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THE BURNING BUSH : AN INVESTIGATION OF FORM AND MEANING
IN EXODUS 3 AND 4.

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF BIBLICAL STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,
SEPTEMBER 1985.

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To my Mother

ATEMON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

During this period of 3 years study in Glasgow, I have come to be indebted to a host of people from whom I have received help ranging from personal goodness, hospitality, moral encouragement to guidance and financial assistance. To attempt cataloguing all my benefactors here may be beyond the scope of the present purpose.

So of the representative few I can not but mention, I want to acknowledge thanks to the Federal Government of Nigeria who sponsored the project and was responsible for my upkeep throughout the period. But for the 'Government grant', probably I would not have come to Glasgow!

Next on the list is my Supervisor, Dr. R. P. Carroll, the man whose expert advice and incisive but constructive criticisms have been my guide as I padded through the maze of complex scholarship in the field of my research.

I would also like to thank the Principal of Trinity College and Professor in the Divinity Faculty, Reverend Robert Davidson, who has not only assisted me financially from the coffers of the Faculty, but has, in conjunction with his consort, made my family have happier Christmas celebrations throughout our three years stay. Dr Nicolas Wyatt has a conspicuous place here too, a personal friend and an old teacher, who has been instrumental in my choice of Glasgow University as the place of study and whose advice and encouragement have been a source of inspiration. Of course, the members of staff of the Faculty of Divinity can not be left out! Their fellowship has been warm and interaction cordial. With them I would also like to say thank you to the staff of the University Library for their services.

Finally I owe a profound gratitude to my wife Kate who has been very understanding and patient with me during this difficult period, and has almost single-handedly run the family affairs, leaving me ample chance to pursue my studies. To her and all others not mentioned by name but who deserve it, I say thank you.

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PREFACE

This Thesis aims at investigating the development and theological significance of the Burning Bush story.

As a narrative in its present biblical setting, Ex. 3 and 4 constitutes a pivotal point in the tradition of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It serves as the basis for the subsequent miraculous works in Egypt, while it provides the clue for the understanding of the Mosaic involvement in the deliverance episode. The importance which Israelite tradition later came to attach to the Exodus Event, and its popularity among oppressed people of every generation have been contributory to my desire to examine more closely this 'Divine-human encounter' at the Burning Bush.

Therefore to begin with I have first summoned the various textual evidences available on the subject for a thorough interrogation to see how the story has been reported and used since its assuming literary form. In this exercise which takes up Chapter 1, I discover divergences and discrepancies among the various texts, which point to some sort of literary development of the story. On the basis of this finding in Chapter 1, I then try to put the question whether it is possible to trace and recover by any means what the form of the original story was and how it has been developed to assume the form we now have in the Massoretic Text. The answer to this question constitutes the thrust of Chapter 2.

In conducting this investigation in Chapter 2, to recover the original form, I departed from the hitherto used tools - J. E. Source analysis, which have so far multiplied the problems of understanding the Text rather than illuminate them. I have used, instead, the Form-Critical and Traditio-historical analysis and have been able to successfully/

successfully uncover the two basic underlying literary structures of our Text. Having unveiled the basic forms and demonstrated how they have been brought together by our author(s) to make up our present text, I then tried to see which Biblical Literary Genre has influenced its composition. This examination is carried out in Chapter 3, where 'Prophetic Call Narrative' is found to be the Model for the Burning Bush Story. Here the two basic forms discovered in Chapter 2 are examined at greater depth. In thus giving a Prophetic Call paradigm to our Text, it is found that our author(s) has used one of the popular 'Motifs' of Yahweh's appearance and intervention in the cosmos found in copious references throughout Biblical Scripture.

The examination of this 'Motif' in our text and its use in subsequent Biblical Literature and in Post-Biblical Writings constitutes the burden of Chapter 4. With the development of our Text thus traced to its limit in Chapter 4, I then turned to the second half of the title of our investigation - The Theological Significance and Interpretation of the Text.

It is to this enquiry that Chapter 5 is devoted. How is the bringing together and the literary expansion of what constitutes the basic elements of our Text to be interpreted? In addressing ourself to this question, I first delineated what I style the basic theological strands in the text before looking for the message of the Text in the Textual exegesis - an exercise in which the results of Literary analysis are married together with theological elucidation. It is my hope that the method, used here to some degree of success, if applied to some other relevant Biblical pericopes will yield similar dividends!

MAIN ABBREVIATIONS IN THE TEXT AND NOTES

1. A Codex Alexandrinus
2. α Aquila
3. ABR Australian Biblical Review
4. AJSL American Journal of Semitic Languages, Chicago
5. ANE Ancient Near East
6. ASTI Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem
7. AV Authorised Version of the Bible
8. B Codex Vaticanus
9. BA Biblical Archaeologist, New Haven
10. BC/CE Before Christian Era/*Christian Era*.
11. BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, eds. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament Oxford 1979.
12. BHK R Kittel, Biblia Hebraica
13. BHS Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, ed. K Elliger and
W. Rudolph 1967-77.
14. BJRL Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
15. BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,
Giessen, Berlin.
16. CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington D.C.
17. Deut. Deuteronomy
18. DTR Deuteronomist(ic)
19. E The Elohist Document
20. ET English Translation
21. ExpT Expository Times
22. HAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament
23. HTR Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Mass.
24. HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual, Cincinnati
25. IDB The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, New York
26. IDB Suppl. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume,
ed K. Crim, et all (Nashville 1976)
27. IEJ Israel Exploration Journal, Jerusalem
28. Interp. Interpretation
29. IQIS^a A Scroll of Isaiah from Cave I, Qumran exemplar a
Published in DSS I i.e. (M Burrows, John C Trever and W H
Brownlee eds. The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Marks Monastery
Vol. I (New Haven 1950)
30. JAOS Journal of American Oriental Society, New Haven
31. JBL Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia
32. JBR Journal of Bible and Religion
33. JJS Journal of Jewish Studies

34. JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago
35. JQR Jewish Quarterly Review, London
36. JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Sheffield, England
37. JSS Journal of Semitic Studies, Manchester
38. JTS Journal of Theological Studies
39. LXX Septuagint ed. Alfred Rahlfs (Editio Septima) Stuttgart 1962.
40. MT Massoretic Text
41. MS Manuscript
42. OG Old Greek
43. RSV The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, London 1952
44. S Codex Sinaiticus
45. σ Symmachus
46. SBL Society of Biblical Literature
47. \mathbb{W} /SP Samaritan Pentateuch
48. θ Theodotion
49. T Targum
50. Th.B Theologisches Blatter, Leiptzig
51. V Vulgate
52. VT Vetus Testamentum, Leiden
53. VT Suppl. Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Leiden
54. W.Th.J. Westminster Theological Journal, Philadelphia
55. ZA Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, Leipzig, Berlin
56. ZAW Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche, Wissenschaft, Giessen, Berlin.
57. Z.Th.K. Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Tübingen

INTRODUCTION

Although some work has been done on isolated verses in our area of investigation by commentators it is a general consensus of scholars that the problem of its interpretation still remains enigmatic.

This confusing state of the Text has been made worse by the method hitherto used by scholars which is the J. E. Source Analysis, a method which leads to a complete tangle whereby different levels have to be sorted out within a source. That this practice of atomising the Text by sharpening the source documents to a point of abstraction has not helped the understanding of our Text but compounded its problems is a well known fact.

Just as the source document hypothesis has not been very helpful in the thorough grasp of the meaning(s) of our Text, so also has the philological approach not only confused the situation further but has diverted attention away from the given Text to Near Eastern languages where cognates and parallels are sought on linguistic grounds for a solution of the Text's problems. The result of the endeavour makes one wonder whether the author(s) of our Text were so highly informed linguistically to make the philologists' results appear applicable. This approach makes people lose sight of the indubitable fact that what we have in the Exodus Burning Bush Story, like most Biblical narratives, is primarily a theological treatise which has got to be approached with that understanding.

It is in view of this confusing state of the Text as a result of the Methods used that this investigation takes a departure from the old fashioned approaches to new methods which as will be shown lead to a better/

better understanding and interpretation of the Text. In this I have not only delineated what should be seen as the scope and unity of the Text, but have taken care of the various elements of the Story, separating them into their component parts and demonstrating how they had been brought together and theologised upon. This penetration behind the Text into the study of the development of the narrative strands in the context of early Israelite Literature and traditions I have found very beneficial and a right approach to the study of our Text.

In this undue attention has not been given to probing the historicity of the events and figures contained in the narrative, but rather I have treated it solely as a theological literature which tries to present an interpreted understanding of Israel's past.

This is a reasonable and appropriate approach because the concern of the Biblical writers, we believe, was not primarily to write a history book but rather to narrate what they believed God had done in their life - an interpretation of history.

The result got from the traditio-historical analysis has helped to sharpen the already recognised but so far unprobed concept of 'Prophetic Call' of our Text. In our thesis, I have shown not only how the Prophetic Call narratives are related to our Text which describe how Yahweh conferred on Moses the requisite credentials to validate his leadership role and oracles ascribed to him which came to have present and futuristic interpretation, but have also shown how this concept sheds light on the understanding, composition and theological interpretation of the story.

And in the search for the theological significance of the story, I have not put the result of traditio-historical analysis and theologisation in/

in two water-tight compartments, which appears to be the practice of advocates of 'holistic approach to Biblical Literature'. This practice which I see as a bane in Biblical theologisation is completely abstained from. Instead, I have demonstrated in practise how the two approaches should be made to complement each other and not be done in isolation. This practice, I believe, is the better way by which a richer theologisation can be done which builds bridges between theologisation on 'Reconstructed Forms' at one extreme and theologising on 'Raw Materials' of the Text without serious critical analysis on the other.

However, since no single investigation can ever lay claim to perfection, we believe that subsequent work, along the line of our approach will in future lead to a better understanding and interpretation of given Biblical pericopes.

CHAPTER I

TEXTS AND VERSIONS OF EXODUS 3 & 4

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Biblical Textual Criticism has as its aim the recovering of the Original Text of the Biblical Literature by comparing the available manuscripts. As a discipline one would normally expect it to have a well defined method of procedure in its scientific pursuit. But it has to be said, with regret, that Biblical Textual Criticism has no specifically well defined method of approach, though it offers some suggestions to guard the researcher against excessive arbitrariness and subjectivity. This situation arises, because of the nature of 'the tradition' which is so varied that an effective procedure for one problem may not be found appropriate for another. The problem thus created is compounded by the fact that almost all the early Manuscripts of our Hebrew Bible, which constitute the only source of information in the exercise of retrieving the Original Autographs of the Biblical Literature have disappeared in whole. What we now have printed as our text in the 'Biblia Hebraica' is merely an unchanged reproduction of Codex Leningradensis which dates from the eleventh Century A.D. 1

From the assumed date of the writing of the Pentateuch - about 400 B.C. - to the date of Codex Leningradensis we have a transmission period of about one thousand four hundred years. What happened to the Scriptures during this long period of transmission is the guess of any scholar! The absence of a surviving manuscript of this long period is usually ascribed to either the Jewish regulations which required that worn-out or defective manuscripts should be destroyed, or to the fact that when scholars had finally established the Text of the/

the Bible in the 10th Century, all older manuscripts which represented earlier stages of its development were naturally considered defective and in course of time disappeared.

Whether such disappearance was intentional to protect the 'established' Text or unintentional, we now have no means of knowing. (2)

So whatever reasons may be adduced for the disappearance of the early witnesses to the Text, the simple fact remains that, for our Hebrew Bible, the Original manuscripts are already extinct and the extant ones are heavily infested with Scribal errors, corruptions or deliberate alterations for theological or ideological purposes. While some of the corruptions could have occurred accidentally during the process of copying, others could have been deliberately made in the Text for purposes of exegesis, restoration of the true Text or to prevent misunderstanding. Prior to the establishment or normalisation of the Old Testament Text, such practice would normally not have aroused any serious objection. (3)

The corollary to this is that it was only much later, after the process of Canonization was complete, that a mechanical attitude was adopted toward the Text and a sort of absolute Literal accuracy was expected or ascribed to the Scribes. But since the aim of the Textual Critic is the recovery of the Original Text, and since all earlier forms of the Hebrew Text manuscripts have perished, Scholars have tried to penetrate the Textual vacuum by reversing the customarily earliest known version of the Old Testament i.e. the LXX, into Hebrew for comparison with our present Hebrew Text. The belief is that, this process could offer an indirect evidence for reconstructing the Hebrew Text of pre-Christian times. Good or laudable as this project seems, it is fraught with grave difficulties.

This/

This is because, after the comparison is made and the differences discovered, could the divergences be regarded due to the differences in the Hebrew Text used by the translator(s), or as reflecting the Original proto-LXX and proto-MT, which were based on the Ur-Hebrew Text? It is becoming increasingly apparent today that the present LXX is by no means exactly the original Greek Version of the Old Testament i.e. Proto-LXX/OG, just as well as the MT with which scholars are comparing it, is not the same as the Parent Hebrew Vorlage presupposed by the LXX.

On the other hand, although the MT is not a translation like the LXX, yet both cannot, from the textual evidence, be regarded as the finished product of one man. This being the case, it seems a sort of general statement about the two Texts is prone to be very far from the truth, except if confined to a particular 'Book' and within a given pericope. This point is important in the sense that it has been discovered through a close study of the LXX, that it was the work of different translators who probably had different paraphrastic style and theological bents.(4) The individual characteristic tendency of the translators to amplify the Text, omit minor expressions or interpret archaic or esoteric words can not but be given cognizance.

Swete has noted an example of this where instead of, "I am uncircumcised of lips", one translator has given a non-literal approximation, "I am speechless"(5) OR for an example of some theological scruples, one could compare LXX rendering of Ex.24:10 with the MT, where the former renders the latter's "They saw the God of Israel", as "They saw the place where the God of Israel was standing".

Whether the differences that surface on a closer study of the Texts reflect a series of individual variants in circulation or are to be ascribed/

ascribed to faulty Hebrew manuscripts used by the translators or to misreading and misunderstanding of the Text due to inadequate knowledge of the Hebrew language, we do not know.

Even if we assume some degree of ineptitude in the LXX translators, in this issue of reversing the Greek Text into Hebrew, we still have to give some consideration to the point that one Hebrew word could mean several things in Greek. Similarly too, when the Hebrew thought puts on the 'Greek garb', it receives a new shade of meaning and reversing it into Hebrew will attract a very different Hebrew vocabulary. (6)

In view of the above, it seems that the recovering and reconstruction of the Original Hebrew Text via reversion of the LXX is bound to yield little or no meaningful results. The 'Dead Sea Scrolls' which have proved a profitable source of information in the recovering of the 'Originals', regretfully have nothing to offer in our present investigation as what is found in Cave four refers only to Chapter 32 of Exodus.

This means that on the whole we are still very much dependent on the Codex Leningradensis and whatever conclusions are therefore passed on it, have to be reached on the basis of the evidence from comparison of extant manuscripts.

USING THE EVIDENCE OF THE MT AND THE MAJOR VERSIONS

It is now almost traditionally accepted and a basic working principle that the MT furnishes us with the best witness to the Original Hebrew Biblical Text. This assumption is based on the fact that it is not a translation but a direct transmission in the original language. On this point, it is claimed to have an edge over the LXX, whose popularity /

popularity in the last half Century - now on the wane(7)- nearly led to the undervaluing of the MT. This emerging popularity of the MT amongst scholars, does not however rule out the indubitable fact that the Hebrew Text as we have it today has been altered from its original form by many circumstances and consequently contains many corruptions.

In a bid to trace these alterations and corruptions the Text is usually juxtaposed with other Ancient Texts i.e. LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) and Vulgate, and a thorough scrutiny by way of comparison carried out. But even these Ancient Versions whose help is called in, in the attempt to reconstruct the supposedly older Text (MT) and correct its errors, have their own peculiar range of problems which even cast doubt on their witness.

Probably, this is why Lagarde had insisted on establishing a consistent 'Original Text' of the Septuagint before using it as a version for Textual Criticism. Although the advice sounds good, its practical realisation looks very remote. And even granted that it were possible, the question would still have to be put, whether it should be preferred over the MT purely because of its age. Some scholars have even tended to undervalue its worth because of its agreement with the SP against the MT. They claim that this is a pointer to it that both the LXX and SP have as their underlying Hebrew Text, one of the popularising Texts. This is a conclusion which I think cannot be sustained. It appears purely based on the erroneous sectarianism which is associated with the SP and so any other version which agrees with it is deemed to be of the same group with it. It is almost lost sight of that the SP was the Hebrew Bible prior to the Separation which did not take place until very early in the History of the Samaritans (probably during the destruction/

destruction of the Sanctuary on Mount Gerizium and Sechem by John Hyrcannus 134-104 B.C.). If this point is noted, then it means for a very long time, the SP was the Jewish Scriptures in its original form and so if the later sectarian tendencies are pruned, it could offer a valid test to the originality of the MT.

Secondly its agreement with the LXX - both being of different locale - against the MT would then have to be seen in a different light. In view of this, I think Nyberg was entirely wrong in his apparent hasty conclusion when he said "The Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch are derived from early popular recensions in use among the Jews of the Diaspora. Whereas Massoretic Text offers a careful recension which is related to the Diaspora Texts much as the Classical texts of the great Alexandrian Philologists are related to the popular texts of the Classical authors which are now available to us from the Egyptian papyri". (8)

Rather I think, Nyberg's conclusion should be reversed. What we now have in the MT is the agreed Text of the Christian era, while the SP has lived an independent life for a long period unimproved for general acceptance. It is in view of this that I think, after taking care of the theological stance of the LXX and eliminating the probable sectarian elements in the SP, any deviation of the MT from them - particularly in our Text, should be seen as the improvement of a later age to meet the 'set standard of acceptability' at the time of Normalisation of the Text.

So in the absence of any better witness to the Original Hebrew Text, the LXX, SP, and MT can still be compared to locate differences and help/

help in a possible Textual reconstruction. The importance of the role of the Vulgate or Old Latin which is in bits and pieces, is questionable since it is nothing other than the MT in 'Latin Uniform'.

OUR TEXT IN THE MT, LXX, SP AND V

A. EXODUS CHAPTER 3

(1) Ex. 3:1

MT	הַר הָאֱלֹהִים הַרְבֵּה
LXX	ἐὺς το ὄρος χωρηβ
SP/	הַר הָאֱלֹהִים הַרְבֵּה
V	Ad montem Dei Horeb

Out of the four Texts, it is only LXX which does not mention Horeb as the Mountain of God. The MT and SP as well as the Vulgate agree that the spot of the revelation is the Mountain of God. Here the LXX difference can be attributed to some sort of theological scruple for which it is well known. The translators might have thought of a possible misunderstanding of the Biblical God, if he is given a particular locale i.e. mountain. So its leaving it out in the translation is understandable.

(2) Ex. 3:2

MT	בְּלַבַּת שָׁח
LXX	ἐν φλογὶ πυρος
SP	בְּלַבַּת שָׁח
V	in flamma ignis

The difference located here is in spelling and it is between the MT and the SP. An investigation into other Biblical occurrences of the word/

word, 'Flame' shows that the SP pattern is the popular one and MT form is rare. In fact it is scarcely used anywhere else. In such places like Psalm 29:7; Judges 13:20; Isaiah 29:6, 66:15; and 5:24 which 'IQIs^a Secundum' represents as לְהַרְבֵּי , the form is either לְהַרְבֵּי or לְהַרְבֵּי . In all these cases the intervening לְ between לְ and בֵּי is present. Its omission in our Text has been ascribed to the Theory of Contraction by some like B. S. Childs (Exodus Commentary) following 'BDB', while some may like to see here the archaic and popular/modern forms of the spelling.

From our observation it seems that the difference is purely the mistake of the Scribe whose eyes rushed from לְבֵי to לְבֵי thus omitting the intervening word לְ - a sort of Homoeoarchton. Therefore though the difference in this instance may be of some importance in Rabbinical exegesis, it seems it does not aid us in the work of reconstructing the Original Text.

(3) Ex. 3:4

MT	$\text{הָרָה} - - - - - \square' \text{לְהַרְבֵּי}$
LXX	$\text{κυριος} - - - - - \text{κυριος}$
SP	$\square' \text{לְהַרְבֵּי} - - - - - \square' \text{לְהַרְבֵּי}$
V	Dominus.....???

All the Texts apparently have different renderings. While the V.drops the second 'Dominus', both LXX and SP are consistent that it is the God who saw Moses turning to have a look at the burning bush that also spoke to him from the midst of the Bush. The only problem with them is that while the LXX uses KUPIOS, the SP uses $\square' \text{לְהַרְבֵּי}$.

