave." In fact Socrates used to combat the view (that a man may know the right and do the wrong) altogether, implying that there is no such thing as Unrestraint, since no one, he held, acts contrary

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[19]Ibid., p. 590.

> to what is best, believing what he does to be bad, but only through ignorance. Now this theory is manifestly at variance with plain facts.[20]

However, after a discussion of the various senses in which the word "know" is used[21] and the various ways in which a man may be said to have knowledge,[22] Aristotle states that the cause of Unrestraint may be studied "scientifically":

> Again, one may study the cause of Unrestraint scientifically, thus: In a practical syllogism, the major premise is an opinion, while the minor premise deals with particular things, which are the province of perception. Now when the two premises are combined, just as in theoretic reasoning the mind is compelled to affirm the resulting conclusion, so in the case of practical premises you are forced at once to do it.[23]

and further,

> But inasmuch as the last premise, which originates action, is an opinion as to some object of sense, and it is this opinion which the unrestrained man when under the influence of passion either does not possess, or only possesses in a way which as we saw does not amount to knowing it but only makes him repeat it as the drunken man repeats the maxims of Empedocles, and since the ultimate term is not a universal, and is not deemed to be an object of Scientific Knowledge in the same way as a universal term is, we do seem to be led to the conclusion which Socrates sought to establish. For the knowledge which is present when failure of self-restraint occurs is not held to be knowledge in the true sense, nor is it true knowledge which is dragged about by passion, but knowledge derived from sense-perception.[24]

Clearly, Aristotle's views support those of Plato concerning the nature of the relationship of knowledge to action. Exactly what constitutes,

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[20]Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 379.

[21]Ibid., p. 387.

[22]Ibid., p. 389.

[23]Ibid., p. 391.

[24]Ibid., p. 393.

for Aristotle, an object of "scientific knowledge," however, is made clear when he states:

> We all conceive that a thing which we know scientifically cannot vary; when a thing that can vary is beyond the range of our observation, we do not know whether it exists or not. An object of Scientific Knowledge, therefore, exists of necessity. It is therefore eternal, for everything existing of absolute necessity is eternal; and what is eternal does not come into existence or perish.[25]

Although Aristotle did not wish to identify his objects of "Scientific Knowledge" with Plato's Forms, there is a striking resemblance between the two. And though Plato initially speaks of the "Human Good" as "the most important object of knowledge,"[26] later in the Republic Cornford observes:

> He held that man's happiness consists in the full realization of his characteristic virtue and function, and that his virtue, as a rational being, is a clear insight into the true end of life, "knowledge of the Good." Such knowledge, once attained, cannot fail to determine will and action.[27]

and concerning the nature of the "Good" Cornford continues:

> In Greek "the Good" is normally synonymous with "Goodness itself." This is the supreme Form or Essence manifested not only in the special kinds of moral goodness, Justice, Courage, etc., but throughout all Nature and especially in the beautiful and harmonious order of the heavenly bodies. The knowledge of the Good, on which well-being depends, is now to include an understanding of the moral and physical order of the whole universe.[28]

Plato firmly refused to offer a definition of the "Good" but maintained that it was known through direct apprehension.[29] Norman

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Cornford, op. cit., p. 211.

[27]Ibid., p. 212.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

Gottwald, cognizant of the similarity existing between the thought of Plato and that of Hosea has maintained:

> So far Hosea stands close in his insight to the view of Plato that to know the right is to do the right, for knowledge of the good has an intrinsically attractive and self-authenticating quality. Political chaos, social disintegration, moral laxity, and religious defection--all these have at their core the failure to see the nature of reality. Not to know God is not to know one's own welfare.[30]

Gottwald's assertion, to wit: "Not to know God is not to know one's own welfare," may be viewed as the cornerstone of the religious thought of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah. As noted above, only an examination of the writings of these prophets will divulge the exact nature of their views concerning the nature of the relationship which exists between man's "knowledge of God" and his subsequent actions. Nonetheless, it should be clear that the views of both Plato and Aristotle lay a philosophical foundation for utilizing a determinant theory of knowledge to account for and help explain the views of these prophets.

It is hoped that the above remarks may serve as a sufficient propaedeutic for the task which remains; namely, the explication of the concept, knowledge of Yahweh, through which the two hypotheses stated above should garner their support. The method to be employed involves examining the concept as it is found in the relevant passages located in the works of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. To restate simply, these hypotheses maintain that: (1) from the prophetic point of view, man's unique and peculiar function resides in his

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[30]Norman K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 303.

acquiring a knowledge of Yahweh; and (2) that knowledge of Yahweh is identified with knowledge of the Ethical. The conclusion to be drawn from these hypotheses is that what causes man most truly to be man, or comprises his essential nature, is his acquisition of knowledge of Yahweh; i.e., the Ethical, combined with his display of that knowledge. The further conclusion is that Yahweh's essential nature is comprised wholly of the Ethical. In sum, the essential nature of man is identical to that of Yahweh. This is a conclusion which, if supported by the evidence, qualifies the Judaism of the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C., at least as put forth by the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, to be considered truly monotheistic.

Chapter 4

THE MAN/GOD RELATIONSHIP

Within the combined works of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah there are thirty-one passages which deal with the prophetic position that man's acquisition and display of knowledge of Yahweh constitutes his summum bonum. Of these thirty-one passages, sixteen deal with the subject explictly, whereas the remaining fifteen handle the topic in a more circumspect manner. No less than one half of these passages are located in the writings of Jeremiah. The remaining sixteen passages are scattered through the combined writings of Amos, Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah.

If an evolutionary view were to be posited concerning the development of this concept, it would run roughly as follows. The concept of acquiring knowledge of Yahweh, or the Ethical, is initially developed quite tentatively in the book of Amos, where only two of the thirty-one passages are found. However, the concept seems well grounded in the work of Hosea, where one-third of the passages are found. Hosea first clearly states that the doing of right, or the right thing, is dependent absolutely, upon the prior procurement of knowledge. It is not only the presence of fifteen passages in the book of Jeremiah that leads to the undeniable conclusion that it is with this prophet that the concept attains fulfillment. For it is in the work of Jeremiah that the essential nature of Yahweh is laid bare

through Jeremiah's identification of it, unequivocally, with the Ethical. And further, man's essential nature is shown to be comprised totally of the Ethical and his proper function, to reside in the doing of ethical activities. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the treatment of the concept in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah, where four of the passages are found, is at best cursory. Deutero-Isaiah directs the majority of his energy to securing the aloneness of Yahweh, a concept which lacks not only the subtlety of knowledge of Yahweh, but also contains ramifications which are difficult to apply not only to man, but to Yahweh himself. That is to say, that once Deutero-Isaiah has succeeded in localizing the totality of the divine in one being, beyond having secured a single object of worship, it is difficult to see what he has achieved. Indeed, if Deutero-Isaiah 55:8-9 is seen as the culmination of his efforts, what he has truly wrought is the complete and utter separation of the Hebrew from his God, a conclusion of at least questionable value. Given, however, that there are vestigial elements of the concept knowledge of Yahweh present in his writings, his work will be examined in the present analysis of that concept.

What follows is not an in depth analysis of each of the four prophets, dealing to any great extent with their personal circumstances or the unique situations within which they found themselves. Neither will the vast bulk of their writings be analyzed in an attempt to present their combined works as a systematized, unified whole. Rather the thread of the concept knowledge of Yahweh and its relation to knowledge of the Ethical is to be traced through each of the four prophets. Consequently, where passages have been lifted

from their context, this has been done with neither a lack of appreciation of the importance of context nor with an unawareness of the pitfalls inherent in such a process, but rather with the conviction that such a line of thought is present in the combined writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, and deserves to be studied in its own right. While the specific claim is not being advanced here that the passages taken from the combined works of these prophets, constitute a conscious effort on the part of these prophets to develop, systematize and promulgate a coherent, unified philosophical doctrine, this fact, nonetheless, does not detract from the position that such a doctrine is present. And while it is undoubtedly true that virtually all philosophical and historical reconstructions impose a certain artificial order on ideas and events that may well find their provenance in quite disparate surroundings, the works of the Hebrew prophets, taken collectively, may generally suffer less from this condition in that their aim, by and large, was common and shared; viz., to bring to the ancient Hebrew a greater awareness of his relation to his God.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SOURCES

There remains but one task to which we must turn our efforts before proceeding to the analysis of the thoughts of the prophets. This task deals with determining the authenticity of those passages which have been lifted from the writings of the prophets to develop the general prophetic position concerning the nature of the Man/God relationship. For if it is shown that these passages do not derive

from and consequently do not embody the views of whichever prophet is being considered, clearly, the validity of the entire argument, which is developed in the following section, will become, at the very least, open to question.

On the other hand, where it is clearly demonstrated that a given passage must be ascribed to an author other than the prophet in whose writings the passage is found, it is difficult to imagine that a later redactor would feel completely free to either change or add to a particular body of prophetic thought any material which may be seen to be antithetical either in content or form to the general views of that prophet. Also, the point must be stressed that the determination of the authenticity of these passages is founded upon the conclusions of Old Testament scholars rather than upon sources which could supply a completely definitive answer to the question of whether or not this or that statement sprung directly from this or that prophet.

This observation is not meant to detract in any way from the scholarly efforts of those Old Testament researchers who have grappled with this extremely difficult problem. Rather it is intended to draw attention to the fact that the verasity of the conclusions arrived at by those Old Testament scholars must be viewed as statements expressing relative probability rather than absolute certainty.

Further, it should be noted, that any attempt to determine the authenticity of the entire text of each of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah, is not undertaken in that which follows. A determination of the authenticity of only those passages which have been employed to develop the argument found in the following section

is being sought. These passages are: Amos 3:2, 3:10; Hosea 2:8, 2:19-20, 4:12, 4:4-6, 4:11-12, 5:3-4, 6:6, 8:2-3, 13:4, 14:9; Jeremiah 2:8, 3:15, 4:22, 5:4-5, 7:9-10, 8:7-9, 9:6, 9:23-24, 10:23, 10:25, 13:23-25, 16:21, 19:4-6, 22:15-16, 31:31-34; Deutero-Isaiah 44:19, 44:21-22, 45:4-6, 51:7.

Only two passages have been taken from the book of Amos and determining their authenticity represents a relatively simple task. James Luther Mays has stated:

> The book of Amos is composed primarily of material of three distinct types: (1) sayings spoken by a prophet in carrying out his commission; (2) first-person narratives told by the prophet; (3) a third-person narrative about the prophet. In the present form of the book these major types of material are distributed in this fashion. True to its title, "The words of Amos" (I.I), the book begins with a large block of sayings (1.3-6.14). Then comes a section composed of four vision reports in first-person style (7.1-3, 4-6, 7-9; 8.1-3) with the only third-person narrative about Amos set between the third and fourth vision reports (7.10-17). The sayings resume in 8.4-14, then comes a fifth first-person vision report (9.1-6), and a final sequence of sayings closes the book (9.7-15). The three major types of material do not quite exhaust the book; there are a few bits of material scattered through the book which belong to other categories: the title (1.1), sections of hymnic poetry (1.2; 4.13; 5.8f; 9.5f; 8.8?), an observation of the kind characteristic of wisdom (5.13).
>
> The larger part of the material can be attributed with confidence to Amos. Most of the sayings and the five autobiographical narratives fit appropriately into a choherent picture of his prophetic activity in Israel just before the turn of the eighth century.[1]

In a similar vein Erling Hammershaimb has commented concerning the general integrity of the book of Amos: "The text is one of the best preserved among the prophetic books, and in only very few passages are there good reasons to assume a textual corruption."[2]

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[1]James Luther Mays, Amos (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1969), p. 12.

[2]Erling Hammershaimb, The Book of Amos (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1970), p. 15.

Verses 3:2 and 3:10, however, have not been cited by Hammershaimb as having suffered from this "textual corruption."[3] Also, Otto Eissfeldt has failed to include these two passages in that group of passages generally held to be "secondary additions."[4] Consequently, it may be assumed that these two passages truly express the thoughts of Amos.

It is the position of both Eissfeldt[5] and Mays[6] that there are very few passages present in the book of Hosea which are to be considered secondary additions. None of the ten passages, which are utilized in the following section, have been identified as belonging to that group of material which "did not originate with Hosea."[7]

Fifteen passages have been taken from the book of Jeremiah and the findings of Old Testament scholars attest to the fact that only three of these passages did not issue directly from Jeremiah. These passages are Jer. 7:9-10, 19:4-6, and 31:31-34. Concerning the authenticity of Jer. 7:9-10, Gerhard von Rad has observed:

> A relatively large strand of the Jeremiah tradition bears the marks of the influence of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomists; i.e., it is dependent on the Deuteronomistic terminology and is in prose. For prophetic diction, the latter suggests in principle secondary redaction. The passages in question are (according to Rudolph, H.A.T., p. xvi) the following passages: Jer. VII.VIII.3, XI.1-14, XVI.1-13, XVII.19-27, XVIII.1-12, XXI.1-10, XXII.1-5, XV.1-14, XXXIV.8-22, XXXV.[8]

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 400.

[5]Ibid., pp. 387-391.

[6]James Luther Mays, Hosea (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1969), p. 16.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. II (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 193.

Otto Eissfeldt has expressed a similar view concerning the authenticity of Jer. 7:9-10:

> We may reckon with it (the original scroll of Jeremiah) as a clearly demonstrated entity which at least in very large measure actually goes back to Jeremiah himself. Its genuineness is suspect particularly in the prohibition of the desecration of the sabbath in xvii, 19-27, and in various parts of the Temple sermon in vii, I-viii, 3.[9]

Jer. 7:9-10 expresses the view that idolatry is primarily an impediment to man's acquiring a "knowledge of Yahweh." It is the first of three passages utilized to reconstruct Jeremiah's perceptions dealing with idolatry. Although its authenticity is suspect, it has been retained in the general argument on the grounds that it is not at all improbable that it truly expresses Jeremiah's position concerning the detrimental effects idolatry has on preventing the people of Israel from correctly perceiving how they are related to their God.

Jer. 19:4-6, like Jer. 7:9-10, is utilized in the argument found in the following section to develop further Jeremiah's stand on the problem of idolatry. Concerning the authenticity of Jer. 19:4-6, von Rad asserts "Vss. 2b-9 and 12-13 can be seen to be later additions."[10]

The intent of Jer. 19:4-6 is to threaten the Israelites, for their practice of idolatry, with the wrath of Yahweh. Like Jer. 7:9-10, the retention of Jer. 19:4-6 is not held to be absolutely critical to preserve the integrity of the argument found in the following

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[9]Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 353.