But in the case of the MT, while it is הָרָה who saw Moses, it is/

is $\square' \eta \lambda \nu$ who called to him. Although deciding which of them possibly represent the Original Text is difficult, one thing is clear. It is that SP Vorlage probably had the same God seeing and calling Moses just like LXX. Whether the Vorlage contains $\eta \eta'$ or $\square' \eta \lambda \nu$ is difficult to say because LXX is not consistent in its Greek representation of Hebrew $\eta \eta'$ and $\square' \eta \lambda \nu$.

So the MT version looks very much like a theologically informed Text. Either in the story form or early Literary Stage, saying $\eta \eta'$ saw Moses and $\square' \eta \lambda \nu$ called out to him would have appeared a little absurd. What we have in the MT is a later development of identifying Yahweh as Elohim and so the story is sandwiched with the Divine Name for theological purpose. In all likelihood, the Original Text must have read the same God seeing and calling on Moses.

(4) Ex. 3:5

MT	$\eta \lambda \nu$ $\eta \lambda \nu$
LXX	$\tau\omicron \upsilon \pi\omicron \sigma\eta\mu\alpha \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \text{ek} \tau\omega\nu \pi\omicron\delta\omega\nu$
SP	$\eta \lambda \nu$ $\eta \lambda \nu$
V	Calciamentum pedibus tuis

A close scrutiny of the Texts shows a sort of gradual development or improvement. In the SP what we have is 'Your shoe' from 'Your foot' which is singular. The construction would make one think Moses had just a foot not feet on which he fastened the single shoe - a poor grammar indeed.

But the Septuagint went a step further in its rendering to say 'Your/

'Your shoe' (singular) from 'Your feet' (plural). Here we can feel the translator using his common sense to make the statement intelligible. Then we have the MT rendering it in very good grammatical construction, "Put off the shoes from your feet" and the V copied it. Thus in the MT we see the climax of the process of grammatical development of the Text. It would be absurd for anybody to think that the reverse is the case! So our present MT shows here marks of a later development of the Text.

(5) Ex. 3:6

MT	ך'בן
LXX	του πατρος
SP	ך'בתן
V	patris tui

The rendering of the different texts is difficult to understand. Although it appears that the LXX agrees with the MT, we may note that some of LXX manuscripts like, 'MSS 58:72' read 'Fathers'. And in the case of the SP the very word ך'בתן is absent in the Original Text. It is only in such MSS as the $\text{D}^3\text{EG}^1\text{IX}^2$ that we find ך'בתן instead of ך'בת . And even as we now find it in the Text ך'בת , it is difficult to determine its meaning. This is because while it has a masculine singular suffix, it is a masculine noun with a feminine plural term. This makes it different from the better form in MT, which is a masculine singular noun with a masculine singular suffix.

This problem of reading is compounded by the result of a comparison of/

of the verse with other exemplars of our text in other parts of the Pentateuch. Here in Ex. 3:6 it is Father (assuming that is what lies behind SP) like in Ex.15:2; 18:4; but in Ex.3:15-16; 4:5; 6:25 it is Fathers. In these references LXX always agrees with MT in reading Father or Fathers. And in the early Church the passage is cited as saying Fathers, Acts 7:32 says *Τῶν Πατέρων* and so Justin Martyr cited it.

If we compare Genesis 47:9 (*אבותי*) with what we have in the SP of Ex. 3:6, it is very unlikely that it should be understood as singular. This coupled with its absence in the Original shows that the Text has in a way been tampered with in view of the later understanding of the 'Fathers' as either referring to the immediate forebears or to the Distant Patriarchs - after the Fathers of the Exile had discredited themselves through disobedience to be styled Fathers of Faith. Probably at this later date, the use of Father(s) became scrupulously guarded to avoid any misunderstanding of it.

In view of this, we may think that here in Ex. 3:6, MT and LXX preserve the 'Original' and the singular would be very appropriate and reasonable in 'Moses dialogue with Yahweh'.

(6) Ex. 3:6

MT	<i>אֵל</i>	<i>אֱלֹהֵינוּ</i>
LXX	<i>καὶ θεὸς</i>	<i>Ἰσαακ</i>
SP	<i>אֵל</i>	<i>אֱלֹהֵינוּ</i>
V	Deus Isaak	

The problem with the Texts here is the addition or deletion of the conjunction - *καὶ* or *ו*. The MT and V have no conjunction, but SP and LXX have, just as it is repeated in Ex. 3:15 too. In all probability/

probability it seems that the vorlage used by the LXX and SP has it and is therefore retained in their versions. But its absence in the MT might have been due to the tendency or desire to interpret the construction along a particular line. Apart from the fact that the deletion of the conjunction makes the Text more idiomatic and a better construction - an improvement, its removal might have been theologically motivated i.e. to avoid misunderstanding the Patriarchal Deity as Three instead of One - problem of interpretation!

On the basis of this, one would think MT rendering is a later improvement on the Text.

(7) Ex. 3:7

MT	וְכָנְסוּ
LXX	τὴν ὀδυνην αὐτῶν
SP	וְכָנְסוּ
V	propter duritiam eorum

Although all the versions look alike in their rendering of this text or verse, it is noteworthy that it is only the MT which uses the plural form of the Hebrew word for suffering. Both LXX and SP agree that it is singular - suffering or sorrow. The plural form of the MT may be due to later tendency to make the passage speak to the Israelites in their captivity in view of the varied experiences of sorrow they were passing through. So MT's plural form may represent later development accruing from the use made of the text.

(8) /

(8) Ex. 3:8

MT 77N7
LXX και κατεβη
SP 777N7
V descendi

In the Samaritan Pentateuch there is conflict of witness. While in MSS. A, we have 777N7, in MSS. B, we have 77N7. The variance may point to later adaptation of the text to suit theologisation. This can be inferred from the form of the verb used. Like MSS. B, of the SP, the MT has the 'Kal future' form of the verb, 777 which probably points to Yahweh's continual coming down to save His people when in a state of stress; while the SP and its MSS. A have the indicative form of the verb with a paragogic 77 just like the LXX with its 'Second Aorist indicative form' of the verb κατεβην—'I have come down'.

Thus the LXX and SP, reflect the Original with the form of the verb suitable in the Moses Context, while MT points to later understanding and use made of the one time revelation to Moses to mean an all time descent of Yahweh to save his people from their suffering.

(9) Ex. 3:9

MT ??? ----- 77777
LXX και χετταιων----και Γεργεσαιων
SP 77777 77777
V et Hetthei???

Both MT and V have the form "And the Hittites", while omitting the tribe 'Girgashites'. The LXX has, "And the Hittites and Girgashites", while/

while SP has the Hittites and the Girgashites. It is also only the LXX and SP who retain Girgashites in Ex. 3:17, while both MT and V omit it. And if we set it out thus:

MT The Canaanites and the Hittites.....

LXX The Canaanites and Hittites and Girgashites....

SP The Canaanites, the Hittites and the Girgashites...

we would see that while LXX and SP reflect the more rhetorical use of the nomenclature without actually putting too much thought into what they mean - just the nations Yahweh dispossessed for the sake of his beloved people, MT presents a better form of naming or construction which is less rhetorical.

Secondly the omission of Girgashites by MT may point to its meaninglessness much later when the tribe and the land they supposedly possessed had lost any trace in history. To still include the name may make the story look like fiction (9). Thus we could say that MT is here again improved upon.

(10) Ex. 3:10

MT	??	??	וַיֹּצֵא
LXX	βασιλεα	ΑΙΓΥΠΤΟΥ	ἐξάξεις
SP	??	??	וַיֹּצֵא
V	??	??	educas (10)

The addition of 'King of Egypt' by the LXX may be regarded as the work of the translator to make the original unambiguous in his rendition. And for the verb וַיֹּצֵא, while the MT uses the imperative, the SP uses the preterite form which could be represented as, "And thou shalt bring out (my people) - cf. Num. 20:8 וַיֹּצֵא = "And you/

you shall bring (water) out". If this our interpretation is accepted then it would mean that in the SP as shown here, we have the form of the verb which suits the story of Moses more than the MT's own rendering which is copied by the V. The SP and LXX - excluding the addition - would therefore from my point of view point more to the original Text than the improved Massoretic Text.

(11) Ex. 3:12

MT וַיֹּאמֶר

LXX εἰπεν δε ὁ θεος Μωυσει λεγων

SP וַיֹּאמֶר

The simple phrase, "And he said" of MT and the SP, is rendered by the Septuagint translators in its redundant form "And God said to Moses saying." Even in some LXX Minuscules, ΚΥΡΙΟΣ is used to replace ~~θεος~~ while in the Codex Alexandrinus, the word λεγων is missing. The LXX rendering is an amplification of the MT and SP which represent the Original.

(12) Ex. 3:14

MT וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֹּאמֶר

LXX εἶπα εἶμι ὁ ων

SP וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֹּאמֶר

There is evidence that the 'phrase' in the Vorlage before all the 3 versions is cryptic, and as a result of which, none of the versions is absolutely clear as to what meaning lies behind the phrase. Instead of a name as the passage suggests, the phrase smacks of an explanation of the significance of the 'Name' rather than the name itself. It shows that behind the phrase is an ineffable name which can only be known/

known by the coming into being, or becoming in action what it is in essence. Therefore all the 3 versions look like a theologisation on the meaning of the name which is absent. So none of the three could be regarded as representing the Original, if in fact they are not all later theologumena of the essence of the Divine Name of the God of Israel.

(13) Ex. 3:15

MT	דָּר	דָּרָל	
LXX	γενεῶν	γενεαῖς	(literally - of generations to generations)
SP	דָּר	דָּרָל	

Of the many possible ways of rendering the phrase - 'from generation to generation or for ever', i.e. דָּר דָּרָל; דָּרָל דָּרָל; דָּר דָּרָל דָּרָל; SP chooses one and MT another.

Since whichever form is chosen does not affect the sense of the Text, we should see the difference as reflecting the desire to present a better grammatical construction. And since of the two, MT looks more idiomatic than the fairly awkward SP, then we are to see the MT as representing a later better grammar and the SP, the original archaic form. In this regard the LXX is of no help!

(14) Ex. 3:16

MT	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי
LXX	τῶν Ἰσραηλ	τῶν
SP	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי

If it is understood that the SP represents the version of the Scriptures in use by the Samaritans prior to their separation, and also /

also that it is a transcription rather than a translation, then one should normally expect it to be closer to the MT with which it was related before the separation than the LXX. But contrariwise, in the above rendering SP and LXX agree against the MT. IF as it is usually claimed, the SP and LXX represent later popular Texts, and the MT the Original, one should expect the MT construction to be more archaic than the SP and LXX. But instead the reverse is the case. SP and LXX's "...The Elders of the sons of Israel", is put in a more laconic and less wooden construction, "...The Elders of Israel". The conclusion from this is obvious, which is that MT is a refinement of the old form presented in the SP and the LXX.

(15) Ex. 3:17

MT	אמר	
LXX	εἶπεν	(in the Original Ms it is in the 3rd pers. Singular = And he said)
SP	אמר	

Here the form of the verb אמר used by the MT is more emphatic than that of the SP. What we have in the SP looks very much like a wish or a plan being ruminated upon, cf. Lamentations 3:24 אֲנִי שׁוֹכֵחַ אֶמְרֵי אֱלֹהִים, and Genesis 46:31 אָמַר אֱלֹהִים. And LXX puts it in the reported speech. What we have therefore in the SP and LXX is purely the sense of the story of what happened to Moses in the wilderness and nothing more. But in the MT it appears that with the - I have said, or have promised - idea of the version, more is being read into the original story to make it a present reality, - Yahweh has promised to bring his people out as he did of old. The simple /

simple Moses Yahweh encounter thus becomes no longer an ordinary story but an ongoing present reality.

(16) Ex. 3:18

MT מֵאֲנִיךָ

LXX ἐξ^ςε^ς

SP מֵאֲנִיכֶם

It is difficult to reconstruct what the Original is in this context. While the MT and SP use the second person plural, the LXX uses the second person singular. As we know later in the contest with Pharaoh (Ex.5:1ff), the elders definitely did not accompany Moses to Pharaoh. It is either that LXX is amending its vorlage on the basis of this later knowledge of the story, or the MT and SP are putting it in the second person plural to reflect the later 'community leadership' in Israel rather than the individual sovereignty. So the Text is in a confused state and not much can be made out of it.

(17) Ex. 3:18

MT וְעַתָּה

LXX ???

SP ???

As we have been maintaining all along, here again we find the MT amplifying its source by putting in words which will make the story more lively and arresting - "And Now". There is no doubt that it was absent in the original or vorlage used by the LXX and SP, and even probably in the Original MT version used by Jerome as the V itself does not have it. In all probability it/

it is a much later improvement of the Text.

(18) Ex. 3:19

MT 2851

LXX $\dot{\Sigma} \alpha \nu \mu \eta$

SP. 767

While SP and LXX look at Pharaoh's stubbornness from one angle, the MT sees it from another. MT sees that Pharaoh will not let the people go even by a mighty hand. But LXX says, 'except by a mighty hand', while SP says, 'not, except by a mighty hand'. The latter i.e. SP and LXX see that Pharaoh will eventually allow the people to go after Yahweh's demonstration of His might. But MT says this demonstration may not even convince Pharaoh - a pointer to his ultimate destruction at the Red Sea. Such an extended implication savours of a much later interpretation than the original simple story construction.

(19) Ex. 3:22

רש אלה אשה כושכ בזה MT

LXX αἰτησέι γυνή παρὰ γελτονος

ר'שאל אג'ש מאת דעהר ראשה מאת רעותה SP

In the rendering of this passage, the LXX agrees with the MT against the Samaritan Pentateuch. They both have it that only women should ask ornaments from their neighbours. But SP says it is both men and women. Yet when we compare with Ex.11:2 we see that all three versions agree.

רִישׁ אֱלֹרִי אִישׁ מֵאֵת זֶהָר וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רָעוֹתָהּ MT.

LXX και αἰτησάτω ἕκαστος παρὰ τοῦ πλησίον καὶ γυνή παρὰ τῆς πόλεως

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב מִמֶּנּוּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִמֶּנּוּ

And/

And this fact is^{also} corroborated in Ex. 33:5-6 where it is again evident that it was not only women and children who left Egypt with ornaments but also men as well, though they all disposed of the ornaments in a discreditable way - those of women and children in making the 'Golden Calf' (Ex. 32 ff) and those of men as a result of Yahweh's Anger (Ex. 33:6).

So it is not unlikely that the Original Text consistently had 'men and women' as represented by the SP, but was for one reason or the other amended to read only women and children by MT and LXX at least in the 'Revelation Episode'. Even LXX adds the personal note that the jewellery was to be requested 'Secretly', which is neither in the MT nor in the SP.

B. CHAPTER 4:1-17

(1) Ex. 4:1

(A)	MT	הוה' אלך	לך-נראה	(B)	???
	LXX	οὐκ ὠπταί	σοι ὁ θεός	τί ἔρω	προς αὐτοὺς
	SP	הוה' אלך	נראה לך		???

(A) As we have said earlier it is not very easy determining the pattern LXX follows in rendering the Hebrew Divine Names, הוה' and אלך. In all probability it appears that it is the sense of the context rather than the form of the Names which is followed as guide. Here one would have expected the word 'KUPIOS' but 'θεός' is used instead. Probably it may be that when the Deity is referred to in His impersonal Status as here - 'A God has not appeared to you', the word θεός is used, but when the reference is to/

to the personal God of Israel 'KUPIOS' is used. This formula appears to be followed at least in our Text though may be difficult to sustain elsewhere.

So we are to see all the Texts or versions as representing the Original apart from the special case of LXX translation.

(b) It may be mentioned too that it is only the LXX which has, "...What shall I say to them", (cf Ex. 3:13 where it appears to have been borrowed).

(2) Ex. 4:2

MT	מַה בְּיָדְךָ
LXX	τι τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου
SP	מַה בְּיָדְךָ
V	quid est hoc quod tenes in manu tua

IF the various versions are rendered literally we would have something like this

MT	'What is in your hand?'
LXX	'What this is which is in your hand?'
SP	'What is this in your hand?'
V	'What is this which is in your hand?'

Virtually it seems all the versions except MT agree on the form of the question even including the V. The contracted form of the question in the MT might have been due to the desire to make the question look less of a 'person to person' type of dialogue i.e. physical contact, and more of a command probably from 'heaven'. The fact that the V does not agree with the MT supports the point that/

that the development was much later in the MT.

(3) Ex. 4:5

MT הָרָחֵק

LXX KUPIOS - missing in both the Original Text
 and in Codex Vaticanus.

SP הָרָחֵק

The absence of any representation by LXX of the Hebrew here is surprising. This is because in other places like Ex.3:16, it is fully represented. But when one recalls the fact that the verse itself is a disputed one as a later insertion into the Text, one begins to wonder whether it was even in the original Hebrew vorlage used by the LXX. The assumption that it was absent, may therefore explain why it is represented in one place and is absent in the other. Thus the verse itself may be seen as a later interpolation.

(4) Ex. 4:6

MT וַתֵּצֵא

LXX καὶ ἐξήνεγκεν τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐκ κόλπου αὐτοῦ

SP וַתֵּצֵא וַתֵּצֵא

In this passage there appears to be a sort of progressive pruning of detail deemed unnecessary.

LXX says, 'he took his hand out of his place or bosom'.

SP. prunes it to 'he took it - (hand) out of his bosom', and

MT, the climax of the pruning exercise presents a more idiomatic form, 'he took it out'. Here the unnecessary pedantic expressions of LXX and SP are refined to read the better Hebrew expression of the/

the MT. Thus we may have cause to believe that the old expression in the Original Hebrew vorlage represented by the LXX is gradually refined until it reached its climax in MT. Except on grounds of good expression, it would seem unreasonable to delete the words cut out by MT. Even in Ex. 4:7 we see MT going back to the form in the SP, *וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בִּשְׁמוֹ* - 'And he took it out of his bosom', a form which is consistently retained by SP.

Thus within a short space we see MT exercising a freedom of removing or retaining words which it finds in the Original, according to his wish, while LXX and SP appear to betray a slavish attitude to the original construction.

(5) 4:6

MT	<i>וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בִּשְׁמוֹ</i>
LXX	??? ἡ χερς αὐτοῦ ὥσερ χιων
SP	<i>וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בִּשְׁמוֹ</i>

MT and SP agree that the 'hand' was or became leprous but LXX omits the word leprous and says as white as snow. The LXX translator(s) might have omitted the word leprous as an over emphasis or unnecessary embellishment of the story. This might have been called for by the type of audience he had in mind to whom being 'white' would not have been synonymous with leprosy. But of course to the Jews this is understandable since leprosy could even be found on a garment cf Lev. 13:38 ff 47ff.

(6) Ex. 4:9

MT	<i>וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בִּשְׁמוֹ</i>
LXX	<i>ἐξέταλ</i>
SP	<i>וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בִּשְׁמוֹ</i>

Here/

Here both SP and LXX carry the futuristic sense of the act of Nile water turning into blood. But MT has the sense of either the action was being performed at the spot or had already taken place. He mixes together the later event which happened in Egypt with the prediction of it here, that it will happen. So LXX and SP here have the record as it was related in its story form probably as it was in the Original.

(7) Ex. 4:11

MT	הנה' יינא
LXX	ἐγω ὁ θεος; ὁ θεος; κυριος ὁ θεος
SP	הנה' יינא

Here again LXX and its manuscripts are inconsistent in their rendering of the Divine Names in Hebrew. While some say, 'ὁ θεος'. others say, 'ἐγω ὁ θεος or κυριος ὁ θεος'.

(8) Ex. 4:14

MT	גבר גשח
LXX	χαρησεται εν εαυτω
SP	גברל גשח

The only difference here is in the spelling of MT's גבר and SP's גברל. MT looks like an abbreviation of SP. But the use of the two forms does not help us to locate which form antedates the other, though גבר first appears in Isaiah while גברל is found constantly in use in the earlier poetry, (see B.D.B pp 523 ff). Even the change in spelling brings little or no significant change of meaning to the sense of the passage. So any distinction that may/

may be made about it will be purely psychological or conjectural.

Having thus looked at the various divergences between the MT and the Major Versions, we may now push our investigation a little further by comparing what we have in the present MT with another Ancient witness to the Biblical Text, the Targum.

THE WITNESS OF THE MT COMPARED WITH THE TARGUM

Before juxtaposing the two Texts, we need to say something about the general nature of the T we are using. As history has it, the T evolved as a necessity in post-exilic Judaism. This was when Hebrew ceased to be spoken as the common language and was replaced by Aramaic which by then had become the official written language of the Western Persian Empire. Although Hebrew had not then, as a language, completely died out of use, it was becoming less and less spoken and used only within the larger part of the Jewish Community.