[10]von Rad, op. cit., p. 198.

section. Nonetheless, it has been retained in the body of that argument for the same reasons given for the retention of Jer. 7:9-10.

The dispute concerning the authenticity of the material found in Jer. 31:31-34 is held to constitute a somewhat more serious matter. For it is held to be precisely in this passage that Jeremiah espouses the view that man's "knowledge of God" is to be placed directly into man by God himself, consequently bringing to fruition man's essential nature and determining absolutely the very nature of the Man/God relationship.

Concerning the authenticity of the material found in Jer. 31:31-34, von Rad has contended:

> Furthermore, even Jer. XXXI.31ff. can hardly be the form of the oracle as it was originally spoken by Jeremiah, for he, like the other prophets, usually gave his oracles a verse form. Jer. XXXI.31ff. is, however, prose, though there are one or two places where the outlines of an original verse form can still be recognized. The best explanation is therefore that Jeremiah spoke of the new covenant on two different occasions (Jer. XXXI.34-4 and Jer. XXXII.37-41), both times in a different way, and that each of the passages as we now have them has been subsequently worked over.[11]

He goes on to note that S. Herrmann denies that even the content of Jer. 31:31-34 may be attributed to Jeremiah.[12]

Otto Eissfeldt, however, has maintained the following concerning the "content" of Jer. 31:31-34:

> Jeremiah's authorship has also not been unquestioned for the beautiful saying concerning the new covenant in xxxi, 31-4, a saying which nevertheless has its own intrinsic value. As far as content is concerned, it certainly could be put into the mouth of Jeremiah. The narrative of xxxii makes it quite certain that in a cheerless contemporary situation, which apparently left no

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[11]Ibid., p. 214.

[12]Ibid., p. 215.

> room for hope, he believed in a new age of salvation and also proclaimed it. It also corresponds entirely to the rest of his message that the most precious value of this time of salvation would be a personal communion between the individual man and his God.[13]

Aside from the question of "content" Eissfeldt concedes that Jeremiah was not responsible for the "present form" of this passage.[14] Consequently, Jer. 31:31-34 has been retained in the argument which follows, not simply because it is viewed as a critical element in that argument, but because there are sufficient grounds for believing that its "content" truly expresses Jeremiah's views concerning the new covenant God is to make with man.

Of the four passages taken from the writings of Deutero-Isaiah, Claus Westermann is of the opinion that only Is. 45:4-6 is to be attributed to that prophet.[15] Is. 44:19 is considered by Westermann to be a "homogeneous addition" by which he means that it was "inspired by Deutero-Isaiah."[16] Both Is. 44:21, 22b and Is. 51:1-8, it is claimed by Westermann, are additions to the original text and are "very reminiscent of Trito-Isaiah."[17]

Concerning the general integrity of the text of Deutero-Isaiah, Eissfeldt has asserted:

> The sections, however, which many scholars assign to someone other than the main compiler of XI-IV, i.e. Deutero-Isaiah, are

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[13]Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 362.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1969), p. 29.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 30.

> primarily the "Ebed-Yahweh songs," and in addition smaller or larger passages outside these songs which are regarded as additions made by the collector of Deutero-Isaiah's sayings, namely one of his disciples, perhaps identical with Trito-Isaiah.[18]

And in relating the conclusions of one Old Testament scholar concerning which parts of Deutero-Isaiah are non-genuine, Eissfeldt has noted:

> On the other hand, Elliger sees in Trito-Isaiah, the disciple of Deutero-Isaiah, the collector of his master's sayings. The latter had only to a small extent put together as larger units his speeches, sayings and songs, so that the disciple had almost everywhere a free hand in their arranging. In this he was guided by principles of content, and, conscious that he was working entirely in the spirit of his master, felt himself justified too in working over what had been left to him and in completing it, and did this not only in respect of the "Ebed-songs." According to Elliger, xlii, 19-23; xlv, 9-10; xlvi, 12-13; xlvii; xlviii, 8b-10, 16b-19; xlix, 22-6; l, 1-3; li, 4-5, 10b, 12-14; lii, 3; liv-lv come from the pen of Trito-Isaiah.[19]

Clearly, none of the three passages identified by Westermann as secondary additions is present in the list offered by Elliger. Eissfeldt concludes that although it is perhaps more likely the case that the "form" of the writings of Deutero-Isaiah is due to the efforts of a later compiler,[20] it is by far and away the overwhelming consensus of opinion of Old Testament scholars that the "main body of xl-lv" is to be ascribed to a single prophet, namely Deutero-Isaiah.[21]

However, as noted above and in Chapter 3, the contribution of Deutero-Isaiah to the further development of Hebraic monotheism,

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[18]Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 333.

[19]Ibid., pp. 336-337.

[20]Ibid., p. 338.

[21]Ibid., p. 332.

understood as having arisen in response to the efforts of the prophets to identify the essential nature of man with that of Yahweh, is, at best, meagre. And regardless of whether the four passages taken from the writings of Deutero-Isaiah actually reflect his own views or those of a disciple, they, nonetheless, clearly attest to the fact that the line of reasoning formulated by Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah had been all but abandoned by the year 539 B.C.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPHETIC MONOTHEISM

Amos

As pointed out above, there are only two passages in the writings of Amos which deal with the concept "knowledge of Yahweh." And while it may be contended that such a paucity of evidence could hardly hope to substantiate the two hypotheses advanced in Chapter 3, it is, nonetheless, precisely here, in the book of Amos, that the concept "knowledge of Yahweh" is identified with knowledge of the Ethical, and further, that man's proper function is, though incipiently, identified with the pursuit of ethical activities. As meagre as the initial evidence may be deemed, it is held here to be sufficient to lay the foundation for the position that the essential nature of Yahweh is perceived as being comprised wholly of the Ethical, as is the essential nature of man.

Amos states the rationale upon which his mission is founded when he claims that Yahweh said:

> You only have I known
> of all the families of the earth:
> therefore I will punish you
> for all your iniquities.
> (3:2)

The intent of this assertion goes well beyond the justification of acts of reprisal against the Israelites by Yahweh, due to the presence of a special relationship he has with them. That Yahweh freely punishes all peoples for their sins, irrespective of any special relationship, is readily apparent from the statements of Amos 1:1-15; 2:1-5. The universal nature of this punishment gives rise to an interesting question, to wit--On what grounds does Yahweh punish peoples whom he has not specifically known, and who, it may be inferred, have not known him? For it would, at least in part, seem to be the thrust of Amos 3:2 that a certain reciprocity of knowledge is being posited by which Yahweh has known the Israelites, and they have known him. And if the justification for Yahweh's punishment of the Israelites springs from the fact that they have known him and are, consequently, expected also to know and do what is right, as a function of this unique knowledge, what then constitutes the basis for the punishment of non-Israelites, who have not had the advantage of any such special knowledge?

If the justification of this punishment is predicated upon the position that the sins, catalogued in Amos 1:1-15; 2:1-5, are sins against Yahweh, it must be in some secondary sense that this is so, for the immediate object of their iniquitous acts are the sinners' fellow man. And given that these sinners act out of an ignorance of Yahweh, what special sort of knowledge are they presumed to have which would enable them to act otherwise?

It would seem that Amos is developing an idea of a special type of knowledge of the Ethical, itself, which although it is apparently facilitated by a direct knowledge of Yahweh, is, nonetheless,

sufficiently universal in nature, as to hold all men responsible for their acts. And the true intent of Amos 3:2 may well be to express a certain dismay, on the part of Yahweh, with a people to whom this tacit notion of the Ethical had been made, more or less, explicitly, and yet who continue to sin.

If, indeed, this is the case, then the position may be advanced that Amos was the first of the Hebrew prophets to attempt to universalize the uniquely Hebraic conception of Yahweh, by identifying it with an impersonal, yet universal conception of the Ethical itself, which all men are expected to be conversant with. However, this attempt at universalizing the concept of Yahweh, must not be viewed primarily as an attempt to proselytize Israel's neighbors, but rather as an attempt to expand and refine the Israelite's own conception of their God. It would seem, then, to be the aim of Amos 1:1-15; 2:1-5, to explain to the Israelite that Yahweh is already a universal, if tacit, concept, but that the intelligibility of that concept lies in the identification of the nationalistic, Hebraic concept with the Ethical itself. Generally considered, then, Amos' task lay in lifting, to a higher ethical plane, this uniquely Hebraic conception of Yahweh, by identifying him with the Ethical itself, so that man's proper function generally, and the Israelites' specifically, attained completion through the acquisition, and consequent display of "knowledge of Yahweh," for the latter, and the Ethical itself, for the former.

While it would be going too far to maintain that Amos had personally rejected the view of Yahweh as uniquely concerned with the Hebrews specifically, there is a perceptible move, on his part,

to extend the sphere of Yahweh's domain through his identification with the Ethical itself. This move may be most readily apparent from his assertion:

> "They do not know how to do
> right," says the Lord,
> "those who store up violence and
> robbery in their stronghold."
> (3:10)

As noted above, there is at least the implicit notion, present in the position of Amos, that Yahweh's knowledge of the Israelites entailed their possessing a knowledge of him. With Amos' assertion that "they do not know how to do right . . . those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds," comes a reformulation of the view that the knowledge of "how to do right" is equivalent to knowledge of Yahweh. This is to say that whereas the dictum, Do right, speaks to the display of ethical behavior, the special knowledge of the Israelites is a knowledge of Yahweh; and yet it must be through this knowledge that an objective and universal standard of ethical behavior emerges. Further support for this contention may be furnished by Amos 3:9, where it is pointed out that Israel's neighbors are summoned to witness the corruption present among those who, supposedly, know Yahweh. For without making an appeal to an apparent Ethical itself, such a witnessing would be meaningless.

It is, most probably, the further intent of this passage to begin the development of the position that man's proper function resides in doing that which is right. For it is upon this basis, as is pointed out in Amos 3:11, that man's ultimate well being is predicated. That is to say that through the fulfillment of his proper function, viz. doing that which is right, man secures his well being,

while the perverting of that proper function, causes him to reap disaster.

The criticism that too much has been made of too little is, at this point in the analysis, somewhat justified. However, I believe that Amos anticipates a view, developed more fully by the later prophets, in such a manner that virtually each of the conclusions to be drawn from an analysis of the work of these later prophets is, at least, hinted at in his writings.

Hosea

In forming the general historical context within which the message of Hosea is delivered to the people of Israel, one may view it, on the one hand, as the logical result of the earlier prophesies of Amos. This is to say that Yahweh has punished the people of Israel for their "iniquities." On the other hand, one may see it as representing suitable conditions for Hosea to extend and refine the position put forth by the earlier prophet. It is to this task that Hosea directs his efforts.

Hosea's efforts to develop further the position espoused by Amos is accompanied by a few shifts in emphasis. The most obvious shift of emphasis present in the writings of Hosea is his apparent abandonment of the universal theme developed by Amos. Whereas idolatry did not cause much concern to Amos, it is dealt with extensively by Hosea. However, the topic of idolatry, as dealt with by Hosea, must be approached with the utmost caution, for his intent, as perceived here, transcends the mere chastisement of a people who are desperately searching for stability and tranquility in their lives.

It is the contention here that for Hosea, the so-called sin of idolatry did not truly represent a sin of the Israelites committed against Yahweh, for the question may be seriously asked--How may mere man truly sin against his God?--but did represent an impediment in man's acquiring an awareness of his unique relation to his God. From Hosea's point of view, the continued practice of idolatry by the people of Israel would insure their continued state of ignorance concerning their unique relation to their God. And given that it was this initial state of ignorance, and more specifically their ignorance of how to do "right," which was the cause of the Israelites' present plight, for Hosea to observe their seeking knowledge from false ideas gave rise to his heart-felt sorrow, rather than his use of invective. It was the task of enlightening the people of Israel concerning man's proper function and the intimate nature of the relationship man shares with his God that Hosea set for himself.

Hosea begins his task by drawing the Israelites' attention to the fact that while the goods, which had in times past accrued to them, had issued from Yahweh, the people had apparently forgotten that. This is clear from his observation:

> And she did not know
> that it was I who gave her
> the grain, the wine, and the oil
> and who lavished upon her silver
> and gold which they used for
> Ba'al.
>
> (2:8)

It would seem, from this passage, that Hosea is arguing for a conception of Yahweh in which he is depicted as a divine being who was directly reponsible for the actual procurement of the goods which the people had previously enjoyed. Were this the case, it would do little

to advance the position, espoused by Amos, in which Yahweh is seen primarily as an ethical ideal. There is the further possibility that Hosea is maintaining that while the people are essentially correct in assuming that some divine being is directly responsible for procuring the goods they prize so highly, they have gone astray in placing the locus of that function in Ba'al, rather than in Yahweh. And indeed Hosea (2:9) would seem to support this view of Hosea's intent by depicting a selfish Yahweh taking back the goods he had previously given to the people.

However, such an interpretation of Hosea's intent, is quite unacceptable. The position that Hosea attempts to win the people back to Yahweh by imbuing him with predicates which they found attractive in the gods of their neighbors, must also be rejected. Just what constitutes Hosea's position is clear from his assertion:

> And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness, in steadfast love, and in mercy. And I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.
>
> (2:19-20)

Hosea, in this passage, is reaffirming the position that Yahweh has a special relationship with the people of Israel. And the intimate nature of that relationship is expressed through his utilization of the marriage motif. However, the "upshot" of that relationship is that the people of Israel "shall know the Lord." It may be assumed that it will be this knowledge of the Lord which will enable the people to do that which is right. For Hosea continues:

> Hear the word of the Lord, O
> people of Israel;
> for the Lord has a controversy
> with the inhabitants of the land.

> There is no faithfulness or kindness
> and no knowledge of God in the
> land;
> there is swearing, lying, killing,
> stealing and committing
> adultery;
> they break all bounds and murder
> follows murder.
>
> (4:1-2)

From this passage it would seem that "swearing, lying, killing . . ." etc., are manifestations of an ignorance, on the part of the people, of Yahweh. Conversely, doing "right" is a manifestation of a knowledge of Yahweh.

Hosea drives this point home when he asserts:

> My people are destroyed for lack
> of knowledge;
> because you have rejected
> knowledge,
> I reject you from being a priest
> to me.
>
> (4:4-6)

This assertion makes quite clear the importance of knowledge for man and that his survival is predicated upon his possession of it. The emphatic manner in which Hosea makes this point leaves little doubt that he believes that man's proper function lies in his acquiring and possessing a certain type of knowledge. Having made this point, Hosea is in a position to deal with idolatry as an impediment to the people's acquisition of the particular type of knowledge he has in mind, namely, of how to do right.