It was at this point the need arose, for Liturgical purposes, to get the Hebrew Scriptures still in Hebrew characters interpreted in Aramaic for the benefit and understanding of the worshipping community. Thus the practice arose to combine the usual Scripture lessons read in Hebrew in the synagogue with a translation into Aramaic. But when exactly the practice began, no one knows (though Neh. 8:8 might be correct in associating it with Ezra), neither do we know for how long the translation was done orally before it assumed written form. And even when it assumed written form, we know not what the relationship was between the two now literary documents - the Torah and the Targums.

But/

But however, after centuries of oral and written transmission, these Ts were eventually reworked in the fifth century A.D. in Babylon to agree with the received Text, having for centuries served the worshipping community as a renowned interpretative document of the message of the Torah. Out of all the then floating Ts, two became the best known and authoritative for Judaism, viz., Onkelos for the Pentateuch which had greater authority and was supplied with a Massora and Jonathan for the Prophets. These two documents then became distinguished from the numerous Palestinian Ts which were never edited officially and consequently had no single authoritative form or Text.

As ancient witnesses to the Hebrew Biblical Text, the Ts have their own special characteristics which Sperber has called, "The Style of the Targum" (11). A closer study of the T has revealed that, whenever the context demands it, it either adds the necessary particles and prepositions or even omits them altogether; while for the verbal forms, it completely disregards the grammatical form of the Hebrew Text and uses the tense which the context demands. In a bid to promote a better understanding of the Scriptures by the people, the T exercises a very free hand in its Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew Original. It is probably this approach to the Text, which occasionally ignores the meaning of the Hebrew Original, that reduces its value as Textual witness except only as an important document for the history of Old Testament exegesis.

Thus, we find that the T often gives a rendition of what the Hebrew Original Text meant to say, rather than what it actually or literally says.

For/

For instance, instead of MT's I Sam. 12:15 "וַיִּבְרָחְךָ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ" =
 (Against you and your Fathers), T gives, "וְנִתְּחַלְּתָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ" =
 (Against you like your Fathers), or as in Jeremiah 13:17,
 "וְהָיָה כְּצֹאן הַיְּהוָה" = (The flock of Yahweh), T gives, "וְהָיָה כְּעַמֵּי הַיְּהוָה" =
 (The people of Yahweh) etc.

In addition to this, the Biblical Divine Name Yahweh is rendered
 in different forms as, 'י' ; 'י' ; or 'י' ; while the tendency
 to eliminate all phrases which are reminiscent of anthropomorphism
 and anthropopathism and substitute instead expressions which are
 better suited for the more refined ideas concerning Yahweh of a
 later generation is very pronounced. (12)

To achieve this seemingly set objective, the T changes verbs from
 the active - ascribing actual action to God, to the passive, making
 God involved only indirectly. Thus affirmative statements in the
 Hebrew Original are found changed into question forms while negative
 statements are changed into affirmations, i.e. if the original
 wording of the Hebrew vorlage seems to allow for doubts regarding
 the omniscience or omnipotence of Yahweh. The following examples
 may be given.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) | Joshua 4:24 | MT | וְהָיָה יָד הַיְּהוָה | = Hand of Yahweh |
| | | T | וְהָיָה כֹחַ גְּבוּרַת הַיְּהוָה | = Might of Yahweh |
| | | cf | LXX ἡ δύναμις τοῦ κυρίου | = Power of the Lord |
| (2) | Ex. 16:3 | MT | בְּיַד הַיְּהוָה | = In the hand of Yahweh |
| | | T | לִפְנֵי הַיְּהוָה | = Before Yahweh |
| | | cf | LXX ὑπο κυρίου | = By the Lord or Under his influence. |

(3) Joshua 10:11 MT וְהָיָה הַשֶּׁלֶךְ עַל־הָאֲבָנִים = Statement

T וְהָיָה הַשֶּׁלֶךְ עַל־הָאֲבָנִים אֲתֵרֵמֶינָהּ = Put in question form.

cf LXX καὶ κύριος ἐπεργάζεν αὐτοῖς λίθους
χάλαζης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ = The stones are qualified

(4) And in I Samuel 17:26 the Armies of the living God of the

MT is made the armies of the people of the living God

MT מִצְרֵכֹת אֱלֹהִים הַיָּיָה

T מִצְרֵי עַמִּי הַיָּיָה

After having said all this, a critical scrutiny may pose the question whether all these apparently obvious deviations of the T in its translation of the Hebrew Text can actually be ascribed to 'its Style', or are we rather to see in them evidences of an actual variant Text of the Hebrew vorlage used by the T in contrast to the MT. Or on the other hand, could the terms and expressions it is regarded as having altered be regarded at that early stage as the Standardised Biblical expressions and phrases?

It is generally claimed that the T writing for a later generation was out to remove anthropomorphisms and unworthy statements about God which no longer fitted or suited its age. This may be understandable in the case of the LXX writing for a different audience. If the anthropomorphic language was no longer suitable at the time of the T, how did they survive in the MT till the Christian era, or were they later reintroduced since both the Hebrew Original and the T were written and used by the Jewish community. If the T were written for Jewish audience for whom anthropomorphisms and anthropomorphisms were very much at home, should we then see the T as merely putting the LXX into/

into Aramaic Language? From the examples cited above, the T appears nearer the LXX than the MT and so could either be a translation of the LXX or its recension. To support this, the impression the T gives is not that of a piecemeal translation work, but rather that of a Commission. Probably this is why some have seen in the two Names Onkelos and Jonathan, the names of the revisers of the LXX, viz., Aquila and Theodotion. Any attempt at investigating deeper the above puzzles will take us beyond the scope of our present quest, so we may now stop to compare the MT Exodus 3 and 4 with Onkelos Targum translation of it to see the differences.

As one of the aims of the T is to make the Hebrew Scriptures more intelligible to its community in the daily spoken Aramaic language, we find it making additions necessary for a better understanding of its vorlage.

(1) In Ex. 4:7 where the MT says, "like his (other) flesh כבשרו", the T, like the Peshitta, qualifies the leprous flesh as, "The corrupt/rotten flesh בשר רע", to distinguish it from the healthy flesh.

(2) In Ex. 4:13 MT says, ביד תשלח, but the T puts in an adjective to qualify hand, בידך דכשר למשלח - a more suitable hand.

Added to this amplification of the Original is the tendency to render the words in the Original according to their meaning in the Context.

(1) In Ex. 4:16 MT has, 'be to him as God אל יהי', but T puts it - 'be to him as Master/Lord or governor ליה'; while MT's פה, 'as a mouth' /

mouth', is rendered in a clearer way - למתורגמן = his interpreter. (13)

(2) Also MT's Ex. 3:3 לעב (not) burnt is given in a more explanatory way as מתר = was still moist/fresh.

In addition to the above, T also supplies words by way of interpreting the Original.

(1) In Ex. 3:10 The MT gives us - (sons of Israel) 'out of Egypt' ממצרים ; but T interprets it as 'out of the land of Egypt' - מארצת מצרים which when retroverted would read like this in Hebrew - מצרים מארץ

(2) Also in Ex. 3:15 MT has לדור for "To or for generations", but T reads לדור כל the equivalent of the Hebrew לדור כל , "for all generations".

While the T does this, it also tries to omit what to it seems or appears to be unnecessary. Thus MT's Ex. 4:6 עכשיו - 'now', is omitted as well as Ex. 4:14 הנה - 'behold'. (14)

In the T we also find specific indications of 'Time' and 'Direction', which appear missing in the MT.

For instance in Ex. 4:9 MT's בשבת is rendered by T as לשבת while also MT's Ex 3:1 מדבר appears in the T as למדבר (15)

In one instance in our Text, the T exhibits a 'doublet' tendency. This is in Ex. 3:1 where MT's 'wilderness' - המדבר , is qualified as a beautiful pasture (to the) wilderness, - שפר רעא למדבר .

Along with the above may be mentioned the addition by T of the Aramaic/

Aramaic '7' to Ex. 4:2 and which in Hebrew is the equivalent of 7שן = which/what etc.

Thus while MT has 7'7 'in thy hand'

T has 77'77 = 'which is in thy hand' (16)

It has also been found to be one of the characteristics of the T to use Aramaic synonyms in interpreting the Hebrew words in its Original. Within our Text, we have the following examples:

(1) Ex. 3:5 MT 777 (come near) hither

T 7777 (lit. to go to and fro) Advance

(2) Ex. 3:7 MT 777 taskmaster/exactor

T 7777 attendant, overseer, taskmaster

(one T.MS. N has 77777 = to make to rule over with power or force).

(3) Ex. 3:12 MT 7 That

T 777 That

(4) Ex. 4:10 MT 777 heavy

T 7777 heavy, difficulty, hard, ponderous.

Apart from the variant readings in the MT and T as discussed above, there are two or three cases where, in the use of tense, both seem to agree. In Ex. 4:11 both MT and T have the 777 in the perfect with the participle, while in Ex. 3:13 both agree to use the perfect with the 7777 consecutive.

(1) Ex. 4:11 MT 7777

T 777

(2) Ex. 3:13 MT 77777

T 77777

Our observation from this comparison between the MT and T is that in the process of use, it seems that our Text had been subjected to some series of developments by way of amplifications or embellishments as the T has shown. IF we take the T approach as an index to later attitude to the Text, then we may begin to see how, probably, the Text has been reworked over the centuries with many scribal interpretations or additions finding their way into the Text (cf Ex. 3:9; 3:13-14; 4:5, 8-9). (17)

Secondly in some places it raises the doubt whether the T was using our present MT or merely revising the LXX or its vorlage. The general opinion that T translated the Hebrew MT is a view which appears, to me, very difficult to sustain in view of the evidence.

However, having said this, let us now examine the MT and SP in some greater details.

THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH

When the Samaritan Pentateuch first came to the notice of scholars in 1616 in the discovery of a manuscript in Damascus, much was expected from its witness to the Original Hebrew Text, but, unfortunately its prestige suddenly waned as a result of the blow dealt it by Gesenius' Verdict in 1815 that the SP is practically worthless for purposes of Textual Criticism.

Gesenius does not see the SP as an independent witness to the Text, but rather as a revision of the MT adapted in both language and subject /

subject matter to the views of the Samaritans. This stance of Gesenius which has the flavour of an inadequate appreciation of the SP was not however left uncontested. Thus in the 19th Century it was protested by A. Geiger and in the 20th Century by P. Kahle, while recently Jellicoe has said, "The Samaritan Pentateuch, though itself properly speaking is not a version so much as a transcription, can not be ignored in any comprehensive account of the transmission - history of the Old Testament". (18)

What has largely been responsible for the undervaluing of the SP as a Textual witness, is the alleged revisions and corruptions which stem from its sectarian interest and the old wrong assumption that the final break of the Samaritans from the Judeans took place very early after the Babylonian Exile, an assumption which is now largely being corrected to early first or second century A.D.

This is due to the light thrown on the matter by the writings at Qumran and of the Chronicler. IF for instance the break between the Palestinian Jews and the Samaritans had been total, as alleged, at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, then one wonders why the Chronicler (400 B.C.) a partisan of Jerusalem and a rabidly orthodox writer of Jubilees as well as the Essene Monks at Qumran should cite the Pentateuch according to the Text of the Separatist and Sectarian Community at Shechem.

Another point raised against the SP is that in about 6,000 places, it is found to be at odds with the MT; 1,600 of these in agreement with LXX against MT, while in 4,400 instances it maintains a variant reading from the MT. But the fact remains that most of these readings are/

are not only on trivial matters, but many of them are purely orthographical differences. Apart from the few sectarian readings in Deut. 11:30 and nineteen other places, it seems that the SP is less susceptible to corruption since as a small community not widely scattered, dangers of Textual corruption and recensional developments would normally be few.

Also the almost a priori judgment that the MT is 'the Text', has made it possible to see any deviation from it as representing the popular or popularising Texts which once floated about in Palestine.(19) It seems not taken into account, the fact that the locale of each Text, MT - Babylon?, LXX - Egypt, and SP - Palestine might have contributed to the differences. The almost separate history of the MT might be responsible for the differences rather than the alleged sectarian interest of the SP. However as an ancient Textual witness, we find the following differences between the SP and the MT which have not been mentioned in our study of the MT and the Major Versions.

COMPARISON OF THE JEWISH AND SAMARITAN VERSION

(1) Ex. 3:1 SP. $\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta$ MT. $\eta\eta\eta\eta$

The difference between the two versions in this verse is in SP's spelling. As we shall see all through this comparison MT is very inconsistent in its spelling, an indication of probably the work of many hands. But the SP maintains its spelling pattern, cf. Ex. 17:6; 33:6; Deut 1:6 and 4:10 where SP's spelling of Horeb is the same while MT uses one form now and then another.

(2) /

(2) Ex. 3:2 SP מִלֵּאךְ יְהוֹה אֵלֶיךָ בְּלִבְתּוֹ MT מִלֵּאךְ מִלֵּאךְ יְהוֹה בְּלִבְתּוֹ

There is a rearrangement in MT which makes it look a better construction while its spelling of 'in flame' is different.

It is worth noting that in the Original SP, 'flame of fire' is absent, while some MSS. like ^{QDE} simply have 'in fire' .

When however we compare this with LXX witness, it becomes evident that 'in a flame of fire' in all probability came in as part of the development of the Text. It might have read originally - 'A Mal'ak met Moses'.

(3) Ex. 3:3 SP וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה MT וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה

Here again the difference is in the MT and it is orthographical.

(4) Ex. 3:5 SP וַיַּעַמְדֵּךְ MT וַיַּעַמְדֵּךְ

Different tenses are employed by the versions. While SP uses the perfect, MT chooses the participle; 'You stand', 'You are standing'.

(5) Ex. 3:7 SP וַיֹּרֶא מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים MT וַיֹּרֶא מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים

Both versions here agree on the tense of the verb 'see' used. But though they both use the infinitive absolute, MT's spelling is different from SP.

(6) Ex. 3:13 SP אֲמַר אֶל־יְהוָה MT אֲמַר אֶל־יְהוָה

Apparently the interpretation of the Text remains the same in spite of MT's difference in spelling. Here as in Ex. 3:16 the MT omits (the yod) in אֶל־יְהוָה but in Deut 28:32 and elsewhere it is retained.

(7) /

(7) Ex. 3:14 SP תאמר לבני ישראל אל MT תאמר לבני ישראל אל

The construction of SP seems to be more suitable in the context as it implies Moses' movement 'unto' the sons of Israel (אל) rather than MT's לבני 'to the sons of Israel'.

(8) Ex. 3:15 SP לעולם MT לעולם

Difference is in the spelling which does not however affect the sense of the passage as both mean - 'for ever'.

(9) Ex. 3:17 SP תאמר MT תאמר

Here is one of the many instances where SP gives feminine endings to its verbs while the MT would like to give the masculine form. Why the change is not too obvious from the context. But it seems MT is correcting the old verbal form in the vorlage used by SP rather than vice versa.

(10) Ex.3:18 SP נאמר MT נאמר

While SP has, 'God of the Hebrews has called us', MT says 'God of the Hebrews has met with us'. In the Original story SP's version would probably have been more appropriate than MT. But in the Worship context of the community, MT would have been a liturgical expression of Yahweh's meeting with His people.

(11) Ex. 3:20 SP נפלאותי MT נפלאותי

Here again we note an insignificant spelling difference in SP.

(12) Ex. 3:21 SP ריק MT ריק

Here SP uses the word empty as an adjective qualifying the sons of Israel while MT uses it as an adverb modifying the verb 'go'. So it seems MT is here improving on SP's vorlage which has this wooden/

wooden Hebrew construction.

- (13) Ex. 3:22 SP רשאל איש מאת רעהו ראשה מאת וצותה
 MT גלה---אשה משכנתה
 מאת---רשאלת---בנותיכם
 משכנתה רמגרת---רשאלת
 בנותיכם

Apart from the omissions in the MT of what is in the SP already discussed (p.17 above) we see here again the MT in the usual form of its peculiar spelling habit which is virtually insignificant in the interpretation of the Text.

- (14) Ex. 4:1 SP לא יאמינו בראי' לך MT לא יאמינו בראי' לך

The construction of SP rendered literally is awkward compared with the MT. MT's "They will not believe in my voice", is more refined than SP's "They will not believe to my voice". MT may here represent later construction than SP's archaic form.

- (15) Ex. 4:10 SP משלשם MT משלשם

Here while MT uses the popular form of the spelling SP uses the form which is less often found cf BDB pp 1026 ff.

- (16) Ex. 4:11 SP לא יהיה... MT לא יהיה...

Here too although לא יהיה and לא יהיה are both adverbs of negation with the prefix ה; MT applies the form that is more frequently used.

- (17) Ex. 4:17 SP האותות MT האותות

MT's habit of spelling so far is very inconsistent as if it is a series of developments. In Ex. 4:9 it has האותות for 'signs', while here in Ex. 4:17 it has האותות. But the SP consistently has/

has $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$. Within the SP however we have differences; while MSS IQW³X² ADEW has $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$, C - FHINPQW³X²Y¹ has $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$. It even appears that the MT form $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$ which we have here in Ex. 4:17 is a defective for $\aleph\aleph\aleph\aleph$ which we find in Ex. 4:9. Apart from this surprising habit of spelling of MT here, the difference contributes nothing to the interpretation.

With the differences between the MT and SP thus explored we may now move on to examine the rendering of our Text within the LXX 'fold' of Primary Manuscripts.

THE RENDERING OF THE SEPTUAGINT AND ITS PRIMARY MSS.

Over the Centuries the Septuagint has enjoyed an unsteady reputation amongst scholars of Textual Criticism. Its prestige, which depends on the credibility of the legendary Letter of Aristeas, is now under question for many reasons; while the general characteristic traits ascribed to it as a version are now found to belong, in varying degrees, to the individual books constituting its component parts. (20)

Although in its early years, it was praised by such Jewish scholars like Philo (died ^c50 C.E.) and Josephus (died ^c100 C.E.) as the work of 'inspired Prophets', while in the early Church it was accepted as the Standard form of the Old Testament, it seems that these praises are based on the external rather than the internal evidence of the Text. (21)

What/

What we have today as the Septuagint appears very much like a Synthesis or collection of different versions with no impression of an overall unity. The implication of this is that the Septuagint is evidence of the Standard Text used in the Church, which was only gradually established and did not of itself stand at the beginning of the Tradition.

It is probably the revision and normalisation of a Single Text from the floating Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures which Aristeas' letter is praising rather than the supposed proto-Septuagint.

This looks very much the case because as history tells us, the translation of the Hebrew Scripture was done piecemeal according to Liturgical needs in different centres - in Egypt into Greek and in Palestine into Aramaic Targums. So it is very unlikely, as Aristeas' letter states, that the Jewish Law was translated to satisfy the curiosity of a royal 'Heathen Patron' of the Arts. The legendary letter is even faulty in claiming that the translation was done by Palestinian Jews, who were non-Greek speaking, instead of the Greek speaking members of the Alexandrian Diaspora. Even the letter mentions earlier unreliable translations which means that there were already Greek renderings of the Hebrew Scriptures in existence. (22) So Aristeas' letter may therefore be speaking of a Standard Greek Text from the floating piecemeal translations commissioned by the Alexandrian Jewish Community.

In all probability this Standard Text might have continued in existence side by side with the other translations though efforts might have been made to bring them into line with the accepted Text./

Text. This may explain the divergences in the Old Testament quotations we find in Philo, Josephus and the New Testament which are at variance with the LXX (cf Mtt. 12:18-20; Is. 42:1-4). These and many other evidences contribute to Jellicoe's statement that, "Aristeas' letter is a polemic against incipient rival translations and an apology for Jerusalem and its Temple". (23)

What emerges from the above is that, the search for a proto-Septuagint text should definitely look beyond our present LXX and also that it is not easy to say whether what we have in our LXX is a recension of the work based on the supposed Original Hebrew Text or is itself based on the Ur-Hebrew Text. As this cloud of uncertainty hangs over the worth of the Septuagint for Textual Criticism in addition to its baffling rendering of the Hebrew Original, its complete reassessment becomes necessary in the field of Biblical Criticism.

These few remarks notwithstanding, we may now look at how our Text is rendered by it and its primary manuscripts, viz: Codexes B, A, and S. Origen's work may be called to witness only if it becomes necessary.

(A) CHAPTER 3

(1) Ex. 3:1

LXX	ἡγαγεν
B	
A	ἡγεν
S	

In/

In the Original LXX. MSS. the verb is absent but as the Text is now, it means, 'led' in contrast to A ἤγευ - 'brought'.