Rather than launching into a tirade dealing with the idolatrous hearts of the Israelites, he seeks to illustrate to them the absurdity involved in seeking knowledge from dead idols, as is evident when he states:

Wine and new wine
take away the understanding,
My people inquire of a thing of
wood,
and their staff gives them
oracles.
(4:11-12)

Just, then, as alcohol may rob a man of his understanding, so too does idolatry lead astray a man seeking knowledge about how best to prosper. And just as it would be foolish to seek knowledge from a man intoxicated with wine, it would be equally foolish to seek knowledge from a stick. Yet the point must be stressed that Hosea is advocating the seeking of knowledge not from Yahweh, but rather, of Yahweh.

Continuing his argument that knowledge is made manifest through action, Hosea develops the view that the actions associated with idolatry are antithetical and counter-productive to acquiring knowledge of Yahweh, as is clear from his statement:

I know Ephraim,
and Israel is not hid from me;
for now, O Ephraim, you have
played the harlot,
Israel is defiled.
Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
For the spirit of harlotry is within
them,
and they know not the Lord.
(5:3-4)

By drawing particular attention to the fact that it is because of their deeds that Israel is not allowed "to return to their God," and by maintaining that their deeds were predicated upon an ignorance, on the part of the people, of Yahweh, Hosea is basing the doing of that which is right on the possessing of knowledge Yahweh. This is to say that knowledge of Yahweh and knowledge of the ethical are, for

Hosea, highly related concepts. In an attempt to clarify this relation of knowledge of Yahweh with knowledge of the ethical, the question may be asked: What activity or activities should a man pursue in order to acquire the ability to act in an ethical manner? Hosea supplies the following answer to this question:

> For I desire steadfast love and
> not sacrifice,
> the knowledge of God, rather
> than burnt offerings.
> (6:6)

While it is assuredly not the intention of Hosea to derogate the value of the temple cultus, what he is intending to make clear is that man has a peculiar function, which he identifies as man's acquisition, of a "knowledge of Yahweh." Yahweh is understood or characterized not as a divine being, comparable in any way to foreign deities, but rather he is seen as the prime instantiation of the Ethical, itself. Yahweh desires that men acquire knowledge of Yahweh himself, or knowledge of the Ethical, for the two, at this point in the analysis appear to be closely related, if not identical.

In an effort to illustrate the shallow nature of Israel's perception of its special relation to Yahweh, Hosea states:

> To me they cry,
> My God, we Israel know thee,
> Israel has spurned the good;
> the enemy shall pursue him.
> (8:2-3)

Hosea's intent in claiming that "Israel has spurned the good," is to point out that due to their actions, the Israelites' claim to having a knowledge of Yahweh is without grounds.

Hosea (13:4) reiterates the theme of the special relationship Israel finds itself in with Yahweh while attempting further to

dissuade the people from the practice of idolatry:

> I am the Lord your God
> from the land of Egypt;
> you know no God but me
> and beside me there is no
> saviour.

While this passage does not contain an explicit statement to the effect that there is no god other than Yahweh, if Yahweh is identified with the Ethical itself, then the passage may be interpreted to read--There is no activity beyond acting in an ethically correct manner, which truly represents the function peculiar to man. And, consequently it is the knowledge of Yahweh, or knowledge of the Ethical, as manifested through the display of ethically correct behaviors, which is identified with man's essential nature, and is the ultimate saviour of the people. And it is along these lines that Hosea brings his work to an end, as is clear when he states:

> Whoever is wise, let him understand
> these things;
> whoever is discerning, let him
> know them;
> for the ways of the Lord are right
> and the upright walk in them
> but the transgressors stumble in
> them.
>
> (14:9)

Jeremiah

Jeremiah's treatment of the concept, knowledge of Yahweh, advances through four stages of conceptual development. Though the boundaries of these stages are at best rough, the process of analysis is greatly facilitated by viewing the development of that concept, as it proceeds through these stages. In the interest of organization, these stages may best be viewed as depicting four minor themes which

ultimately intertwine to render Jeremiah's position concerning the essential nature of man and its relation to that of Yahweh truly intelligible. These minor themes, along with the passages through which they are developed, are as follows: (1) Jeremiah's position concerning idolatry, where it is viewed as an impediment to acquiring "knowledge of Yahweh," 7:9-10, 13:23-25, 19:4-6; (2) Jeremiah's position that the essential nature of man is identified through the isolation of the highest good of man, which is held to be the possession of "knowledge of Yahweh," 4:22, 5:4-5, 8:7-9, 9:23-24, 10:23; (3) Jeremiah's contention that knowledge of Yahweh is ineffable and consequently not to be identified, absolutely, with the Torah, 2:8, 3:15, 16:21, 31:31-34; and finally, (4) Jeremiah's conclusion that knowledge of Yahweh is truly knowledge of the Ethical, which he maintains comprises both the essential nature of man and that of God, 9:6, 10:25, 22:15-16. That is to say that the ancient Hebrew found himself inextricably bound to his God on the basis of sharing a common essential nature, comprised wholly of the Ethical.

Jeremiah's perception of idolatry as an impediment to acquiring and displaying a knowledge of Yahweh, a view embraced also by Hosea, is expressed in his assertion:

> "Behold you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Ba'al, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say 'We are delivered!'--only to go on doing these abominations."
>
> (7:9-10)

Initially, it is apparent that there is a certain sense of utility present in the phrase, "trust in deceptive words to no avail." Jeremiah's intent is obviously to point out that the practice of

idolatry by the Judeans in truth, does not profit them. However, beyond simply not profiting the Judeans, their indulgence in the practice of idolatry, actually results in their performing acts which are to their detriment. While at this point Jeremiah does not flatly state that these "other gods" whom the Judeans "have not known" simply do not exist, and consequently are unknowable by their very nature, this position is derivable from his expressed view that no utility attends the Judeans' worship of them. There is the further implication, present in this passage, that where a deity exists, a certain knowledge is attached to that deity. However, the very acts of the Judeans make apparent the fact that they possess no special knowledge whatsoever.

If the above passage leaves room for doubt concerning Jeremiah's position dealing with the ontic status of these "other gods," the following dispels it:

> Can the Ethiopian change his skin
> or the leopard his spots?
> Then also you can do good
> who are accustomed to do evil.
> I will scatter you like chaff
> driven by the wind from the
> desert.
> This is your lot,
> the position I have measured out
> to you, says the Lord,
> Because you have forgotten me
> and trusted in lies.
> (13:23-25)

The equating, by Jeremiah, of "other gods" with "lies" clearly demonstrates his view that "other gods" simply do not exist. However, his overriding concern in this passage is to impress upon the Judeans that there is an inherent degeneracy associated with the worship of these "lies," such that, if a man trusts in them and yet attempts to

do good, just as easily may, "the leopard change his spots." In other words, the doing of good by the Judeans is first and foremost contingent upon their abandoning their beliefs in the existence of "other gods."