(2) Ex. 3:2

LXX	φλογι	πυρος
B	πυρι	φλογος
A		
S		

This phrase is not found in the Original LXX Text just like the SP. This may mean that it was also absent in the Hebrew Original used by them. And if as we have shown above, MT, contains evidence of later development, this phrase might have been one of those things that later found their way into the Text. Its inclusion might therefore have been motivated by the desire to legitimise the call.

But apart from this, the phrase is found variously expressed in the LXX manuscripts; Septuaginta agrees with the MT, while BHQRU and A agree against MT and LXX.

Rahlfs has thought that the Original and normal reading is 'ἐν φλογος πυρι', but Peter Walters regards this as a mistaken view which leads to relapsing behind the Sixtine and the Cambridge Editions. (24) From the evidences available, there appears to be no one definite pattern of rendering this seemingly Biblical hendiadys. For instance in Isaiah 66:15 we have ἐν φλογι πυρος, in Sirach 8:10 45:19 ἐν πυρι φλογος, while in Psalms of Solomon 15:4 and Sirach 21:9 it is φλογ πυρος.

In the New Testament we have it in two places differently rendered,

II /

II Thess. 1:8 has ἐν πυρὶ φλογος, while Acts 7:30 has ἐν φλογὶ πυρος.

The respective writers' choice on how to represent the text may be attributed to:

- i) How the Hebrew Original is written and the presence of the preposition ל,
- ii) Which of the two elements, fire and flame is being emphasised for which the other is to serve as an adjective to heighten its meaning.

(3) Ex. 3:5

LXX	καὶ	σου
B	ὁ δε	
A		???
S		

Here the LXX is made to adhere to what is contained in the MT, καὶ not originally in the Text is brought in, while σου which is already contained in the verb ἔστηκας is brought to translate MT's נָשָׁא . But MSS. A omits it and it does not affect the sense of the passage. This and many other instances may point to it that there was a time when effort was made to bring the LXX into line with the accepted and recognised Text i.e. MT.

(4) Ex. 3:6

LXX	αὐτῷ
B	??
A	
S	
Origen	÷

Here /

Here we have a much later addition to the Text by way of making it more explicit. But even then the sense of 'who' is speaking and to 'who' is not lost without it. It only shows how our Text has grown over the years by bits of additions

(5) Ex. 3:8

LXX καὶ εἰσαγεγεῖν αὐτοὺς(B) γεργασαίωνν... εὐαίωνν
(a) B
A ??? εὐαίωνν γεργασαίωνν
S

(A) The addition by LXX of what A omits is only an explanation.

LXX " And lead them out of that land and bring them
into a good....."

A " And lead them out of that land
into a good....."

From this it may be assumed LXX is here explaining its vorlage which it thinks is not explicit enough.

(B) Gergashites and Hivites is missing in the Original LXX while it is found in SP though in the MT only Gergashites is absent. Its later addition may be due to harmonization. And of course A reverses the order.

(6) Ex. 3:11

LXX εἶμι
B ἔγω εἶμι
A
S
Origen *

LXX's εἶμι is a later addition to the Text as Origen notes. The omission in the Original might have been caused by the desire to differentiate/

differentiate the 'I am' of Moses represented only by ' $\tau\epsilon$ ', from the $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega \acute{\epsilon}\mu\iota$ of Yahweh. But later the theological point that the Revelation did not rob Moses of his individuality or personality, as it was with later Prophets, might have led to its inclusion in the Text. Thus the point is made that Moses was quite conscious of the 'I' or 'Self' when he was before Yahweh.

(7) Ex. 3:12

LXX $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$
 B $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\omega$
 A
 S $\acute{\epsilon}\xi$ (missing)

The fact that this word is not in the LXX Original may be an indication that in its vorlage the 'sign' was not for the sending of Moses but for Yahweh's promise of 'being with him'. Even its inclusion does not resolve the conflict. The form in which we find it in B is different, while in S the ' $\acute{\epsilon}\xi$ ' is missing showing that the emphasis is not on the 'going out', but in the authority of the message sent. All these differences show that the passage must have been differently interpreted in its early years prior to harmonisation.

(8) Ex. 3:12

LXX $\tau\omicron\nu \lambda\alpha\omicron\nu \mu\omicron\upsilon$
 B
 A
 S ???

The inclusion of the possessive ' $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ ' is peculiar to LXX. It is neither in the MT nor in the SP. It is also absent in the S. It is /

is to be regarded as one of the peculiar additions the translator(s) have made to their vorlage. Probably it would have been appropriate for the Alexandrian Community in Dispersion.

(9) Ex. 3:13

(A)	LXX	ἐλευσομαι	των πατερων υμων
	B	ἐξελευσομαι	(B) των πατερων ημων
	A		
	S		

(A) The different forms of the verb used here may be a pointer to how the Mosaic Story was understood and interpreted. While the MT says, 'Behold I come....', LXX says, "I shall come...", while B has, "I shall come out". The futuristic sense in the LXX fits the Story, while the addition of 'out' in B is mere embellishment giving a more realistic mental picture to the incident of the Revelation.

(B) Again in the LXX, we have, "God of 'Your' Fathers" which undoubtedly is what is contained in the Original, but in B, we have, "God of 'Our' Fathers", 'Your Fathers' of LXX is now 'Our Fathers', in B, showing a sense of appropriation of the Text to meet specific needs of the 'worshipping community'.

(10) Ex. 3:14

	LXX	Μωυσην
	B	Μωυσην λεγων
	A	
	S	

In the LXX, 'Moses' is a later addition probably to bring it into line with the MT, although its absence does no damage to the sense of the passage./

passage. B in its further development adds 'λ^ςχ^ων' to Moses, to make the reading of the passage a little more dramatic!

(11) Ex. 3:16

LXX Οὐ^ν

B

A ???

S

Septuagint's Οὐ^ν - 'therefore' is neither in the MT nor in the SP.

And wherever he introduces it probably to add or give more force to the passage, it is found consistently absent in the A MSS; cf. Ex. 1:10; 4:1. B. also omits it in 4:1.

(12) Ex. 3:17

LXX ἐλ^νπον

B ἐλ^νπεν

A ἐλ^νπα

S

Here in the LXX, ἐλ^νπον which originally did not belong to the Text is found in a different form, from how it is in the MT. In the latter it is in the perfect tense and is a continuation of Yahweh's speech, but here in the LXX, it is in the imperative and it is a command to Moses to relay what Yahweh will do for the People i.e. bring them out of Egypt etc.

When we compare this with what we have in B and A above, we see they do not agree. While A. appears closer to MT - "And I say I will...", B. is further from them all. He puts the verb in the 3rd person singular/

singular in the reported speech, - "And he said"

This is a further witness to the way the Text has been handled or interpreted during the period of its transmission. The problem appears to have been that of either interpreting it as a story of what happened in the past or as what Yahweh is continuously doing in 'History'.

(B) CHAPTER 4:1-17

(1) Ex. 4:1

LXX $\bar{\text{O}}$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$

B

A KUPIOS

S

Here MT's Yahweh is differently represented (see above p. 23).

LXX's $\bar{\text{O}}$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is not attested in the Original Text which means that it originally circulated without it. If it was absent in its vorlage, then it sheds a different light on the interpretation of the passage. It would mean that the question Moses was anticipating was not whether a 'Particular God' appeared to him, but that he had had a revelation, against which he seeks some palpable proof. The series of miracles which followed were therefore meant to authenticate his having had a revelation. He was seeking to legitimate his having had a call, and not his having been called by a particular God. A's 'KUPIOS' is no doubt an approximation to the MT's $\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}$.

(2) /

(2) Ex. 4:6

LXX	Εἰσενεγκε την χερα	αὐτου
B	Εἰσενεγκον	
A		μωυσεως
S		

'Εἰσενεγκε' as well as 'αὐτου', are not found in the Original LXX just as in Ex. 4:7 the second χερα is missing as well as 'αὐτου'. All these omissions and their later inclusion leave no doubt that a series of reworking or improvements had taken place. B's Original, 'Εἰσενεγκον' may point to his usual tendency to revise LXX and bring it in line with MT (for evidence of this cf. Judges 1:22-24 in the renderings of LXX, MT, B and S.). The addition of 'μωυσεως' by A is without doubt an embellishment of the story.

(3) Ex. 4:11

LXX	προς Μωυσην	ὁ θεος
B		
A	τω Μωυσει	κυριος
S		

It appears here that the hand which later added, 'To Moses' into the LXX Original betrays his poor knowledge of the Hebrew Original. The Hebrew 'לְּמֹשֶׁה' = unto him', is here rendered with 'προς Μωυσην', which literally would mean 'towards Moses'. The 'Dative Case' would be better instead of the, 'προς' with Accusative - motion towards. The A MSS has a better rendering of the Hebrew vorlage. This and the absence of 'ὁ θεος' in the Original LXX shows our Text has been tampered with or developed.

(4) Ex. 4:16 /

(4) Ex. 4:16

LXX *προσλαλησει*

B *λαλησει*

A

S

The difference between LXX and B is a question of emphasis. The addition of *προς* to *λαλησει* by LXX does not introduce any change in meaning to the Text.

From these exemplars, we can see that our Text has been variously understood and interpreted in the course of its transmission within the LXX family of manuscripts. We have also seen how efforts had been made much later to approximate the different readings to the Hebrew Text - MT.

Now we may try to conclude this investigation by comparing how the Septuagint/OG, in its different recensions rendered our Text. But first, let us give some points on the LXX and its recension by *Θ, Α, Σ* and Origen.

THE WITNESS OF THE SEPTUAGINT RECENSIONS

One of the things to be noted in the discussion of the Septuagint/OG and its recensions, is that it has not yet been established what exactly was the nature of the Greek Text used by the revisers. That all the revisers tried to bring their Greek version nearer the MT is the only point on which there is an apparent consensus. But this point is often so exaggerated that one wonders how such a Text so far from the MT /

MT, was acceptable to the Jewish communities who first used it, and on which efforts had to be so strenuously expended to make it agree with the MT. And even, from our experience or observation, what we have as the remains of these revisions still show signs of divergences.

Was the Old Greek therefore a 'free composition' or a translation of the Hebrew Original, or was it the MT that was a later 'free' rendering of the Original Hebrew vorlage, This is a question for which an easy answer cannot be found.

However, early in the Christian era, the need arose to solve the problem of the presence of discrepancies between the Greek and the Hebrew Texts of the Jewish Scripture. To meet this need, the revisions by , Θ , α and σ , were carried out at different times and places. In carrying out their work, each revisor adopted his own method of approach which has now come to characterise the individual works. While Θ is well known for his transliteration instead of translation, which he even extends to well-known and frequent words, α has a reputation for being anti-Christian in his translations as he was indifferent in the renderings where the LXX shows pro-Christian tendency, (e.g. IS. 7:14, Dan.9:26). In fact he appears to have set for himself the task of expunging from the LXX Text all the readings which the Christians were using for their apologetic purposes. (26)

But σ on his own is known for his elegant Greek style and idiomatic renderings of wooden Hebrew constructions. History has it that Jerome favoured this version and used it in his preparation of the V. Although it is popularly said that they were all 'revisors?' of the Old Greek to bring it into line with the MT, their real relation with the /

the Old Greek is clouded in obscurity just as what constituted the Old Greek version is difficult to decide.

Elements in Θ version have been found to antedate Theodotion of the Second Century, C.E., while it is now being commonly accepted that Aquila used Θ in his effort to bring the Greek version nearer the MT. (27) This would make Θ version a member of the Kaige recension manuscripts, though the frequent agreement between α and Old Greek would call this stance into question.

Apart from these problems of relationship among the versions, is the issue of the representation in Greek letters of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton. (28)

While Baudissin has vehemently maintained that right from its origins, the LXX had rendered the Tetragrammaton by 'KUPIOS' and was in no where a later substitution for an earlier ΑΣΩΔ (29) Origen (30) in his comment on Psalm 2:2 as well as Jerome in his own later testimony had maintained that in the more accurate manuscripts, the Divine Name was written in the Ancient ~~palaeo~~ - Hebrew Scripts.

Although some light has been shed on the matter by the discovery of the Fouad Papyrus as well as the Qumran Fragment of Leviticus II-IV in which the Divine Name is written in a hand closely akin to Fouad 266 where the Tetragrammaton is rendered by IASΩ , one would like to say that the matter still remains an open question in view of other problems which it raises. Poor though the situation is, it would not prevent us from using the versions to examine Exodus 3 and 4.

But it needs ^{to} be said from the outset that because of the aim of the revisors /

revisors i.e. to bring the Old Greek nearer the MT, the few variant readings in them which are different from the present MT are very minor if not negligible.

(1) Ex. 3:4

LXX $\tau\iota$ $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$
 α $\acute{\iota}\sigma\sigma\upsilon$ $\epsilon\gamma\omega$
 θ $\acute{\iota}\sigma\sigma\upsilon$ $\epsilon\gamma\omega$
 (MT $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$)

LXX's 'What is it?' is rendered, 'Behold me, or Here I am', like the MT.

(2) Ex. 3:6

LXX $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 α $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 θ $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 (MT $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$)

Here all the versions agree in rendering the Hebrew $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$. But in Ex. 3:11 there is difference.

(3) Ex. 3:11

LXX $\tau\iota\varsigma$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 α $\tau\iota\varsigma$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 θ $\tau\iota\varsigma$ $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$
 (MT $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$)

There is great confusion here as to what was the Original rendering of the Hebrew $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$. The explanation that K. G. O'Connell (31) tries to give as the differentiation between the Hebrew $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$ and $\text{'} \text{ן} \text{ן}$ I think/

think is not appropriate because even in our Text, 3:6 and 3:11 are both ^{וְאֵל} and yet we find differences (cf. also Gen. 45:4; 28:13; 17:1; 26:24 etc.). The two issues at stake I believe are simply these:

- (i) The revisors want to bring the Old Greek closer to the MT who uses ^{אֱלֹהִים} indiscriminately for man and God.
- (ii) While fulfilling their objective, they also want to make sure they differentiate for theological purpose - between the human 'I am' and the "Divine I am'.

Thus one could see why the problem arises here where the Hebrew uses the same 'I am' for Moses as he used for Yahweh in 3:6.

So the issue at stake is theological!

(4) Ex. 3:9

LXX καὶ ἔωρακα τὸν θλιμμένον ὃν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θλιβουσιν αὐτοὶ
 Θ καὶ ἔωρακα τὸν θλιμμένον ὃν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θλιβουσιν αὐτούς
 Α καί γε ἔωρακα συν ἀποθλιμμένον ὃν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ἀποθλιβουσιν αὐτόν
 Σ καὶ ἔωρακα τὴν θλίψιν αὐτῶν ἣν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θλιβουσιν αὐτόν
 (MT וָאֵל אֶרְאֶה אֶת-הָעֶבְרִי מְכֻלָּם וְאֵל אֶרְאֶה אֶת-כָּל-עֲמָלֵי הָעֶבְרִי)

In this rendering Α displays his characteristic literalness in representing the Hebrew 'וָאֵל' with 'συν' even when it is not necessary or redundant. Also to be noted is his usual translation of the Hebrew וָאֵל with καί γε, a thing scarcely found in Θ.

Apart from minor additions by the revisors like ἀπο and the different gender forms of θλιβω, it seems even the LXX was already very close to the MT prior to the revisors' work as could be seen above.

(5) Ex. 3:14

LXX ἔγω εἰμι ὁ ὢν

Ⲑ ἔσομαι ἔσομαι

Ⲡ ἔσομαι ἔσομαι

Ⲑ

(MT אָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה אָנֹכִי)

Apart from the variation in the representation in Greek of the Hebrew Original, we are to note that the Hebrew pronoun 'ֶשֶׁר' is missing in 'Ⲡ and Ⲑ' s versions, while it is in the LXX/OG. The question then arises, were they using the Old Greek i.e. revision, or the Hebrew which would mean an independent translation? Swete has argued that what Theodotion did was to produce a free revision of the LXX rather than an independent version. But Kahle seems not to agree with this view. He had said that, Ⲑ contains an originally independent translation of the Hebrew Text. (32) K. G. O'Connell (33) seems to agree that the omission of the pronoun was caused by a mistake of haplography from the second aleph to the third.

But the question remains, in which version did this haplography occur? Is it when Theodotion was doing his revision or had it already happened before Theodotion used the version? OR could it have been by a later scribe who copied the manuscript?

Whatever was the situation of what really happened, one fact remains that, in the present Ⲡ and Ⲑ versions, the Hebrew pronoun אָנֹכִי is missing. And in their rendering - "I shall be.... I shall be....", they appear more in line with the Hebrew Original than the Greek 'I am who/what I am', which seems philosophically informed.

(6) /

(6) Ex. 3:21

LXX ἑναντιον
 θ ἐν οφθαλμοῖς
 α ἐν οφθαλμοῖς
 (MT יִיָּצַד)

Here α and θ are almost doing a literal translation of the Hebrew word 'יִיָּצַד'. Although LXX's ἑναντιον appears not to be a stabilised word for representing the Hebrew original, but it seems it is never rendered as 'ἐν οφθαλμοῖς!'. The deviation from LXX here could be seen as reflecting the objective of the revisors which is to bring the Greek renditions nearer the MT. Although the change does not actually offend the sense of the Text.

(7) Ex. 4:6

LXX και ἐγενηθη ἡ χειρ αὐτου ὡσει χιων
 θ και ἴδου ἡ χειρ αὐτου λεπρωσα ὡσει χιων
 α και ἴδου ἡ χειρ αὐτου λεπρωσα ὡσει χιων
 (MT לֵבָשׁוּ שֵׁנִי וְיָדָיו הָיוּ כְּחֵלֶבֶד)

In this reading, all that LXX has omitted from the Hebrew Original - accepting that the present MT is identical with the Hebrew vorlage he used? - are brought back by Theodotion and Aquila in their revision. 'Behold' and 'Leprous' are in the MT but absent in the LXX. While their inclusion gives more force or strengthens the meaning, their absence does not distort the message.

(8) Ex. 4:10

LXX οὐχ ἱκανος
 θ οὐκ ἄνηρ ρημάτων
 α οὐκ ἄνηρ ρημάτων
 σ οὐκ εὐλαδός
 (MT אִתְּךָ אֵין אִישׁ מִדְּבָרִים)

There is no agreement in the rendering of the Hebrew Original except between α and ψ . While σ and LXX translate the meaning of the entire Hebrew phrase into Greek, Theodotion and Aquila try to render in Greek nearly every word in their vorlage. Thus they agree in their choice of word to use in representing MT's. 'שׁוֹן - ἀνήρ' which is one of the several Greek words LXX often uses to represent שׁוֹן, (- others are τις, ἑκαστός etc.) So the difference here is not that of interpretation but method of approach to the original Text.

(9) Ex. 4:11

LXX δυσκωρον
 ψ μογιδαν
 α μογιδαν
 σ μογιδαν
 (MT דִּבֹּן)

α , ψ and σ agree in rendering the Hebrew, 'דִּבֹּן - dumb' against the LXX though the word they use here is also used by LXX in Isaiah 35:6. If Isaiah is the work of a revisor, then we may be having here the later common word in use in place of the old 'δυσκωρον'. Thus the difference is simply a matter of the choice of words!

(10) Ex. 4:13

LXX θεομαι κυριε
 ψ ἐν ἐμοι κυριε
 α ἐν ἐμοι κυριε = $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ (ηνζ)
 (MT 'וַיִּתֵּן)

The very near consistent agreement of α and ψ so far, may make one think that one of them might have known and used as basis for his further work the other's revised version of the LXX Exodus. But it is noteworthy/

noteworthy that their deviations from LXX are not very significant in the interpretation of the Text. In fact since there is almost no demonstrable divergence from the MT, their worth in Textual Criticism is minimal except for history of transmission. We have sampled the above instances which appear more significant than others we have chosen to omit because this investigation would not have been complete without reference to the 'recensions'.

REMARKS

In this our investigation, it is evident that much recognition has not been given to both the Peshitta and the Old Latin by way of comparison with other Texts. This is largely due to the state of these 'Texts?' in serious Textual Criticism. On the Peshitta, while scholars are not yet agreed or have not completely clarified its role in Text Critical enterprise (34), Ernst Würthwein has clearly voiced his dissatisfaction with the two editions of it so far made - the Paris Polyglot edition of 1645 which was based on a poor manuscript from 17th Century and the Walton edition of 1957 in the London Polyglot. (35) Even apart from this, the Peshitta in some places appears to be a representation of the Palestinian Targum Text in its latest years or forms of development.

For the Old Latin, it is not clear, at least from the citations of the early Church Fathers, whether it should be taken as a Text or as a collection of Texts. And even if it was or was not a Standard Version, the fact is generally accepted that a reading attested by LXX and Old Latin is in fact really attested only once, since Old Latin is the daughter version of the LXX.

Added/

Added to this general opinion about the Text, is the point that when in the Medieval period (Council of Trent 1546) the V superseded Old Latin and became the Authentic Bible of the Catholic Church, what was left of Old Latin continued its existence in bits and pieces. So what we have of the Text are fragments rather than a Text or version.

But on the Texts we have used, the following could be said, that from the inconsistent spelling pattern of our MT, it is evident that it must have come from different hands or had been subjected to series of reworkings. In many places we have noted some developments which might have been scribal accretions and expansions of the Text in the course of transmission. The subtle theological nuances detectable from the vocabularies used, point to desire to interpret the Text along particular lines, which is an indication of how the Text had been used. Although on the whole the Text has not suffered any serious literary dislocation, the expansionist tendencies observable from the embellishments and refinements of the Text show that some degree of importance was attached to the Text during the period of transmission. This may probably be attributed to the 'sanctity' attached to it as it legitimises the authority of the Prophet 'Moses' and all that has come to be ascribed to him.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

- (1) It may be noted, however, that of the entire Old Testament manuscripts, the only one we may say was written earlier than the 11th Century is the Codex Cairensis which dates from A.D.895 and which contains just the Prophets.
- (2) It has been suggested too that another contributory factor could be the fact that manuscripts were often destroyed during the Medieval persecutions of the Jews, either by their adversaries or even by they themselves to prevent their Sacred books from falling into the hands of people they regarded as infidels.
- (3) Along with the scribal corrections, the fact has to be taken into consideration that a Text can also be seriously conditioned by its historical circumstances since it is meant to speak to a people in their living situation. This is why Textual Criticism in its search for the original Text also takes into account the history of Text Transmission.
- (4) Here compare amongst many other examples, such a word like 'Philistine' which we find transliterated in Greek Hexateuch but translated 'ἄλλοφύλοι i.e. other tribes', in Judges and the following books. Similarly the Hebrew word (hosts) is found transliterated in Isaiah while in almost all other occurrences it is translated $\pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\omega\rho$ or $\delta\upsilon\upsilon\chi\mu\omega\nu$ - II Sam 5:10 6:18, and in Genesis 6:2 MT's 'Sons of God' is rendered by LXX as 'Angels of God'.
- (5) /

- (5) See his work, Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek pp. 325-330.
- (6) In addition one may compare M. H. Goshen-Gottstein's work where he has demonstrated in a fairly impressive manner the point that Rabbinic Style exegesis at times lies behind many of the apparent variations of the Septuagint, Textus 3 (1963) pp.130-158.
- (7) In fact, the glory of the LXX can be said to have started with the early Church Fathers when it was, 'The Bible' of the Christians. This tradition eventually led to its being valued more highly than any other version in the field of Textual Criticism. And of course in the 19th Century scholars almost practically preferred it over the Massoretic Text.
- (8) H. S. Nyberg ZAW 52 (1934) pp. 254
- (9) For a full discussion on the use of these terms, in the Old Testament, see John Van Seters VT 22 (1972) pp. 64 ff.
- (10) From what we have seen so far, it is evident that the Vulgate shows no sign of any major departure worthy of note. It is simply the MT in 'Latin dress'. So from now on we would like to concentrate only on the controversial major versions i.e. MT, LXX, and SP, except if we find that the Vulgate has a contribution to make.
- (11) See his work, The Bible in Aramaic, Vol.IV^B pp.23ff.
- (12) /

- (12) It may be noted that in this the Targum is not alone as even the MT in some places exhibits this tendency too.
- (13) The word is from כִּוְּרָאֵךְ . See p. 210 H.Dalman Lexicon.
- (14) If the Targum in other instances tries to embellish the Original, one wonders why it should omit these words which help to make the story more lively. Either that it was not the MT it used as its vorlage, or the words were absent when it used it which would therefore make them later developments of the Text.
- (15) For discussion on the use of the preposition to express direction, see A. F. Johns, A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic, Andrews University Press 1972 pp 10-11.
- (16) cf. Page 18 above. Here again the Targum seems to follow the LXX and SP rather than the MT.
- (17) Our view that the present MT may reflect a later reworking of the Original Story is even sustained outside our Text elsewhere in the Old Testament, where the MT appears to represent a replacement of the rare verb used in the Original Hebrew Text, e.g. in I Samuel 20:34, MT has Jonathan rose; LXX and 4Q Sam.^b say Jonathan sprang up.
- (18) See Jellicoe. The LXX and Modern Study p.245.
- (19) The issue of Palestinian Local Text(s) has been much discussed ever since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) which has enabled scholars to identify more precisely a series of recensions or revisions of the LXX. This in turn /

turn led them to the formulation of the Hypothesis of local Hebrew Texts for each Jewish Community in given geographical areas like Egypt and Palestine. See for more elaborations, F. M. Cross Jr. 1972. Proceedings of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies 2 pp. 108-126.

- (20) For a full discussion on the anti-anthropomorphic traits of the LXX, See Charles T. Fritsch's work, Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch, Princeton University Press, 1943; T. W. Manson JTS 45 (1945) pp 70-80; and H. M. Orlinsky BA 9 (1946) pp 22-34. From these works cited, it has been established that some books of the LXX Pentateuch are more thoroughly corrected than others.

Thus while many anthropomorphisms are removed from Exodus, only comparatively few are changed in Genesis and Leviticus. And even among the Manuscripts or Codices there are variations; Codex Vaticanus is more anti-anthropomorphic than Codex Alexandrinus, while among the versions, Aquila is pro-anthropomorphic as it is in the MT and Symmachus is anti-anthropomorphic. In between the two Theodotion takes his stand.

- (21) See Bible Culture and Bible Translation by H. M. Orlinsky N.Y. 1974 pp. 385 ff.
- (22) This reference is contained in the said letter para. 314-316; See E Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament 1979 p.61 and The Letter of Aristeas; Translations of Early Documents, Series II. Hellenistic-Jewish Texts by H.St.J. Tackeray SPCK London 1917 p. 85 where Demetrius in answer to the King's question on the brilliant translation work said, "He had heard Theopompus tell how when he was too rashly intending to introduce into/

into his history some of the incidents from the Law which had previously been translated his mind was deranged for more than thirty days...." See also page 29 of same book.

- (23) See Sidney Jellicoe The Septuagint and Modern Study, Oxford 1968 pp. 29-58.
- (24) See Peter Walters, The Test of the Septuagint, Cambridge 1973 pp. 321 ff.
- (25) It is noteworthy that here B says, 'Our Father' but in 3:15,16 he says 'Your Father'. It might have seemed appropriate for him to say, 'Our Father', here in view of what follows in Verse 14 i.e. 'Our Father is he who is'; cf. Justin Martyr's exegesis on this passage in which he claims it was Jesus who spoke from the bush and who he also associates with dwelling there in Dt. 33:16 and who was later hanged on the tree.
See his Dialogue Chapter 59 ff.
- (26) IF one recalls the fact that he was once excommunicated by Christians after his conversion because he would not cease to have adherence to the pagan customs of his native Pontus, his intention may become clearer. We know from history that it was after this his sad experience that he became a Jewish Proselyte and through hard work learned and mastered the Hebrew language so much as to be in a position to translate the Hebrew Scriptures in A.D.130, the 12th year of Emperor Hadrian's rule who had brought him to Jerusalem.
- (27) This stance would make Theodotion a member of the family of Kaige Recension rather than the work of a Theodotion the/

the revisor of the Second Century A.D. See K. G. O'Connell's work which tries to prove this. What Barthelemy had earlier on in 1952 hinted at he set out to prove in his work. The theory of an early Systematic revision of the LXX into conformity with the Hebrew Text was sparked off by the discovery of a Greek Scroll of the Minor Prophets which was regarded as representing this early systematic revision of the LXX. It is O'Connell's view that Theodotion belongs to this early revision though the Hebrew Text to which the revision was being brought in line with may not directly be related to our present MT.

(28) For further details see W. G. Waddell JTS 45 (1944) pp 158-161 and the Bibliography cited there.

(29) See his Kyrios als Gottesname in Judentum 1929 Vol. II p.15 where he says "Darüber hinaus ergilst sich aus der Art des Artikelgebrauchs bei Kupios dass in der ursprünglichen Septuaginta das Tetragrammaton nicht in hebräischen Buchstaben, ebensowenig mit ὁδωναι unschrieben war und dass dafür nicht erst Später Kupios substituiert worden ist."

(30) Origen writes ".....λεγεται μιν τη ΑΑΘΝΑΙ προσηγορια
... περὶ σε Ἐλλησεν τη κυρια Ἐκφωνεῖται"
See W. G. Waddell JTS 45 (1944) pp. 15-161

(31) See his work, The Theodotionic Revision of the Book of Exodus, Cambridge 1972 pp. 20 ff.

(32) See Swete Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Cambridge 1914 p.43.

(33) /

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(33) See Theodotionic Revision of Exodus pp. 118 ff.

(34) See R. W. Klein Textual Criticism of the Old Testament
Philadelphia 1974 p.61

(35) See his Text of the Old Testament, Michigan 1979 p.82

FORM CRITICAL AND TRADITION HISTORY STUDY OF EX. 3 AND 4INTRODUCTION

In our Text-Critical investigation in Chapter One, it was discovered that our Text has been much reworked or rather passed through stages of development. As a result of this its understanding and interpretation is often found shrouded in obscurity due to its complex nature. This is why the problem which faces any commentator on it, and which so far has not been resolved, is what constitutes the core or traditional pattern around which the Text has been woven. Is it possible to recover this traditional pattern or patterns around which an extremely complex interweaving of elements from various sources has been made? The search for an answer to this important question constitutes the thrust of this Chapter and the method we want to use is, Form Criticism and Traditio-Historical analysis.

Form Criticism as a discipline in Biblical exegesis had its birth early in this Century (in 1914) when its pioneer and spiritual progenitor Hermann Gunkel (1) first applied its methods to the Biblical Literature; listing and describing the main genres of the Old Testament. Before his work, the established and generally accepted method of research was Literary Criticism which held its sway till the turn of the last century and represented by that prominent scholar J. Wellhausen. But early in this Century, however, it was already becoming apparent that historical criticism had come to an impasse on account of the excesses of source analysis/

analysis, which more often than not, leads to much wandering away from the final form of the Text in a bid to quickly reach the underlying problems. It was at this juncture that Gunkel came to the 'Stage' with his extraordinary literary insight and sensitivity in the use of Form Criticism to unravel the socio-religious background of the Biblical Texts. In this Gunkel was greatly aided by his knowledge of other literatures of the Ancient Near East and he did not fail to avail himself of their forms and types, their modes of discourse as well as their rhetorical features. All these aspects, he pellucidly applied in delineating and elucidating the Biblical Texts.

But, however, it needs to be remarked that, at its inception, Form Criticism experienced fierce attacks from the dominant scholarship of the day; whether Liberal or Conservative, although today it has gained general acceptance and the question is no longer, 'whether Form Criticism or not?' This is because as a discipline it has become established as a necessary and productive way to understand Biblical Texts.

So much so is this that Albright writing 45 years ago in his book , 'From Stone Age to Christianity' (pp 44 and 77 in the 1957 Second Edition) emphatically maintained that, "The student of the Ancient Near East finds that the methods of Norden and Gunkel are not only applicable, but are the only ones that can be applied." This view is based on the notion that Form Criticism has not only brought the much needed corrective to literary and historical criticism, but also has its welcome in that it offers to address itself to the question of the literary genre represented in the received text and in its pericope.

Unlike/

Unlike Tradition Criticism which focusses on all the stages that lie in between Form and Redaction Criticism, Form Criticism works with three basic assumptions or principles. It is one of the presuppositions of Form Criticism that the making and transmission of the contents of the Old Testament or simply Biblical Literature, has a long and often complicated oral provenance whose origin lies in Israel or beyond in her Near Eastern neighbours. In holding to this working principle, Form Criticism also believes that along with such oral form existed side by side some written documents (cf Joshua 10:13). This makes the discipline flexible and gives a certain degree of freedom to its users which is completely lacking in literary criticism for which it seems to have suffered.

In addition to the belief in the oral prehistory of the Biblical materials, is the concern of the Form Critic to discover the function that the literary genre or type was designed to serve in the life of the community or of the individual, i.e. how each type or genre was employed and on what occasions. The Form Critic does not stop at this, but he also tries to locate the discovered genre, as far as possible, within its precise social or cultural milieu which in the language of Gunkel is its 'Sitz im Leben' or setting in life. (2) This is because it is the belief of Form Critics that the Old Testament literature is the product of the life experiences and customs of the people rather than a mere human artifice. Therefore a better understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament has to take this factor into consideration.

Along with these two basic principles is the third which concerns itself with the history of genre or literary type. In dealing with this, Form Criticism tries to compare the given literary type with other examples within the Old Testament and, if necessary, with representatives of the same/

same type in the Cognate Literatures.

Good as these principles are in exegeting a Biblical pericope, we may note that the method itself has suffered in certain respects. While some scholars scarcely give it recognition in their work, (cf R. H. Pfeiffer, O.T. Introduction 1941) others have abused it in a bid to locate the 'sitz im leben' of given Texts. Thus too many texts are found being subsumed under the rubric of 'The Covenant Renewal Festival', like Artur Weiser in the 'Psalms' or in his work on Jeremiah, or of the 'Festival of the New Year', as is the case of Sigmund Mowinckel in 'Psalmen^{en}studien'. Probably it is in the light of this that Alonso Schökel (3) has suggested an alternative method in form of Stylistics or Aesthetic Criticism.

But he seems to forget that Old Testament writers were not all that motivated by distinctively literary considerations, while even the issue of Aesthetics in all probability lay beyond the domain of their interests. Thus a preoccupation with what he terms Stylistics will only successfully turn the exegetic along bypaths unrelated to his main task. Unlike Schökel and Meir Weiss (4) who advocate outright rejection of the method, H. G. Reventlow would like to suggest caution rather than rejection. (5)

All these criticisms are reasonable in the sense that as a discipline, Form Criticism has reached a stage which comes to all approaches in their maturity. It has not only proved useful in Biblical exegesis, but has made its impact on the assumptions, methods and conclusions of other Critical disciplines like Literary Criticism. (6) Form Criticism has shown that we can no longer think of Biblical writers or authors in the proper sense of the term, but as collectors, editors or redactors of traditional material. In its light, it has now come to be seen that what/

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what the Literary Criticism has held as evidence for multiple authorship is after all evidence for multiple oral traditions used by a redactor. In this, Form Criticism outpaces Literary Criticism as it combines its interest in the recovery and interpretation of the preliterate stage with some concern for the final form or literary stage too.

Having thus stated the worth and the all comprehensive nature of our method - more will be said later on Tradition History and its application - we may now try to delineate the scope and discuss the unity of our Text on which the method is to be applied.

THE SCOPE AND UNITY OF OUR TEXT

The question of the scope of our Text is one over which, it seems, two scholars are never agreed. This disagreement is prompted principally either by the use of the Literary sources J and E or the way Tradition-historical analysis is applied. Noth for instance has recognised, on the basis of his five-theme traditio-historical approach to the Pentateuch, that the Sinai tradition lies behind the narration of the theophany on the mountain of God and Moses' commission as a messenger of God to the Israelites. (7) He believes that the mountain of God in Exodus 3 was an unnamed mountain in Midian which was later equated with Sinai before the tradition took its final form as it is now in Exodus 3 and 4. Thus with its appearance, the possibility for a parallel between Moses' experience, his flight from Egypt to Midian and Israel's experience, its flight from Egypt to Sinai became open. On the basis of this and on the strength of the literary analysis of the 'Call Narrative', he believes that the Story/

Story of Moses' Call in Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 is an interpolation, (8) which breaks the apparent natural connection between Exodus 2:23 and 4:19. So to him and a majority of scholars of his own school, the Story of Moses' Call is an E. insertion into a J narrative. And even apart from this he does not give recognition to the point that the Call Narrative begins at Exodus 3:1. To him the Unit should be regarded as commencing at Chapter 2:11 through to Chapter 4:23 because the flight from Egypt and the return to Egypt 4:18 frame the section. Because Chapter 2:23 and 2:11, to him, belong together, it would be better to divide the section off at Chapter 2:11.

The first thing we have to note about Noth's stand is that his argument based on the Literary strands can not hold as they are now under serious scrutiny. Van Seters has even rejected any argument for disunity of the Call Narrative based upon the alternation in the use of the Divine Name and the presence of the so-called post Deuteronomic redaction. (9)

On this he is supported by Winnett and Mowinckel. (10) In fact from our own point of view, Literary analysis of this section of Exodus highlights more problems than it can solve, and it can not help towards a reconstruction of the Text to make it meaningful for interpretation or exegesis.

Secondly we are also to note that, what the author has used as introduction to his Story or Call Narrative to smooth it out and also used to run the Narrative into what immediately followed has been used by some scholars as break off points. Rather than being seen as break off points, i.e. Ex. 2:23 ff and Ex. 4:19, they should be seen as portraying the Literary ingenuity of the author and as supporting the fact that what/

what lies in between them constitutes a Unit on its own - Ex. 3:1-4:17.

Probably it is in view of this that the New English Bible and New American Bible following the Septuagint all begin the Call Narrative with Ex. 2:23-25; thus showing that the Call of Moses was a direct response to Israel's cry to God. But though Ex. 2:23-25 serves as a fitting introduction to the Call Narrative, yet it does not constitute part of it as such. While serving as an introduction, it also marks a decided break, both in time and perspective with what is past.

First the narrative takes the reader back to Israel in Egypt after recording Moses' successful flight and marks the passing of time. Nothing has so far improved, the author seems to say, since Moses' departure. The awful situation remains! Israel continues to groan under its burden. And secondly their suffering has not gone unnoticed. God remembers his covenant with the Patriarchs. As the passage reflects back, it also gives some pointers to the future. It states that the old King whose reign had marked the beginning of Israel's troubles has died. What will the future then bring is the immediate question, sharpened by the note that God has been taking notice of the peoples' suffering. If God has monitored the anguish of the people, then what would or did he do? With this introduction, the writer has pointed the reader to what is to come next. With it the Call of Moses begins to make sense, otherwise, why would God suddenly appear in Midian to enlist Moses. With the introduction the writer shows what provokes God into sending his Servant/messenger to his people Israel.

Thus Ex. 1 and 2 tell of the happening in Egypt and how the Israelites groaned. It ends by telling us how Moses successfully fled the scene, closing/

closing with the remark that God in heaven was closely monitoring all the events.

In Chapter 3:1 - 4:17 the scene is completely different, it is no longer a man to man struggle but God and man in a 'Serious Dialogue', away from the two parties involved in the Struggle in Egypt. As it were, it is a happening behind the scene. In the context of the crisis that precedes it, and the resolution that follows it, its sole function is to indicate that the turning point in the events was reached by direct divine intervention. So what went before, Ex. 1 and 2, is used to show how divine action was precipitated while what follows, Ex. 4:19 ff. demonstrates how Yahweh works through human agency for his people. How God calls and prepares his agent for the task is the burden of Chapter 3:1 - 4:17.

In Chapter 4:12 Moses ceased speaking to God at the theophany site in the wilderness. When next we hear him speak, Ex. 4:18, he has already left the revelation/commissioning site and is with Jethro. The scene is now in the village, that of the Mountain of God having come to an end. So Ex. 4:17 can be taken as the close of the Call Narrative and with vv.18ff recalling Chapter 2:23 ff., the writer brings God's accredited messenger into the conflict leading to its final resolution at the 'Red Sea'.

Thus Chapter 3:1 - 4:17 is unique in that it deals with a specific episode, the call of God's messenger and it is completely in a different scene. This argues against those who would like to extend the section to Ex. 5:1 or 4:23. Such conclusion leads to a combination of different scenes. (11).

But/

But note, our view does not imply that Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 constitutes such a unity as to stand out all on its own. Rather it is to be seen as an integral part of the main Narrative. This is because it has been so well woven into the texture of the Exodus account that it can no longer be separated from it. It relates all the incidents which are necessary for an understanding of the struggle with Pharaoh narrative or what is commonly called the 'Plague Narrative'. This could be demonstrated with the following:

1. The plan to ask Pharaoh's permission to make a three days journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to Yahweh 3:18, 5:3.
2. To ask the Egyptians for gifts of gold and silver and clothing before setting out 3:21 cf. Gen. 15:14, Ex. 12:35-36; 33:6.
3. The provision of the miracle working rod 4:1-4; 7:15.
4. Moses' reluctance to undertake the role of deliverer because of his inability to speak well and the appointment of Aaron as his assistant 4:10-16.