Jeremiah, not contenting himself with the belief that his first two arguments will prove efficacious in eradicating the practice of idolatry in Judah, resorts to his final argument that the continued practice of idolatry by the Judeans will reap, in the final analysis, their incurring the wrath of Yahweh. And what this argument lacks in subtlety it compensates for in intensity, as is evident from the following:

> "Because the people have forsaken me, and have profaned this place by burning incense in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled the place with the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Ba'al, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind; therefore, behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter."
>
> (19:4-6)

Jeremiah's position concerning idolatry may be summed up as follows. He attempts first to illustrate the point that its practice is attended by a certain futility. Beyond being a study in futility, it is actually counter-productive in helping the Judeans secure their own well being. The notion that it is an expression of the Judeans' ignorance derives from his assertion that it is predicated on worship of non-existent beings. And finally he argues for a rejection of it on the grounds that all it will truly produce is the wrath of Yahweh. The second theme Jeremiah develops follows naturally from the first in that it concerns either the inability or unwillingness on the part of

the Judeans to recognize and pursue that which constitutes man's highest good, viz. knowledge of Yahweh.

Jeremiah initiates his analysis of this problem, with the following observation:

> "For my people are foolish
> they know me not;
> they are stupid children
> they have no understanding;
> They are skilled in doing evil,
> but how to do good they know
> not."
> (4:22)

Jeremiah's depiction of the Judeans as "stupid children" is very enlightening. For it carries with it the notion that like "children" the Judeans know precisely what they want, but they do not necessarily know what is best for them. In other words, they suffer from an underdeveloped sense of knowing which, out of a number of apparent goods, is truly the highest good. Also, like children, he contends, the Judeans are quite clever and skillful at obtaining those things they desire, and are willing to employ any means at their disposal to insure this. And it appears to be the case that the Judeans' inability to perceive the highest good for man invariably results in their adopting means to secure the goods which they do prize, which results in their perpetuating evil after evil.

That Jeremiah possesses an acute social awareness, but is maintaining that the evil present in Judah is not due to, nor solely attached to the economically deprived and less educated inhabitants of the land, is apparent from his assertion:

> Then I said, "These are only the
> poor,
> they have no sense;

for they do not know the way of the
Lord,
the law of their God.
I will go to the great
and will speak to them;
for they know the way of the Lord
the law of their God."
But they all alike had broken the
yoke,
they had burst the bonds.
(5:4-5)

While in part this passage anticipates the third theme, which attempts to illustrate that the Law, itself, is not to be identified with knowledge of Yahweh, it serves here to illustrate Jeremiah's contention that all the Judeans have misperceived the highest good of man, irrespective of an individual's relative acquaintance with the Law itself. It would, indeed, seem to be his intention to denigrate the idea of wisdom generally considered attainable by man, as is clear from his statement:

. . . but my people know not
the ordinance of the Lord.
"How can you say, 'We are wise,
and the law of the Lord is
with us?'
But, behold, the false pen of the
scribes
has made it into a lie.
The wise men shall be put to shame
they shall be dismayed and taken;
lo, they have rejected the word of
the Lord,
and what wisdom is in them?
(8:7-9)

Clearly the question has been asked--What is the value of wisdom, for man as man, which is not wisdom of God? And the point may be pressed by inquiring--Is there a body of knowledge which may aptly be designated as wisdom, which is not wholly comprised of a knowledge of God? to wit, Jeremiah's query, "what wisdom is in them?"

Surely it is not Jeremiah's contention that man's knowledge is completely without value. Nor is he attempting to denigrate the other goods which help a man to secure a happy life. His aim is to shift man's attention to that which constitutes his highest good. And though his treatment of these other goods which man pursues is, at times, high handed, his intention is self evident, as is apparent from the following:

> Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me . . . ."
> (9:23-24)

It is with this statement, at one stroke, that Jeremiah discloses both the highest good for man and the means necessary to acquire it, which when combined may be expressed simply as the acquisition and glorying in knowledge of Yahweh.

The task remains for Jeremiah to communicate how man is to acquire this knowledge of Yahweh, and that this process is somewhat unique is, perhaps, foreshadowed by his declaration:

> I know, O Lord, that the way of
> man is not in himself,
> that it is not in man who walks
> to direct his steps.
> (10:23)

The third theme taken up by Jeremiah, while dealing primarily with the problem of how man is to acquire knowledge of Yahweh, also deals with the problem of the composition of man's essential nature. It has been alluded to above (Amos 1:1-15, 2:1-5; Jeremiah 5:4-5), that it was not the intention of the Hebrew prophets to identify knowledge of Yahweh with knowledge of the Law. And it is, further, the specific position of Jeremiah that the nature of knowledge of

Yahweh is such that its acquisition lies beyond the efforts of man alone. Dealing specifically with Jeremiah's denial that knowledge of the Law is to be equated with knowledge of Yahweh is his assertion:

> The priests did not say, "Where is
> the Lord?"
> Those who handle the law did not
> know me.
> (2:8)

And though this statement may be interpreted, on the one hand, as an indictment of the corruption of the "Priests," it is the view espoused here that Jeremiah is contending that knowledge of Yahweh transcends knowledge of the Law, which is to say that it is qualitatively distinct from it. However, though Jeremiah is not disparaging the study and consequent knowledge of Law, he recognizes that this process is reserved for a select few, namely, the Priests. And in that he holds that knowledge of Yahweh represents the highest good for all men, he asserts that a few individuals, undoubtedly the prophets, have been selected by Yahweh, to disseminate generally this unique knowledge:

> "And I will give you shepherds
> after my own heart, who will feed
> you with knowledge and understanding."
> (3:15)

However, this "knowledge and understanding" do not constitute knowledge of Yahweh, per se. They are rather to be considered as propaedutic to the acquisition of this knowledge. They are meant to turn the people's attention away from the goods they now hold so dear, and refocus it on their relation to their God. For where it is the prophet's task to awaken in man his awareness of his relation to God, it is the task of God to bring this awareness to fruition. And where

Jeremiah holds that Yahweh's initial response to this task will manifest itself through a show of might:

> "Therefore, behold, I will make them know, this once I will make them know my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord. (16:21)

his tone quickly softens. For Yahweh is ultimately to place a knowledge of himself directly within man:

> "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; . . ." (31:31-34)

It is from this passage that Jeremiah relates precisely how the Hebrew is to acquire his "knowledge of Yahweh," and further that his essence, or that which causes him to be, most truly, man, is comprised wholly of this knowledge.

The problem which arises concerning the exclusivistic nature of this "new covenant" such that it takes into account only the "house of Israel" is undoubtedly due to Jeremiah's preoccupation with his own people. For it is clear from his position, stated above (Jeremiah 13:23-25), that he holds that "other gods" do not exist, not simply for the Hebrews, but rather that they simply do not exist. The natural consequence of that position is that Yahweh's "new covenant"

must extend to all peoples, whether this is or is not explicitly stated. The point here is that Yahweh's "new covenant" is meaningful only where a people's awareness has been heightened by the preparatory work of the prophets.

The final theme which Jeremiah undertakes to develop involves his attempt to universalize the uniquely Hebraic concept of Yahweh by identifying it with the concept of the Ethical, itself. And the position he embraces is that, though knowledge of Yahweh is ineffable, its presence in man is manifested through his display of ethical behavior. That is to say that where an individual display of ethically correct behavior is, itself, not held, by Jeremiah, to derive from some specific bit of knowledge of Yahweh. Rather, all ethical activities are seen to issue from an indwelling sense of the Ethical, universally conceived, and identified with man's essential nature, which is intimately related to a transcendent embodiment of the Ethical, identified by the Hebrews as Yahweh.