These incidents, as can be seen from a perusal of the Call Story, constitute what one may call the indispensable introduction to the redemption battle narrative, and they show that the Call Story in Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 is an integral part of the main body of the book Exodus.

In Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 and 4:27-31; 5:1-6:1 (P's account 7:7 - 10:29) the execution of the vocation is separated from the Call itself. In between the vocation account and the execution of the commission, we have Ex. 4:19-23, 24-26. The vocation account is in some measure, one would say, incomplete without the narration of the execution of the commission. Yet we are to note that the structure of the narration as/

as presented, as well as the shift in setting from Midian to Egypt holds the execution apart from the principal Unit i.e. the Call Narrative Ex. 3:1 - 4:17.

Thus the whole story Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 finds a fitting place within the nexus of the oppression/deliverance episode, the suffering of Israel, the birth and royal upbringing of Moses, his call and the deliverance of his people through his agency. So we conclude that Moses' call narrative begins at Ex. 3:1 and ends at 4:17, (12) that it is distinct, being a call narrative but yet constitutes an integral part of the whole Exodus account.

With this said we may now briefly look at the structure of our Text.

THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

In this short story of Moses' call, we have two characters involved at the scene i.e. Yahweh/Angel and the shepherd Moses. The other three characters - Israel, Pharaoh and Aaron are involved off-stage. The scene as it is presented is coherent and complete in itself and follows on well in the context of the book as a whole. But however as a 'prophetic call' it stands out from its immediate and broader context. This does not however mean that the call is in any way a disruption in the narrative as we have maintained earlier, but rather it has been so well built into the texture of the redemption account that all preceding events are made to run into it and following to flow from it. In fact one could justifiably say, it is made to serve as the nerve centre of the release story.

The basis of the theophany is the groaning of Israel in Egypt Ex. 2:23-25. Before presenting the picture of the awful plight of the Israelites/

Israelites in Egypt, the author first tells us of the successful flight of Moses to Midian and his settlement in the house of Jethro. This preamble to the Call - the literary skill of the storyteller - is rounded off with the recall of the scene of anguish in Egypt where the points are made that, the King who initiated the oppression has died, and the Israelites in the midst of their suffering were crying for help. This prepares the reader for what comes next especially as he is told God took notice of their groaning and remembered the covenant with the Patriarchs.

The scene like some other accounts of call narrative is made a private one outside the village of Jethro, Ex. 3:1 Moses led the flock out for grazing...., Ex. 4:18 Moses went back to Jethro. Thus it is reported as a private encounter between Moses and Yahweh alone in the wilderness. But the Unit as it is now - a reported incident, is framed in the third person (13). This shows that the author is out to write a narrative or story although because of the nature of the account - a prophetic call, the plot elements, creation of tension and resolution are not fully developed as we would expect in a normal story telling episode.

Whatever might have been the true story of Israel's release from bondage in Egypt (cf Ex. 12:39; 13:18-19; 14:5) the writer of our Text wants us to believe that Yahweh did it and He took the initiative. And with a literary ingenuity he makes the story an integral part of the whole, using the following as linking chains: (i) Groaning, Ex. 2:25; 3:6-7; 4:18; (ii) King, Ex. 2:25; 3:17; 4:19; (iii) God of the Fathers, 2:25; 3:6, 16-17; 4:5; 5:3 etc.

ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGE

(1) SETTING THE SCENE CHAPTER 3:1

- (i) Moses leads the flock out for grazing.
- (ii) The flock is Jethro's, his father-in-law, Priest of Median.
- (iii) He leads the flock to the West Side of the wilderness.
- (iv) He arrives at Horeb the Mountain of God.

(2) THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENED

A Theophany occurred 3:2-3

- (i) An Angel appears to him.
- (ii) From the midst of a bush.
- (iii) Moses sees bush burning but not consumed.
- (iv) He desires to have a closer look at the sight.

(3) INTRODUCTION TO THE CALL COMMISSION

The Divine Call 3:4-6

- (i) Yahweh calls out to him.
- (ii) Moses answers in response formula
- (iii) Warning is issued.
- (iv) The calling voice identifies himself.
- (v) Impact of the self-identification on Moses.

(4) IMMEDIATE PREAMBLE TO THE COMMISSION

Reason is given for the theophanic encounter 3:7-9

- (i) Yahweh declares what he has seen.
- (ii) He states why he has come down.
- (iii) He reveals his immediate future plan for Israel.
- (iv) Returns to what he has seen to emphasise necessity for action.

(5) THE COMMISSIONING 3:10; 16-18

- (i) Moses invited to come (probably nearer)
- (ii) Moses is ordained and told the destination of his mission - Egypt.
- (iii) He is given the commissioned message to Pharaoh and Israel.

(6) CONCLUDING THE COMMISSION CEREMONY 3:11-12

- (i) Moses expresses his nothingness to appear before Pharaoh.
- (ii) Yahweh promises his unfailing presence.
- (iii) Yahweh supports his promise with an assuring sign.
- (iv) Moses to bring Israel to worship at the mountain.

(7) DIALOGUE OF PROTESTS AND ANSWERS ENSUES

(A) Prophetic Legitimation

1st Step: 3:13-15

- (i) Moses seeks confirmation of his office before the people.
- (ii) Demands Deity's name as an assurance.
- (iii) Deity replies v. 14^a

Elaboration: 3:14^b-15

- (i) Second reply of the Deity.
- (ii) Third reply.

(B) 2nd Step: 4:1-5

- (i) The people may disbelieve the received revelation.
- (ii) Yahweh dismisses Moses' fear of people's unbelief.
- (iii) Moses armed with miracle of rod turned snake.

Elaboration 4:6-9 /

Elaboration 4:6-9

- (i) Probability that people may not be convinced by miracle of rod turned snake.
- (ii) Moses to demonstrate miracle of hand turned leprous.
- (iii) Lastly to turn Nile water blood on dry ground.

(C) TRADITION OF REJECTION: REACTION TO PROPHETIC MESSAGE 3:19-22

- (i) Pharaoh's reaction to the commissioned message predicted.
- (ii) Consequence for his rejection is stated.
- (iii) The ultimate result of his continued intransigence predicted.

8. PROPHETIC PROTESTS ON GROUNDS OF PERSONAL DEFECTS 4:10-14

- (i) Moses complains of speech defect.
- (ii) Yahweh promises to do something about it by his accompanying presence.
- (iii) Moses unconvinced suggests Yahweh sends another person.
- (iv) Moses angers Yahweh by his suggestion.

9. RESOLUTION 4:14-17

- (i) Yahweh promises sending Aaron with Moses.
- (ii) Moses is to tell Aaron what to say.
- (iii) Yahweh promises both his accompanying presence.
- (iv) Moses enjoined not to forget the miracle rod.

SCENE CLOSES

From the above analysis, it is apparent that elements of the storyteller's skill can still be discerned though faintly in the narrative. The development of the narrative from one stage to the other still has its captivating spell which is capable of holding the/

the reader in suspense while he desires to know what comes next - cf. the way events in 3:1-9 are made to lead up to 3:10 from which emerged the discussion that followed. Also with the 'Tradition of Rejection', and the 'Despoliation of the Egyptians', mental bridges are built to connect the real scene in Egypt.

But, however, the general interest in the story is made to centre on how Yahweh intervenes in the life of his people at a critical time through his accredited messenger, the Prophet. How the messenger receives his office therefore constitutes the thrust of the passage.

We may also note how the dialogue between Yahweh and Moses has been made to show that in a call the Prophet still retains his rational powers in the midst of the awe that surrounds his call, so he poses questions about his call and has the Deity answer them. So prophets - probably only those of this 'Tradition' - are not passive receivers of revelation! But still in this, the point is made that the prophet is an obedient servant of Yahweh to whom belongs the final word in such a situation. Thus we find that after Yahweh's final speech in 4:14-17, the messenger no longer responds, but obediently goes out to carry out what he is bidden.

Having thus analysed our Text, we may now carry our investigation a little further by trying to see which aspect of the religious life of Israel influenced the setting of the context in which the call of Moses is presented to us.

CULTIC /

CULTIC INFLUENCE ON ITS COMPOSITION

On a very careful reading of our call narrative in the context of what precedes it, one has a mental picture of the drastic situation which the author tries to paint as the setting (14) within which the call occurred. As the writer would want us believe, Moses' call happened because of a pressing historical crisis - the Israelites were in pain and crying for help in Egypt, and the execution of his prophetic vocation was the resolution of the crisis - God's intervention in their life and their release.

Thus the call is presented as the reply to the anguished questions of the people which preceded it and the nerve centre of the great historical movements that followed.

Looking at the religious or cultic life of Israel, this picture immediately reminds one of that aspect of cultic liturgy usually called the Lamentation or complaint liturgy.

From the studies of Begrich and Mowinckel (15) on this aspect of the cultic life of Israel in relation to the use of the Psalms, we know that invariably this type of liturgy has three main parts: (i) the complaint by the suppliant: (ii) the Oracle of Salvation which could be subdivided into three sections/parts, and (iii) the joy or jubilation of the suppliant in response to his answered prayer.

According to Mowinckel, the supplication or lamentation may be by an individual, it may be general or it may be congregational, put into the mouth of the King or Leader of the people. And usually, he says, the distress may be of a historical national nature that has befallen the whole community. This is the picture we have from the introduction/

introduction of most of the complaint Psalms - petitions seeking revenge or deliverance.

According to Begrich, the setting in life of such complaint Psalms is the Sactuary. There it would have been answered by an authorised cultic speaker, either a Priest or a Prophet, with an assurance to the worshipper in the form of an oracle that his prayer has been heard and that salvation will follow, (cf. Jer. 15:15-18 Petition 19-21 oracle of salvation, see also Psalm 6; 5 etc.) (16). But we may note that although pronounced by one of the cultic personnel of the Sancturary, the Priestly Oracle of Salvation was formulated exactly as if Yahweh Himself had expressed Himself without intermediary. And of course what would be more important to a people who loved to believe that God has spoken by word of mouth to the ear of His most favourite servants!

The assurance of Divine help is an essential part of the Oracle (Jer. 15:20-21). Here the worshipper is promised an end to his distress which clearly refers back to the content of his lamentation or historical situation, (cf. Ex. 2:24-25 and Ex. 3:7-8). Still using our Jeremiah example, we find that God's answer to Jeremiah is couched in the first person singular, "I will make thee...I will deliver thee...". Nearly in all cases, God is always I in such expressions of divine intervention and there is always a reference to the special circumstances of the person addressed.

Along with this divine assurance is a pointer to the near future, an announcement or indication of the ways in which God intends to carry out his promises of assistance. Yahweh says, Jeremiah's enemies /

enemies will continue to oppose him but it will be in vain. This form of Divine reply to the one in need is found latent in most of the Biblical oracles of consolation and is most popular with Deutero-Isaiah. In Deutero-Isaiah alone, we have about twenty four oracles of this nature which may point to the popularity of this type of liturgy during the exile when it influenced the thought patterns of the writer of the Exodus narrative, (cf. for instance Is. 41:8-13, 14-16; 43:1-3, 5; 44:2-5; 48:17-19; 49:7, 14-15; 51: 7-8; 54:4-8 etc. and in the Psalms see 6; 22; 28; 56; 69 etc.)

This understanding of the Psalms in its two dimensions of complaint and reply i.e. the consolation oracles, a cultic practice which influenced the concept and interpretation of suffering and Divine response in certain historical contexts, had its impact on the thought forms of the writer of Exodus 3 and 4. In fact as we shall now see it seems that this cultic liturgy supplied the author with the imagery and vocabulary with which he got across his narrative to his audience.

As is usual with the Psalms, the Lamentation Liturgy presupposes a Sanctuary where the cultic personnel is he who gives the Oracle of Salvation. And our Exodus narrative is set in the context of a Sanctuary, Moses comes to the Mountain of God to hear the divine Oracle of Salvation for his people (cf. P.'s Ex. 6:1 which sees Egypt as the place of revelation).

The suppliants are the Israelites who cry for help in the midst of anguish in Egypt, Ex. 2:23-25 cf. Psalm 22:1,6 "I am a worm and no man". While in God's holy sanctuary Moses receives on behalf of/

of his people Yahweh's Salvation Oracle.

- (i) Allaying the suppliant's fear or anxiety; Ex. 3:7,9, their cry has been heard, their affliction seen and their condition known, cf. Is. 41:14 "fear not you worm Jacob", 41:10^a "fear not I am with you".
- (ii) Assurance of Divine Salvation or the 'Heilsorakel' is given; Ex. 3:8 Yahweh has come down to deliver cf. Is. 41:10^b ff.
- (iii) God's salvation is in keeping with his faithfulness to his Covenant promise; Ex. 3:8^b I am the God of the Fathers, in keeping with which, I will establish you in a prosperous land, cf. Is. 41:8 ff.
- (iv) Thanksgiving - the suppliant's reaction to his salvation; Ex. 3:12 Give thanks or serve God on this mountain cf. Is. 41:16^b Psalm 22:22 ff.

In addition to this, the writer really sees the place of the Call as a real Sanctuary; (i) It is the spot of Yahweh's theophany, his mountain; (ii) It has a Sanctuary setting with light burning - the burning bush representing the Menorah; (iii) It is so sacred that one should not step on it with shoes on i.e. Holy place; and (iv) it is a place where Yahweh enjoins his people to worship him.

From this we can see the type of setting which the writer gives the Call of Moses with Ex. 2:23-25 which already anticipates Ex. 3:7-8 (17).

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I believe that it is this lamentation and the oracle of response form which was probably very popular during the Babylonian Exile that the DTR transformed in Deuteronomy to a sort of confession of faith. And a comparison with the Exodus pattern raises the question whether both were the product of the same school or one influenced the other.

Deuteronomy 26:5-9

(1) The Egyptians treated us harshly.
and afflicted us, and laid upon
us hard bondage.

(2) Then we cried to the Lord

(3) The Lord heard our voice

(4) The God of our Fathers

(5) And saw our affliction, our
toil and our oppression.

(6) The Lord brought us out /

Exodus 2:25-25; 3:6-9

And the people of Israel
groaned under their bondage.

And cried out for help.

I have heard their cry because
of their taskmasters; And
God heard their groaning, their
cry came up to him.

I am the God of your Father,
the God of Abraham, the God
of Isaac and the God of Jacob.
God remembered his covenant
with the Fathers, Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob.

I have seen the affliction of
my people who are in Egypt, I
have seen the oppression with
which the Egyptians oppress
them, I know their sufferings.

(6) The Lord brought us out
of Egypt.

(18)
I have come down to deliver
them out of the hand of the
Egyptians and bring them up
out of the land.

This comparison shows that both Texts used a form in which we find almost every word and phrase which belongs to the specialised vocabulary of Israel's Lamentation prayers, groan 'anah, cry out, ša'aq, cry for help, shaw'atah, groaning נַחֲנֵחַ , God heard שָׁמַע, God saw רָאָה, God knew יָדָע and God remembered זָכַר. Apart from the likelihood of both Texts coming from the same school (19), it also throws serious doubt on the validity of von Rad's claim that here in Deut. 26:5-9 we have the Text of Israelite Credo of an ancient origin. Rather one should hold that the author of Deuteronomy reworked an ancient formula(e) which he incorporated in his own liturgical composition in Deut. 26:5-10.

What we would like to observe here therefore is that the writer of Exodus built his narrative in part on older conventional formulae which were at home in Israel's cultic practices. The cultic mode supplied the mental model for the historical situation he sets out to depict. It also shows how he endeavours to speak to the people in images of thought which they would easily understand.

Thus what from practice is done by the Priest on behalf of Yahweh is represented as being done originally by Yahweh himself in a holy place. And as the Priest, at the time of our author, represented Yahweh in the holy place giving the Salvation Oracle, this story would make him appear a worthy representative of Him as he pronounced the 'Heilsorakel' in/

in the first person singular.

Thus this pattern helps to show the contribution of the cult to the understanding of the composition and interpretation of the Biblical narrative. It shows us how the writer has tried to speak to his audience by means of patterns with which the people were familiar and the usage of themes which were commonly known in their tradition to aid clarity and immediateness - especially as the Babylonian Exile recalls the Egyptian Exile or bondage.

As we have chosen to use Form Criticism and Tradition History in this investigation instead of the old fashioned J. and E. Source Analyses, it may be appropriate to say something on why we have not used the J.E. Source approach.

LIMITED USEFULNESS OF J.E. SOURCE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Source Literary Criticism, as used in the Biblical material, aims at answering questions about the author, characteristics, date and circumstances of writing either a book or a body of Old Testament literature. To be able to answer these questions, four basic documentary working hypotheses J.E.P.D. are postulated and used for the Pentateuchal material.

And with regard to our Text, two of these hypotheses have so far been applied, viz. J. and E. And nearly all scholars agree that Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 is a combination of these two sources apart from the later glossatorial additions. (20) What this means is that it is almost a consensus amongst Old Testament scholars that Moses' Call Narrative /

Narrative is composite. (21) This conclusion is based on two or three main reasons; (i) The apparent repetition in the Text of verse 7 in verse 9; (ii) The use of place and personal names like Horeb and Sinai, Jethro and Reuel and (iii) the alternate use of divine names Yahweh and Elohim for the deity and in sudden transition as we have it in Ex. 3:4. Thus our Text is principally divided between J. and E. with some modification in matters of detail with RJE or the Redactor called in to explain verses that can not be assigned to J. or E. with ease. (22)

This literary critical analysis of the Narrative as we have said, rests primarily on the appearance of the two different names for the Deity יהוה and אלהים or אלהים יהוה . Although the validity of the use of this principle of Divine Names as a criterion for differentiating the component elements of the Book of Genesis may not be too seriously contended, but it stands to be emphatically denied that this same criterion holds good for the Book of Exodus. The extension of the criterion beyond Genesis has led to endless confusion and atomisation of our Text, and in my opinion to an entirely wrong view of its composition. This is because, a careful examination of the Book of Exodus and in particular our Text (minus the so called P. elements in Chapters 1 and 2) reveals the fact that the application of Elohim or ha -elohim is dictated by logical reasoning and dramatic feeling, and therefore has nothing to do with the presence of another literary strand in the narrative. And even if we interchange the names, we would see that no substantial change is made either in the interpretation or content of the passage. It is of general acceptance that the name Yahweh predominates in the narrative and so to explain the problem posed by the abandonment of the normal nomenclature in favour of/

of Elohim or ha -elohim, the assumption of a hypothetical E. document is evoked. But can the presence of such a change not be better explained than with this theory of another Literary Strand?

Apart from such instances where we have the name Elohim used as a common noun - e.g. as god, a god or god of your Father(s) or the god of the Hebrews, it seems that for the proper name Elohim God, or ha -elohim the Deity, no appreciable difference in usage can be discerned. What appears from the context is that the writer simply uses now one and then the other even in the same sentence (Ex. 3:4 cf 18:19;22:8;19:3;18:1;5:1;6:2). From the way the writer uses Yahweh and Elohim in these verses it appears as if he is not really using two distinct documents, but is out to identify or prove that ha -elohim is Yahweh, they are one and not two, (cf. Deut 6:4 and in fact the whole of Deuteronomy which is riddled with this desire to identify Yahweh and Elohim as one).

This theological motif is given a ground base here in Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 by putting the statement in the mouth of Yahweh himself. To carry out this theological 'Tendenz', it seems the writer adopts a certain principle which is that when he wants to impart a feeling of awe and mystery, he employs the vaguer and abstract term - ha -elohim. While he reserves the name Yahweh for a more intimate and personal connotation. This is why for instance when the Egyptian magicians saw the futility of their competition with Moses and Aaron, they exclaimed that this is the 'finger of Elohim', instead of Yahweh, which name they ought not to know or have known (Ex. 8:19).

If /

If the splitting up of Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 on the basis of the alternate use of the Divine Names can not be sustained but rather be seen as reflecting a theological purpose of the writer, then we can see our passage as a Literary Unity probably emanating from a single author or a 'school of thought'.

Apart from the above, we even have more serious conflicts and contradictions in the use of J.E. in the Text, which can neither be resolved nor lead to a better understanding and interpretation of the Text. For instance, J is traditionally assigned Ex. 3:5 while E has 3:6. But should Ex. 3:6 not belong to J who is traditionally claimed as affirming that Yahweh had been worshipped by the Fathers right from time and therefore consistent in calling Yahweh the God of the Patriarchs? (23)

Childs has noted that J's characteristic reference to the burning bush is found in Ex. 3:4 which is traditionally assigned to E. And if it is removed as not belonging there, then E's Ex. 3:4 becomes meaningless on the ground that the injunction not to 'come near', presupposes the turning aside to see whose antecedent is in the 'Burning Bush'. (24)

Along with the above, two points may be noted with the assignment of Ex. 3:9-15 to E Source. (i) It is claimed that Ex. 3:9-15 belongs to E. and so the revelation of the New Name is his, which according to his work is unknown before this point in time. But the question may be asked, how does the giving of the new name validate Moses' claim to Divine Revelation if the name had, hitherto, been unknown? How could it act as evidence adjudicating his claim? If according to E's scheme of work, the Patriarchs did not know the name and so neither their generations, how could the giving of it serve its purpose/

purpose with the Exiles in Egypt? And since according to E there is no other provision for the revelation of the name apart from here, does it mean that the Patriarchal God(s) were anonymous which makes the request for the name redundant.

(ii) Secondly in the division of our Text, while E has Ex. 3:9-15, J is given VV. 7-8. And yet we find the Deity styling Israel in both passages as 'MY PEOPLE' (LXX *τοῦ λαοῦ μου* ; MT *עַמִּי*). The use of this phrase, my people, only looks reasonable in the J passage 7-8 according to the traditional analysis. This is because according to J's use, Yahweh had already entered into covenant bond with the Patriarchs and through them with their generations or posterity. But how could such a phrase be understood in an E passage Ex. 3:10 who up to the point has not yet recorded any incident of a covenant between Yahweh and the Patriarchs and through them with their children. On the basis of this one could even think of assigning Ex. 3:10 a strong E passage to J (cf. Gen. 12:2 ff, 7; 13:14 ff; 15:18; 28:13-15). Because this is difficult to do, some, like Morgenstern has suggested that the *עַמִּי* in Ex. 3:10 should be seen or regarded as a redactorial insertion of the Yahwist editor. (25) But in place of such conclusion it may be better to see the phrase as reflecting the theological tendency of DTR or its school who likes to make the point that Israel is Yahweh's people not by their own deserts but only out of Yahweh's gracious favour. To prove this point, the author represents the people in Egypt as crying just for help, Ex. 2:23; and not crying to Yahweh for help - the cry only came to Him indirectly, but Yahweh, though they did not cry to him, calls them his people and comes to their rescue - an unmerited show of mercy. Israel are his own not because they cried to him, but because he has chosen to have them (cf. Joshua 24:14 /

Joshua 24:14; Ezek. 20:7 where the people are represented as having worshipped Deity other than Yahweh in Egypt).

A similar theological purpose may underlie the Aaronic passage Ex. 4:14-17 usually regarded as an interpolation. When the role specified for Aaron here is compared with what actually happened - as reported - in the plague Narrative, it becomes difficult to understand as Moses spoke for himself without intermediary. The writer of the Text and his school interested in the office of the 'Prophet' here want to show who and what a Prophet is in relation to God and the people to whom he delivers only that which God puts in his mouth. The prophet receives direct information or oracle from God!.

Thus one could say with Childs (Exodus p. 52 ff) that the use of Divine Names as criteria for source location and the constant need to adjust the theory in every succeeding section to make sense, does not evoke much confidence in the approach particularly in our Text.

The situation even appears worsened by the practice of Text fragmentation as is evident in the split of Ex. 3:1 between J and E, or of having to assign a whole passage to a particular source without any evidence of source indicators like as we have in Ex. 3:16 ff. which is usually unhesitatingly assigned to E.

In view of these Source problems, commentators usually resort to one or the other of two options; either to make the text read what they want by rearranging the whole narrative, deleting one or the other of the sources, or simply by removing as many verses as possible labelling/

labelling them secondary glosses. The end product of which practice is invariably a serious mutilation of the Text. (26)

OR in the alternative they sharpen the distribution of the verses between J and E to the point of atomising the Text. This practice also results in asking hair-splitting questions for which the method can not advance an answer. (27) Thus the J and E Source approach compounds the problems of the understanding of our Text.

THE PROBABLE CIRCLE WHICH PRODUCED OUR TEXT

It is in view of the above literary Source problems and the need to get to grips with the message our passage is trying to get across that we would like to contend here that it should be seen as the work of a particular 'School' whose interests and theological stance reflect that of the Deuteronomists. Without wasting time we may sustain our contention with the following points.

(1) In our Text the first pointer to this direction to be noted is the List of Nations in the land promise formula, which we find in Ex. 3:8,17. In these verses the list of the Nations reflects what we have in Deut. 7:1 9:1; Joshua 23:1 which in the phraseology of the description implies conquest. And as Van Seters (28) has rightly argued, this certainly belongs to a late stage in Literary compilation and is thoroughly Deuteronomistic. On this he is given an unqualified support by Wyatt in his article on our Text. (29) This land promise and List of Nations is also found in its well expanded Deuteronomic terminology in Genesis 15:18-20 which passage is usually regarded secondary to the J and E Source analysis of the passage. (30)

(2) /

(2) In addition to this we may note the difference between the Deuteronomic style in mentioning the Patriarchs in the context of the Land promise in apposition to the Fathers, and the style in the J. E. corpus of the Pentateuch where the Patriarchs are mentioned in a non-appositional way, (cf. Ex. 3:6,15,16 = DTR Style with Ex. 33:1 Numb. 32:1 and Deut. 34:4 = J.E. Style). Here probably the theological intention is to differentiate the Patriarchs from the Fathers, either as referring to the disobedient Exodus group or the 'Jerusalem Fathers', on account of whose sin the children were suffering in exile, (cf. Ezek. 18:2 'The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the Children's teeth are set on edge'). (31)

(3) Also the form of the Divine Speech which we have in Ex.3:6,15,16 which is the Divine Self-introduction formula, is frequently encountered in the cultic language of the Holiness Code, Priestly Code, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. This Self-introduction formula has its counterpart, it has been noted, (32) in the public confession of the Divine Name. And such confessions are very frequent throughout Deuteronomy. Thus in our passage Yahweh is made to present himself in the way he is to be confessed and worshipped.

(4) In Ex. 3:4 when Moses, on seeing the burning bush, turned to have a closer look at the sight, Yahweh ordered him not to come near, but instead to take off his shoes because he was on a holy spot. This unapproachability of the Deity looks odd in the context of other J.E. passages where the Deity could move freely with people and be entertained by them or on his own invite people to come near. Here we may recall such passages as ^eGenesis 18 where Yahweh could "eat and drink" with Abraham and in return promise Abraham a son as a reward /

reward, or Ex. 19 and Ex. 24 where Yahweh himself summons Moses to the top of the Mountain - his immediate presence, alone or in company of the Elders of Israel. We may also compare Ex. 33 where Yahweh puts Moses on the cleft of the rock to watch Him as He passes by. So the injunction not to come near in Ex. 3:4 only finds its counterpart in the early historiographical narratives in I Sam 6:19-20 and II Sam. 6:6-7 etc. where we have similar references to the danger that accrues from approaching the Divinity. The presence of the Deity in the Sanctuary demands rigorous observance of all measures affecting holiness and purity, laxity in which might incur the wrath of the Deity and thus invite disaster. This view of Yahweh's immediate presence appears strange in the context of a J.E. corpus while at home in the Deuteronomistic Literature.

- (5) Related to this is the question of the Divine Name in Ex. 3:14 which offers to answer the question of Ex. 3:13. In this verse we apparently have two answers, 'Ehyeh 'aser Ehyeh' and also just simply 'Ehyeh.' Apart from the fact that Ehyeh 'aser Ehyeh looks like a further attempt at explaining the short cryptic Ehyeh, we are to note that in actuality, the name of the Deity elsewhere other than in this text is never mentioned as Ehyeh but always Yahweh. Even in Exodus 20:2 where the Deity delivered to Israel her charter of their new relationship - 'the Ten Words', the first thing the Deity is made to declare is his name which is YHWH, the one who brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt. The name Ehyeh is not used! And from the abundant studies of the Ancients and their notion about God, we know that the primitive man does not necessarily ask what a deity is, but rather what he is up to or can do. Thus when we find deities described and individualised /

individualised by their attributes, especially in such abstract terms as we have in our Text, Ehyeh 'ašer Ehyeh, we have the indication of a theological speculation. In view of this will it not be appropriate then to conclude that in Ex. 3:14 we have the product of speculative theologisation of the nature of Israelite God by a Circle with a theological bent which has been directly influenced by the DTR Literature of the Prophets? (33)

(6) This leads us to the next point which is the special use of sign in Exodus 3:12. The problem posed by the use of sign here has met with different solutions or interpretations from different commentators. The nature of the sign given is as difficult to discern as the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun 'זֶה this'. In view of this, attempts have been made to see the antecedent of the 'This' either in the burning bush incident itself or in the promise of worshipping Yahweh at the Mount of God after the rescue from Egypt. OR for a better understanding to facilitate interpretation, supplying supposedly missing words in the Text.

On the interpretation of the sign itself, some have claimed that the actual sign has fallen out of the Text or that it has been transposed from its original position after Ex. 3:12 (Noth, Exodus). OR that it might have taken the form of the appearing of the messenger of God in a pillar of fire and cloud which would lead them to Horeb (Gressman), a view which Childs has called an interpretation of desperation which makes no sense of the Text (Childs Exodus p.56).

In his own contribution, Childs has compared the two uses in the early Tradition of the Old Testament and discovered that while that of /

of Exodus shares or has affinity with the two, it does not completely conform to either. This is because as we have in similar call narratives such as Judges 6:14,16 and I Sam. 10:1, the sign ought to take the form of an extraordinary happening but it does not and what is more, it even points away from the present to the future.

Thus it seems to be more at home with the use of sign in I Sam. 2:34; I Kings 13:3; II Kings 19:29; Is. 7:14 and Jeremiah 44:29 etc. In all these references the sign is given as confirmation of what has been said, and both the confirmation and the prediction are futuristic in nature. But the subtle difference is that while in the above references the prediction will assume the nature of a historical event, that of Exodus 3:12 is of the invisible companionship of Yahweh with Moses. This is why in the above references the confirmation of what has been said can be separated from the spatio-temporal happening of the prediction to which it stands as a prefigurement.

While in the Exodus account, it is only the sign that will assume the status of a historical event authenticating the invisible miraculous working of the Deity. Thus in this special use of the sign the promise and the confirmation are made to coalesce - an indication of a much later handling and use of sign.

Apart from the above mentioned little difference, it seems to be purely in line with the same use made of sign in the above references which undoubtedly have the influence of DTR. So here in Exodus 3:12 we have sign used in a highly abstract form in contradistinction to its use elsewhere in the Pentateuch where a sense of concrete happening is implied /

implied. God's promise of 'being with' takes the place of visible concrete miracle which Moses would very much have required on the spot. But since the author is still going to give copious examples of such miracles, he now makes the sign to look up to the future for its fulfilment.

This special use of sign, we would contend, is scarcely to be found in any body of material which we can confidently label J.E., while it shares affinity with some DTR passages.

And above all the interest that the DTR has or shows in Moses as a type of person as well as in his ordinances as exemplified in the Book of Deuteronomy which virtually claims to be the ipsissima verba of Moses, may justify the conclusion that it is this 'Circle' that may be responsible for his prophetic call as he was undoubtedly their Archetype of the Prophets. (34)

From what we have seen so far, it becomes obvious that the presence of so many features in this short story of Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 which can not be explained in terms of J.E. analytical method, and the excision of which would really leave nothing substantial behind, points not only to a very late work, but also to a different literary source Unit - DTR instead of J.E. Understanding our Text in this light would resolve the usual commentator's problem that arises on account of the three Divine figures, YHWH, Elohim, Mal'-ak, presented as acting in this passage of Moses' call account.

With reference to other call accounts in which the hand of the DTR can not be ruled out, it is not unusual for Yahweh in his Call of the Prophet to appear or be seen in the midst of his heavenly hosts, the Cherubim and Seraphim (cf. Is. 6; Ezekiel 1 and I Kings 22:19 ff.)

So /

So the appearance or presence of Yahweh with his Mal' ak immediately fits the pattern and poses no problem. Also since it is the ground work of this 'Circle of Theologians', to 'wed' Yahweh with Elohim and at all costs prove or show that they are one and there is no division between them, then presenting Elohim and Yahweh in the same passage - the two names of the same God, raises no problem too. It is not that the author is here using two different documents but rather showing that 'Yahweh our Elohim', is one God who could legitimately operate under two innocuous titles. This of course reflects a late stage of the history of Israelite religion - post exilic (35) theological epoch, which attempted a harmonization of the variegated facets of the religion to present a monotheistic picture.

At this point, with the above said, it may be necessary for us to pause and say something about the understanding and different uses of Tradition History Method by Old Testament scholars in Biblical exegesis.

ON USING TRADITION HISTORY

Among scholars of the Old Testament, it is a well recognised working principle that, some of the materials of the Pentateuch must have been orally transmitted or even composed orally for a long period of time before assuming literary status. This basic assumption is not ruled out even if the sanctity of J. as a literary source were upheld. This is because, assuming that J. was written as early as at the time of Solomon, (36) then three or more centuries would have separated the occurrence /

occurrence of the events recorded from the time when the recording took place - a long period of oral transmission. Noth has recognised this fact when he said, "A great deal of narrative material certainly first handed down by oral tradition served to give the description of the events - (in Exodus) a concrete living form". (Exodus Commentary p.14). And Hyatt in his commentary says, that in the early centuries prior to the art of reading or writing, oral composition and transmission must have been popular practice. And many people, he went on, would have entertained themselves with stories about the past, sayings of the wise or poems, (Exodus Commentary p. 28). The implication of this for the Traditio-Historical approach is that the aim of Tradition history is to trace the form and content of this pre-literary tradition as it was transmitted from generation to generation. Thus the traditio-historical approach goes behind the Literary sources in its search for the origins of Israelite religion. In this it also makes use of the results of Source Literary analysis as well as Form Critical Method. This is because of the nature of 'Tradition' about which the following may be said.

Although it is generally recognised that tradition is oral, it can also be in written form, with the oral and the written maintaining a sort of symbiotic existence. (37) In this wise, even the analysis of the Pentateuchal materials into successive documents or sources J.E. D and P. could be said to represent in itself an attempt at tracing the history of the traditions of Israel. Such tradition that is transmitted from one generation to the next can not but have elements of its content or form altered as each successive group or community tries to relate it to its situation in life and reinterpret it to meet its needs.

While /

While recognising this dynamic nature of tradition, it needs to be said that as a discipline in Biblical exegesis, Tradition-historical method is differently understood and applied among Old Testament scholars. Understood in its very broad sense, Tradition History is an attempt to bring together the results of both Source Critical and Form Critical work to provide a complete history of the Old Testament literature through its pre-literary as well as literary stages. And in its narrower sense, it means just the history of the pre-literary development of a body of Literature, or the history of a specific theme or motif. G. W. Coats for instance applies it in this latter sense in his work.(38) Although Coats uses it in this way, other scholars like Noth would prefer to use it in its extended meaning as referring primarily to the history of the Literary development of a body of material. (39) It is probably as a result of this emphasis on the Literary stage of the tradition that Noth - representative of the German Scholars - differs markedly from the Scandinavian Scholars exemplified by Ivan Engnell. (40) While the German Scholars like Noth and von Rad would seek to maintain the usual documentary hypothesis though going behind the documents to the earlier stages of the traditions sometimes in their oral or written form, the Scandinavian Scholars, e.g. Engnell, would prefer replacing the usual documentary hypothesis of the classical Literary Critics with emphasis upon Oral tradition or even what he would call 'Oral Literature'.

According to him i.e. Engnell, the Old Testament in itself is an Oral Literature which was first written down at a relatively late period, say in the post exilic age. During this long period of Oral transmission, he contends, individual units of tradition were already elaborated /

elaborated and combined - this is the stage he thinks J. and E. as traditions were fused - so that one can even talk of whole complexes or collections or even "Tradition works" at the Oral stage. But this does not mean that he totally accepts that the oral and written methods of tradition transmission were mutually exclusive, rather he holds that the narrative stories and genealogies which were orally transmitted existed side by side with the written down legal codes, annals and religio-sacral Texts - the Psalms. But one major fault of Engnell in his stand is that, though he is not unconvinced that at the oral stage materials could undergo transformation, yet he seems to have great confidence in the reliability of materials transmitted orally for historical reconstruction. (41)

This looks like overstepping the bounds of the usefulness of Tradition History. This is so because, in the face of the creative factors in tradition which subject it to reinterpretation according to need, one may ask, to what degree then are the traditions reliable accounts of that which they relate? (42) Even too, the fact that the very word tradition itself may sometimes carry the meaning of something fabricated highlights the great danger inherent in Engnell's stance. Of course this is not to talk of the conflict his stance brings him into with Noth and von Rad, who on the basis of the result of their Tradition-historical Studies, conclude that the Pentateuchal traditions should be seen in the light of the information they give us about the ancient faith of Israel rather than being taken as invaluable materials for historical reconstruction.

It is also to be noted that it is because of the late date Engnell gives the Literary stage and long period for the Oral transmission that makes him rule out the role or usefulness of Source Analysis.

This/

This again differentiates him from most users of tradition history, including Gunkel, who base their work on the results of Source Critical Analysis. This is why his views of Tradition history are different and he could claim that, "Traditio-historical critic must completely do away with the anachronistic book-review of the Literary-historical Method. (43)

Much as Engnell would like to discredit the use of Literary source approach in getting to the roots of Israelite religion, Noth and von Rad would like to employ it as an aid to better understanding of the Pentateuchal material. Apart from the minor differences between them in matters of detail, they both agree on topics relating to the Pentateuch, and the use of Tradition history to get behind the written sources and show how the traditions were formed that entered into those sources. On the Exodus/Sinai Tradition, for instance, they both are of the view that the Sinai Tradition entered late into the old Exodus tradition, which formed the kernel around which the Pentateuchal narratives are built and which is a notable feature in nearly all categories of Old Testament Literature. To reach this conclusion, Noth had worked out in great detail the history of the traditions prior to J & E which he divided up into five themes according to the chronological order in which they appeared and got woven together in the body of the Pentateuchal Literature. These main themes, of which he observed that the Exodus Tradition from Egypt is the earliest, were then filled out and linked together by various traditional materials.

This thematic approach of Noth has proved unacceptable to a majority of scholars, not only because of the artificiality of its nature, but also /

also because of its cutting apart of the Exodus and Sinai events which makes the latter meaningless in the context of Israel's faith, and also because it reduces the person and work of Moses to very small proportions. (44)

Unlike Noth, von Rad begins his approach by affirming that Dt.26:5-9 constitutes a very old summary of the saving facts in the history of Israel, a sort of small historical Credo originating in the time of the Israelite settlement in Canaan prior to the establishment of the Monarchy. Further examples of this historical Credo von Rad claims, are to be found in such passages like Deut. 6:20-24 and Joshua 24:2-13 while it is to be found in its free adaptation form in the cult-lyrics of I Sam. 12:8; Ex. 15; Psalms 78;105;106;135 and 136. To him the Hexateuch is a long elaboration of this basic creed of Israel.

He also observed that all these passages, except Psalm 106 which he says has a post-exilic origin, have no reference to the revelation of Yahweh at Sinai. He found that the earliest entry of the Sinai episode into the Canonical story of the redemption of Israel is found in the prayer of Neh. 9:6 ff. Therefore he concluded that the Sinai-pericope Ex. 19-24 was originally a festival legend used at Shechem in a ceremony of covenant renewal in the autumn at the festival of Booths. It is the Yahwist theologian, he holds, who worked in this Sinai Tradition into the body of the Pentateuch, elaborated the Patriarchal history and prefixed the primeval history of Genesis 1-11.(45)

The faults inherent in von Rad's thesis have long been detected and it no longer commands the old respect it once enjoyed. Of the many criticisms levelled at it, we may mention just a few. (46)

(1) Von Rad claims that his discovered Credo is very ancient but in his work does nothing by way of proof of its antiquity.

The /

The little information on the rhythmical and alliterative character of the opening phrases convinces no one (Problem of the Hexateuch p.4 FN 3).

(2) Von Rad himself has observed the touch of the DTR in the latter half of Deut. 26:5-9 without elaborating on it. This calls the antiquity of the Text into question. A thorough investigation even shows that the passage is actually riddled with Deuteronomic phraseology as the clearest parallels to Deut. 26:5-9 are found in the framework section of Deuteronomy and the 'Baruch biography' of Jeremiah. Rost has even pointed out that the so called Creed has its precursor in Gen. 15:13-16.

(3) As we have noted earlier in this investigation, it appears that the writer of Deut. 26:5-9 used materials from the Lamentation Liturgy of the cult and therefore a reformulation.

(4) Brekelmans (47) using Form Criticism on the passages has noted that von Rad is not only wrong in speaking of the historical Creed as if it were an independent Literary genre used in the cult, but that in so doing he has treated the passages out of context. This is because they can not be seen to contain the meaning he puts on them if treated within context. In addition one may also note that Deut. 26:1-11 deals with the ceremony of the offering of first fruit. There is no reference to festival in the passage and the situation presupposes the bringing of first-fruits by individuals at various times.