Jeremiah, tentatively, begins his development of this position by asserting:

> Heaping oppression upon
> oppression, and deceit upon
> deceit,
> they refuse to know me, says
> the Lord.
>
> (9:6)

It would seem, from an examination of this passage, that Jeremiah is positing that the manifestation of unethical acts derives from an unwillingness, on the part of the people, to know Yahweh. It would seem to follow that a knowledge of Yahweh would make itself manifest through the display of acts which were of an ethical nature. And

while the passage does not identify, absolutely, knowledge of Yahweh with knowledge of the Ethical, it, nonetheless, makes the point that knowledge of that which is the ethically correct behavior, at the very least, issues from this "knowledge of Yahweh." This is to say that "knowledge of Yahweh" is depicted as the source of that which constitutes ethically correct behavior.

Jeremiah's attempt to expand his conception of knowledge of Yahweh into a truly universal source of knowledge of the Ethical, may best be illustrated through his plea, directed at Yahweh, to:

> Pour out thy wrath upon the nations
> that know thee not,
> and upon the peoples that call not
> on thy name;
> for they have devoured Jacob;
> they have devoured and
> consumed him,
> and laid waste his habitation.
> (10:25)

Jeremiah's intent in this passage lies not in his desire simply to gain revenge upon the enemies of Judah, but rather to call for an accounting of the actions of Judah's enemies on the grounds that there is a conception of the Ethical, universally recognizable by all peoples, in accordance with which their actions may be judged.

The further development of the universal nature of knowledge of Yahweh, along with Jeremiah's concise description of the essential nature of Yahweh and his subsequent identification of it with the Ethical itself, is found in the following:

> Do you think you are a king
> because you compete in cedar?
> Did not your father eat and drink
> and do justice and righteousness?
> Then it was well with him.

He judged the cause of the poor and
needy;
then it was well.
Is not this to know me?
(22:15-16)

Clearly, the activities which Jeremiah has identified with knowledge of Yahweh are not to be considered, in any way, uniquely Hebraic in nature. They are, rather, activities which all men everywhere may display, without the benefit of any direct association with any specific religion. And yet, it is Jeremiah's view that the display of these activities is to be identified with the possession of knowledge of Yahweh. It is through answering, in the affirmative, the question which is posed "Is not this to know me?" that the absolute identification of Yahweh with the Ethical is carried out.

The concept of Yahweh, as conceived of by Jeremiah, has broken the constricting bonds of nationalism, through its identification with the Ethical itself. And this concept gains supremacy, not primarily through the simplistic process of denying the existence of other gods, but through bringing to man an awareness of that which is best in himself and relating it intimately with that which constitutes the highest good, absolutely. In a very real sense, it may be asserted that Jeremiah's efforts were productive not only of securing for all men a common and shared essential nature, but also of bringing men, collectively, to a oneness with their God.

Deutero-Isaiah

The writings of Deutero-Isaiah, for the most part, exhibit the virtually complete abandonment of the concept "knowledge of Yahweh" and its relation to the larger, universally conceived concept

of the Ethical itself. And, as noted above, there is a distinct anachrostic flavor present in his work. That he has been selected, by the majority of contemporary scholars, as the prophet whose writings display an absolutely monotheistic nature is due to his utter rejection of the notion that there exist any gods other than Yahweh. While the question of the number of gods believed to exist figures prominently in any discussion concerning the monotheistic nature of any given set of beliefs, its happy resolution, that only one god is held to exist, is not sufficient for determining whether or not that set of beliefs truly constitutes a monotheistic faith. Indeed, the process utilized by Deutero-Isaiah for securing the aloneness of Yahweh, based as it is on the assimilation, on the part of the essential nature of Yahweh, of attributes and functions contained originally in the natures of foreign deities, would seem counter-productive to his attaining his goal. In that this process is responsible for the dissolution of an essential nature, held to be simple and a unity by his predecessors, and the consequent reconstruction of that essential nature, through combining a host of predicates within the framework of a single personality.

The causes responsible for Deutero-Isaiah's abandonment of the concept of Yahweh, derivable from the combined writings of Amos, Hosea and Jeremiah, may only be guessed at. This is hardly a worthwhile activity. That his conception and depiction of Yahweh may, in one sense, be considered rich and full is undoubtedly true. However, in a more meaningful sense, just what he holds to constitute the essential nature of Yahweh is vague and ill defined. And while his view of Yahweh, as comprised of a multiplicity of attributes and functions, may

have held a more general appeal for the populace at large, it clearly confuses the nature of the Man/God relationship. This is to say that it is not self-evident from an examination of his writings just how he feels man relates to his God. For there are innumerable predicates, from Deutero-Isaiah's point of view which, although they combine to make up his conception of Yahweh, have no counterpart in the general makeup of man. There is, however, present in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah the vestigal remains of the earlier position derived from the combined writings of Amos, Hosea and Jeremiah. It is to an examination of these remains that this analysis must now turn.

One of the earliest characterizations of Yahweh to be found in Deutero-Isaiah ascribes to him the attribute of knowledge, specifically knowledge of the Ethical, as is evident from his query:

> Whom did he consult for his
> enlightenment,
> and who taught him the path of
> justice,
> and taught him knowledge,
> and showed him the way of
> understanding?
> (40:14)

The nature of this query seems to imply that, while knowledge of the Ethical is not to be identified, absolutely, with the essential nature of Yahweh, he is, nonetheless, cognizant of it. That is to say that from Deutero-Isaiah's point of view, there exists, independently of Yahweh, a body of knowledge which is ethical in nature. Further, it is implied that while this knowledge is available to man, he, unlike Yahweh, must expend an effort to acquire it. This is to say that it is not intimately related to his essential nature. It would appear that at one stroke Deutero-Isaiah has destroyed the basis,

formulated by his predecessors, upon which man claims his intimate assocation with his God.

In his attempt to dissuade the people from the practice of idolatry, Deutero-Isaiah employs the idea, present in the writings of Hosea and Jeremiah, that it represents a certain foolishness. He maintains the position that no knowledge attends the construction and worship of idols. However, his efforts fall short of identifying this knowledge with knowledge of the Ethical. And he predicates his argument on the position that the Hebrews owe their loyalty to Yahweh, because he has treated them well in the past, as is clear from his observation:

> No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire, I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted flesh and have eaten, and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"
>
> (44:19)

and further:

> Remember these things, O Jacob,
> and Israel, for you are my
> servant;
> I formed you, you are my servant;
> O Israel, you will not be
> forgotten by me.
> I have swept away your transgressions
> like a cloud,
> and your sins like mist;
> return to me, for I have redeemed
> you.
>
> (44:21-22)

Deutero-Isaiah develops the theme that the Man/God relationship is essentially like that of the servant/master relation, where the former is held bound to the latter due to his inherent superiority. The Hebrews, then, owe their loyalty to Yahweh, not because they share a similar essential nature thought which one recognizes and appreciates

the other, but rather because they are so radically different. This view, rather than representing the continued development of the earlier prophetic position, appears quite similar to the views, concerning the Man/God relation, expressed by the majority of ancient Near Eastern religions, where man is depicted as being at the complete mercy of deities to whom he is not related in any essential manner.

Deutero-Isaiah continues in this vein, when he asserts:

> For the sake of my servant Jacob,
> and Israel my chosen,
> I call you by your name,
> I surname you, though you do
> not know me.
> I am the Lord, and there is no other,
> besides me there is no God;
> I gird you, though you do not
> know me,
> that men may know, from the rising
> of the sun
> and from the west, that there is
> none besides me;
> I am the Lord, and there is no
> other.
>
> (45:4-6)

Yahweh's intention to "gird" or strengthen his people, in spite of the fact that they do not "know" him, is a direct consequence of the view held by Israel's neighbors, that the strength and viability of a God were primarily visible through the strength of its people. Apparently, Deutero-Isaiah feels that even though Yahweh is not about to enlighten his people, so that they will "know" him, he will vindicate his contention of supremacy through strengthening the Israelites. An act whose meaning appeals to the "Might makes right!" argument clearly illustrates Deutero-Isaiah's obsession with securing for Yahweh the position of sole God, besides whom "there is no other."

That Deutero-Isaiah was familiar with the position developed by his predecessors is clear from his statement:

> "Hearken to me, you who know
> righteousness,
> the people in whose heart is
> my law;
> fear not the reproach of men
> and be not dismayed at their
> revilings."
> (51:7)

In this passage, Deutero-Isaiah seems to hold that the Man/God relation may be based on man's internalization of the law of Yahweh, which is further equated with his knowledge of "righteousness." If this, indeed, was his intention, it would represent, at least in part, a return to the position espoused by his predecessors. However, this does not appear to be the case. For inherent in the process of securing the absolute aloneness of Yahweh is the need to separate him from man, so that he may stand alone and supreme. In closing his work, Deutero-Isaiah makes this perfectly clear by predicating the following position of Yahweh:

> For my thoughts are not your
> thoughts,
> neither are your ways my ways,
> says the Lord.
> For as the heavens are higher than
> the earth,
> so are my ways higher than your
> ways
> and my thoughts than your
> thoughts.
> (55:8-9)

Man, then, for Deutero-Isaiah, is related to Yahweh as is a servant to his master. And if he obeys and honors his master, he shall profit. However, if he does not obey and honor his master, he shall suffer. And man's function, for Deutero-Isaiah, is identified

as praising the power and might of Yahweh, not because he knows him and, as a result of this knowledge, loves him, but simply because there is in fact no other deity he may direct these activities towards. Deutero-Isaiah's efforts to secure the absolute aloneness of Yahweh may represent, at best, a Pyrrhic victory, for it comes at the cost of irrevocably alienating man from his God. And the command --Let us praise the Lord--rings hollow.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been the intention of this dissertation to offer a new and expanded definition of the term monotheism. For it has been maintained that the present definition, to wit, "The doctrine or belief that there is but one God," falls short of being truly meaningful. Rather, it has been recommended that a complete definition of that term should include, along with conveying the notion of oneness in terms of the number of deities in question, a description of the essential nature of that one deity. The expanded definition would read--Monotheism is the belief in one God whose essential nature is simple and a unity. It has been further proposed that in a truly monotheistic system of beliefs there will be an isomorphic relation between the essential nature of man and that of his God.

A reconstruction of Aristotle's theology has been utilized as the paradigm by which all other systems are to be evaluated. For while he did not deal specifically with the problem of monotheism, his theology posits the existence of one deity whose essential nature is completely composed of one predicate, and he says further that this same predicate was responsible for comprising, in its totality, the essential nature of man. Consequently, his deity is called one, not due simply to its being numerically one, but also due to the fact that its essential nature is simple and a unity. And his theology

has been designated as constituting a monotheism in that it posits the existence of one God whose essential nature is comprised of one attribute, which is further held to constitute the essential nature of man.

The process of analysis has been grounded in the conviction of Ludwig Feuerbach that the nature of man is isomorphically related to that of his God. Consequently, it has been maintained that by analyzing the essential nature of man, along the lines of discovering what he holds to be his unique and peculiar function, a correct view of the essential nature of his God would be forthcoming. It has been suggested that this analysis be performed with an eye towards the view that where man's essential nature is perceived as being comprised of a single attribute, so would that of his God.

In an attempt to illustrate the relative lack of consistency with which contemporary scholars have applied the term "monotheism," an extensive survey of the recent literature has been performed. It has been shown that, while there is no clear consensus as to how the term is to be applied, contemporary scholars have generated numerous mutated forms of it, with which they have attempted to characterize various special cases. Where there is more consensus than not, scholars have isolated, as a major criterion, the presence of statements which claim sole existence for the deity in question, as being of prime importance for identifying monotheistic systems of belief. However, evidence has been supplied to illustrate that such statements may be present in obviously polytheistic systems of belief. And this evidence has been supplied, not with the sole intention of

negating, completely, the relative importance of such statements, but to illustrate that while they represent a necessary condition for a system of belief to be designated a monotheism, they do not represent sufficient conditions for such a characterization.

Given that it is the consensus of the majority of contemporary scholars that monotheism of some sort is present in the writing of the literary prophets, the task has been undertaken to substantiate that view. Specifically, the combined writings of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah have been analyzed to see if a truly monotheistic system of beliefs may be derived from them. The analysis involved gathering support for two hypotheses. The first hypothesis maintained that the prophets held the position that man, as man, had a peculiar and unique function, and further that this function would be manifest through a certain activity. It was found that, for the prophets, man as such does have a proper function, made manifest through the activity of acquiring a knowledge of Yahweh. The second hypothesis held that the notion of Yahweh, for these prophets, was identified with a universal conception of the Ethical, rather than characterized as some divine being comprised of certain attributes and functions, similar in any way to the deities of the Hebrews' neighbors. It was determined that the characterization of man's essential nature, as comprised wholly of knowledge of Yahweh, coupled with the further identification of this knowledge with knowledge of the Ethical, would result in allowing the system of beliefs espoused by these prophets, to be accurately termed, "monotheistic."

The position was stated that if an evolutionary view, concerning the development of this system of beliefs, were to be maintained,

it would be characterized as follows. The recognition of the ethical makeup of man's essential nature begins slowly to emerge in the writings of Amos. The theme is expanded by Hosea, and reaches full maturity in the writings of Jeremiah. And although Deutero-Isaiah displays a certain familiarity with it, its further development is completed precluded by his unceasing efforts to secure the complete aloneness of Yahweh. That is to say that the real support for the two hypotheses is to be gleaned from the combined works of Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah. And considering that it is only in the writings of Jeremiah that full support for these hypotheses is to be found, it would be less than accurate to state that monotheism, as it is understood here, was truly "part and parcel" of literary prophets' Weltanschauung, generally considered. It would, at the same time, be misleading to maintain that it comes full blown in the writings of Jeremiah, and represents solely the product of his individual efforts. Rather, the view must be expressed, without falling into the trap of generating various types of monotheisms, that the literary prophets, collectively, were concerned with unraveling the nature of the Man/God relationship. And these combined efforts to heighten man's awareness of his own essential nature and the nature of his relation to his God may be seen as an expression of their conviction that truly to know God is to become one with him.

The value, then, of this dissertation may lie in the fact that it represents the forging of a new tool, an analytical tool which may be employed by scholars to examine various theological and philosophical systems of belief. For it is believed that the careful utilization of this tool will help to keep scholars from falling into the

trap of generating a plethora of novel concepts in order to explain away the presence of what they perceive to be special cases.

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