It also has to be recognised that the subject matter dealt with in Deut. 26:5-9 and Sinai Tradition are different though complementary.
Sinai /

Sinai Tradition is absent from the passages cited by von Rad, because, it is not considered as a historical event in the same sense as the other events such as the Exodus from Egypt and the entry into Canaan.

While the Exodus reports of the 'Magnalia Dei' the Sinai Tradition tells of an encounter with God, which led up to the people's acceptance of the will of God proclaimed in the Commandments. And the study of Israel's religion reveals that both History and Law constitute from very early times the fundamental pillars of Israelite Traditions. It may not even be wrong to say that the passages cited by von Rad, Deut. 26:20-25; Joshua 24 and Deut. 26:1-11 appear to presuppose the existence of the law. So the two Traditions Exodus and Sinai may not necessarily be seen as having lived separate existences or that one has been artificially woven into the other. That the Sinai Tradition can not be expunged from the Exodus narrative without occasioning disaster may sustain this view. Records in the early chapters look forward to it, without which they appear meaningless, (cf. Ex. 3:12,18; 5:3; 7:16; 8:27 etc.) While Moses and his role are so intertwined with the Sinai account that we can not see them as a sort of secondary insertion into it.

From the foregoing it can be seen that Traditio-historical method is not only differently understood among scholars but also the method of application depends on each scholar's choice. Even among recent commentators on our Text Form Criticism is not usually treated differently from Tradition history. This is because in fact, they both coalesce and can not be completely put into two watertight compartments. In what now follows, we want to show what we have discovered to be the pre-literary /

pre-literary traditions which the author of our Text has used and also how he has used it to write a 'prophetic call' to fit the historical milieu the projected call is dealing with. In addition we shall also investigate the probable sociological context from which the need for such a call arose.

To start with let us briefly discuss the genre of our Text.

THE GENRE OF OUR TEXT

The events described in our Text are private and not public occurrences. The episode is about the encounter between the Deity and man. In the context of the Exodus narrative it shows how Yahweh called Moses and made him the Prophet/Leader of His people. So as many commentators have agreed, e.g. Childs, Hyatt, etc., it is a 'Call Narrative', not by the one who is called but by a circle which knows all that is important to know about the Prophet/Leader. Without doubt, stories about the figure Moses, must have circulated within the context of the Exodus tradition, which the author has freely adapted in the composition of the Call. (48) As indicators of the underlying traditions behind the final form of this literary Call Narrative, we have the following:

(1) Moses is called and given a message to deliver to God's people like all other prophets e.g. the classical Prophets. But unlike them, he is to participate actively in the redemption struggle like the early Leaders/Judges of Israel, e.g. Gideon.

(2) In the Call accounts of the classical Prophets, there is no ambiguity as to who is seen or commissions the Prophet. But in Moses' case, an Angel of Yahweh appears to him and YHWH and Elohim commission him. /

him. Along with this we have such elements like what Gressmann has called cultic aetiology, (49) Myth, or fairy tale of bush burning but not consumed; knowing 'name of God motif', and the possession of miraculous powers as mark of special relationship with the Deity. These different elements go to show that what we have here in the story is a harmonization of traditions blended to give the picture of a prophetic call. Before we begin to discuss the underlying Traditions harmonized by the writer of our narrative we would like to say something about Yahweh and his Angel in the early traditions of Israel, the understanding of which is vital for our reconstruction.

YHWH AND MAL'-AK IN THE EARLY TRADITIONS OF ISRAEL

Any conscientious reader of the Old Testament narratives, especially the Pentateuch, can not but be confused as to what designation lies behind the use of the word Angel or Mal'-ak Yahweh. The figure of the personage is so elusive and perplexing that various interpretations have been advanced for its understanding. It could mean either a form of appearance of Yahweh in the nature of a double or 'extended soul', or on the other hand, a being enjoying a personal existence clearly differentiated from that of Yahweh himself. On some occasions, the Mal' ak could become a genuine representative of the Deity in full capacity, playing a part comparable to that of a Divine, or one whose presence has the same impact as that of the Deity. In fact the biblical picture given in Genesis 16:7 ff; 21:17 ff; 22:11 ff; 31:11 ff; Ex. 3:2 and Judges 2:1 ff unlike other passages containing the Mal'-ak Yahweh, shows that there is an impossible task of differentiating between the Mal'-ak/

Mal'-ak and Yahweh himself. This is because the one who speaks or acts, Yahweh or Mal'-ak is obviously one and the same person. (50)

But on other occasions, or even in the same passage, the Mal'-ak is presented as nothing short of a human figure like as we have in Judges 13:16, Gen. 18:8, where he could be told to eat food: Gen. 32:25 where he wrestled with Jacob and touched him: Judges 6:21, Numbers 22:31 could possess staff or a drawn sword: Gen. 28:12 requires ladder to shuttle between earth and heaven, and Judges 6:11 where he could sit and discuss at length.

In view of this ambiguity in the presentation of the Angel figure as man and at the same time as one whom men could see and proclaim unequivocally that they have seen God, is it possible to go beyond the Literary form to recover what the concept of the figure was to the Old Testament writers?

Here the first thing to take note of is the very word Mal'-ak itself, and its connotation. The Hebrew word Mal'-ak derives from the root L'-k (לך) which has no extant example in Hebrew, while the Arabic cognate L'aaka means to 'send with a commission'. (51) As an abstract noun it could mean, sending, mission, or embassy from which the concrete notion 'messenger' only later developed. Understood in this messenger sense, the Hebrew word Mal' ak could be used for those who carry messages from one person to another in which sense it is used of the Kings in the Old Testament. This same word Mal'ak used for human figure carrying messages from one king to another is also found used for the being who carries messages from God to man. Nowhere in the Massoretic Text, is the indication given that these two types of messengers differ and we also do not find traces to that effect in the Septuagint which uses the word ἄγγελος indiscriminately to render the Hebrew מַלְאָכִים, (cf. Priest /

Priest מַלְאָכִים Mal. 2:7; Prophet מַלְאָכִים Haggai 1:13; King's wrath מַלְאָכִים Prov. 16:14 etc). So for the MT messenger of whatever gender or status is מַלְאָכִים.

But with the Vulgate, there appears a special word "Angelus", to differentiate or distinguish the messenger of God from other types of messenger. This distinction which has brought about the difference between Angel and Messenger in rendering the MT Mal' ak is not only arbitrary and finds no support in the original Text, but also reflects the later highly developed theology of Angelology. We may illustrate this with some examples.

<u>TEXT</u>	<u>VULGATE</u>	<u>MT</u>	<u>LXX</u>
I Kings 19:7 Angel of the Lord...	Angelus	Mal' ak	ἄγγελος
II Kings 1:2 Ahaziah Sent messengers	<u>Nuntio</u>	Mal' ak	ἄγγελος
II Kings 1:3 ^a Angel of the Lord said to Elijah...	Angelus	Mal' ak	ἄγγελος
II Kings 1:3 ^b Go up to meet the messengers of the King...	<u>Nuntiorum Regis</u>	Mal'akim	ἄγγελων
II Kings 1:5 The messengers returned to the King...	<u>Nuntii</u>	Mal'akim	οἱ ἄγγελοι
II Kings 1:15. Then the Angel of the Lord said..Angelus Domini		Mal'ak	ἄγγελος
II Kings 19:14 Hezekiah received the letter from the Land of the messengers and read it	<u>Nuntiorum</u>	La Mal' ak	ἄγγελων

From this table, to which many more additions could be made, it becomes evident that the Old Testament in its use of Mal'-ak Yahweh, at least on linguistic grounds, did not think of a figure or being in/

in terms of our own inherited idea from the Mediaeval period about Angel. It is very doubtful whether the Old Testament writers thought there were Angels the way we think of them, i.e. heavenly Divine beings. From the way Mal'-ak Elohim or Mal'-ak Yahweh is used, the Old Testament gives us little or no reason to believe that they pictured this messenger as other than a human being. (52)

This faint trace is still found even in passages where the Angel has been identified or equated with Yahweh. In such passages his distinction and messengership status is still retained. In II Sam. 24:16 he is distinct from Yahweh while in Gen. 22:16 he is found speaking in prophetic terminology and after delivering his message says, 'ne'um Yahweh' - thus says the Lord. And also in Gen.16:7-14 where he acts side by side with Yahweh, his function is distinguished from that of Yahweh; it is the Mal'-ak who speaks to Hagar and says to her, Yahweh has heard thy cries. But it is Yahweh himself who opens her eyes or hears her prayers. From this subtle differentiation the following remark can be made that, when the reference is to God in his Divine invisible capacity, the word Yahweh is used, but when Yahweh or God enters the perception of man, the Mal'-ak is introduced. Thus Mal'-ak Yahweh is the extended soul of Yahweh or his visible executive when he intervenes in human affairs. In the early literature of the Old Testament, he personified Yahweh's assistance to Israel and only in rare cases is he found turning against them in punishment as in II Sam. 24: He is the mediator of Yahweh's grace to Israel.

From this use, it seems that whenever this figure appeared, as the Biblical narratives have it, the stories originally probably referred quite naively to purely physically observable beings. Such primitive theophanies,/

theophanies, it appears, the editors of the Pentateuch have softened in the interest of strict transcendence by interposing the figure Mal'-ak as Yahweh's mode of manifestation.

Even in the course of harmonization of the Mal'-ak appearances with Yahweh's theophany, care is taken to guard against 'sacrilegious' reference to Yahweh in his Deity status, which makes the editors reserve only befitting activities for him in such theophanies. This somewhat subtle definition which is theologically based, is founded on the fact that in very many instances, the Angel is at once identified with God and differentiated from Him. In Gen. 31:13, Ex. 3:2,6, he identifies himself with Yahweh, and in Gen. 16:11;22:12,15 he speaks with the authority of Yahweh. But in Gen.16:13; 48:15, Hos. 12:4,5 he is spoken of by others as Yahweh or God.

But it is noteworthy that from the period of the Monarchy onwards, we cease to hear of this close relationship between Yahweh and the Mal' ak. Even in stories of the intervention of a divine emissary such as are to be found in the Books of Kings, and in the post exilic writings, it is clearly a matter of a servant of Yahweh quite distinct from his master. The great prophets are not even found mentioning him, which probably gives us room to assume that they took up the role and played the function exercised elsewhere by the Mal'-akim. And of course we even find the title applied to one of the prophets (Haggai 1:3).

But in the post exilic period, belief in superhuman and celestial beings called Angel was beginning to develop. This concept of Angelology which probably had its inception in the exilic period (53) is found as an important feature in the Qumran Texts, Rabbinic Literature and the writings /

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writings of the New Testament. Thus the later notion of Angel functioning as an intermediary is different from the Old Testament notion of Mal'-ak who is both one with Yahweh and also distinct from him as his messenger. Between this apparent haphazard alternation of the two figures, we think there seems to be a theological concern which is to designate the visible theophanic figure as messenger and going behind him to posit a transcendent figure he represents with both of them functioning at one and the same time.

This speculative reshaping of older Traditions which is very common and striking in the Old Testament is an important literary theologisation. It enabled the Old Testament writers to build bridges connecting later Yahweh religion with the religion of the Fathers and also made it possible to speak of the presence of Yahweh in many places without calling in question his Unity, as well as his intervention amongst men without challenging his transcendence.

In all this one point stands out clear which is that in spite of the effort made to show that Yahweh is one with his Mal'-ak, we do not hear of a single instance when Yahweh and another being legitimately lay claim to the worship of Israel. It was Yahweh and Yahweh alone. Thus where Mal'-ak is identified with him, it is a subtle effort to raise to a higher level an originally primitive or anthropomorphic theophany.

So our ultimate explanation of the ambiguity is no doubt to be sought in the advance of religious thought to a more theological apprehension of the Divine nature. Thus in all certainty the oldest conception of the theophany was a visible personal appearance of the Deity which later theologians conscious of the danger posed by this bold anthropomorphism, took steps and reconciled the original narrative with the belief in the invisibility/

invisibility of God who acts amongst men through the agency of the 'Word' or in the early traditions Mal'-ak. (54)

This theological tendency of interpreting the primitive and bold anthropomorphic theophanies in light of later Yahweh faith in the context of his spiritual transcendence can be seen in a comparison of the two basic forms of the Pentateuchal theophanies - by Yahweh and by an intermediary the Mal'-ak. As we would want to maintain, it is elements from these two forms of theophanies that the writer of our Text has welded together to constitute the content of the Call of Moses.

THE TWO UNDERLYING TRADITIONS IN OUR TEXT

YAHWEH THEOPHANIES

(1) In Yahweh theophanies it is usual for the Deity to introduce himself to the receiver of revelation, cf. Genesis 17:1

26:23; 28:13; 35:11; Ex. 6:2 (-Ex. 3:6)

(2) Appearance is connected with time of Stress for the individual in the limited family circle according to the Biblical accounts and is invariably in a holy place.

MAL'-AK THEOPHANIES

Never introduces himself.

Appearance connected with time of Stress for the wider Community, Judges 6:1-6, 13:1 cf. Ex. 2:23

(i) /

YAHWEH THEOPHANIES (cont'd)

(2)..../

(i) Abraham in Genesis 17:1ff

(ii) Isaac Gen. 26:23ff

(iii) Jacob Gen. 28:13

(iv) (Moses as fugitive in Exile)

(3) When he appears he states what he will do. He reveals his plans he is about to execute, Gen.17:2,6 26:2ff;28:14,15, cf. Ex. 3:8.

(4) His Name is never asked since it is always the first thing for him to introduce himself.

(5)

(6) There is invariably long divine speech with few or no interruption by recipient of revelation Gen. 15, 17.

MAL'-AK THEOPHANIES (cont'd.

Deliverance is effected in the immediate account following cf. Judges 7-8; 14-16; Ex.5:1ff

When he appears he states what he would have the recipient of revelation do. He never says what he will do. Judges 6, 13, cf. Ex. 3:10. Recipient is to be actively involved in the project.

Name is always asked because he is a strange being to the recipient. In this context knowing the name is important and necessary.

Always refused to disclose his name because it is sacred Gen.32:29; Judges 13:17-18 cf. Ex. 3:14.

There is a discursive dialogue between Angel and recipient Gen. 35, Judges 6, 13 etc.

YAHWEH THEOPHANIES (cont'd)

(7) Calls recipient of revelation

by Name Gen. 22:1, 15:1 cf. I Sam

3 and Ex. 3:4 (also I Kings 19:9ff)

(8) Fire element accompanies his

disclosure Gen.15:17.

(9) Makes promise to recipient

which has connection with Land, or

increase of posterity, Gen. 15:17-21,

28:13-14, 35:12-13 etc. cf.Ex.3:8ff.

(10) Evidence is sought that what has

been promised will come to pass or

be fulfilled.

A verbal promise is given as evidence

or sign to confirm that what has been

said will be fulfilled. Never performs

miracle as evidence or sign of the

truth of what has been said.

(11) /

MAL'-AK THEOPHANIES (Cont'd)

Does not address recipient by

name except where he is made

to speak from heaven in an

official capacity of the Deity.

Gen. 21:17, 22:11. Compare this

with where he is invariably

called man in the Text Judges

6:11, 13:6,11.

Fire is connected with

miraculous feat he performs

Judges 6:11, 13:29.

Does not

Sign is usually sought by

recipient to assure him that

he has not met with just an

ordinary man and or that the

contact has given him -

recipient some supernatural

powers - Miracle is usually

performed Judges 6,13 etc.

YAHWEH THEOPHANIES (cont'd)

MAL'-AK THEOPHANIES (cont'd)

(11) It is characteristic of him to allay recipient's fear or doubt with the words, "I will be with you".

(12) When interacting with man here on earth, emphasis is exclusively on audition rather than vision
Gen. 15;17, etc.

Emphasis is strong on vision and less on audition or word of the Mal'-ak. There is concrete evidence that a being is seen cf Ex 3:2; 3:6.

From the above table it is clear that while the Mal'-ak theophanies look very anthropomorphic, Yahweh theophanies are more theologically befitting the Spiritual status of the Deity. This looks rather like a later stage in Israelite understanding of her God. So the tradition of Moses' encounter with a 'Divine Being', that eventually led to the release of the Israelites in Egypt is found corrected and reshaped in the light of later understanding. In doing this, the writer of our Text combined elements from both understandings of Divine theophany and couched them in a prophetic call pattern, with additions from the 'Prophetic Legenda' that are usually told about holy men. This concerns the mysterious episode relating to their birth, the point of transformation in their life when they acquired extraordinary powers (here the miracles 4:1ff come in) and about the end of the holy man which is usually unlike the fate of the ordinary man.

So in its literary form, our Text is given a call narrative pattern to show:

(1) That Moses a true prophet was discovered by God himself

as/

as he went about his work.

- (2) As a true prophet he was commissioned with a message for the people and Pharaoh which he delivered as a proclamation in the characteristic prophetic style, Ex.3:7,16ff, cf. Ex.5:1ff.
- (3) As a true prophet - according to the laid down standard of Deuteronomy - he did not come to his people in the name of a new god they did not know, but in the name of the Patriarchal God, cf. Deut.13:2ff; 18:20. See also I Kings 18:19; II Kings 10:19; Jer. 2:8, 23:13.
- (4) Yahweh is made to say that if Pharaoh refuses to obey His orders, He would demonstrate to him, His almightiness, cf. later Prophets' proclamation, "And you shall know that I am Yahweh" (Jer. 16:21).
- (5) As a sign of authenticity, Moses is presented as an unwilling servant of Yahweh, who had only to be pressed into service. Like later prophets, he took to his call much against his natural inclination.
- (6) In Chapter 3:18-22 we find the characteristic reworking common in the prophets, where later events are put in the form of prediction in an earlier account. Compare for instances Ex.3:18 = 5:3; 3:21 = 11:3; 3:22 = 11:2.

But in the finished work, it can still be seen that the account of the Mal' ak theophany has not fitted completely into the new mould - Yahweh theophany. This is evidenced in Ex. 3:13ff where the writer is/

is at pains to render the non-revelation or simple refusal to give name in a form that will make sense. This is why we have three possible suggestions - of the author - put in the mouth of Yahweh as answers to the question of Name. The suggestions are not answers or names but a theologisation of the meaning of Yahweh as Israel came to know him in practical religious experience. The author has seized on the opportunity to explain that the figure who appeared and spoke to Moses at the burning bush is not one of the deluding spirits as might be supposed but the very God of the Hebrews, who himself declared to Moses the name by which he is to be called for ever. Therefore, the significance of the Name suggested is not an explanation which satisfies the modern philologists though eminently satisfying to the religious sense - the God who is in relation or He who is. To support our contention, it is evident that if this occasion were the true origin of the Name Yahweh, it would have had an intelligible meaning in Hebrew, the remembrance of which would have been preserved by the Israelites. In the light of this, one is inclined to conjecture that it is a much older name whose meaning the Israelites had already forgotten or did not even know, and to which they attempted later to give a meaning conformable to their own religious conceptions or experience.

Even the way the name is theologised immediately puts the narrative in a much later sociological context i.e. the period of the Exile, when the message of the statement would be both particularly relevant and also consonant with the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah. (56)

At this time the Ark which for some time had symbolised the enthroned Yahweh in the 'Sabath designation' was no more, while the anthropomorphic characteristics /

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characteristics which the Kabod theological designation of Yahweh connoted were on their way to oblivion. The destruction of the Temple had fueled or provoked this transformation of the notion about Yahweh. It was probably at this time of Exile that the Name theology was devised or developed by DTR, which is being explained in our text, as a means of resolving the cognitive dissonance which arose when the established tenets of the Zion-Sabaoth theology were confronted with the harsh reality of Exile. This is the time Yahweh became relocated to the heavens above and only present here on earth amongst His people in His Name - a point Mettinger has well explained. (57)

This and the fact that nowhere in the scriptures is any appeal made to the 'Name' shows that it is a definition by the author of what the name Yahweh signifies rather than its revelation. And this is because in the original tradition of the Mal' ak theophany he used, there is no provision for the revelation of the Name.

From this it can be seen that the author's concern was how to use the received pre-literary tradition in a way to answer the questions of his time. This made him adjust the tradition while at the same time endeavouring to make it seem reasonable in the context of the period he is dealing with. By so doing he constructs a tradition about the past as means of articulating his own theological perspective. This then brings us to the issue of the probable sociological situation that produced our Text.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL SITUATION THAT PRODUCED IT

As Rast has said, among the forces and influences behind the formation of /

of the Old Testament is the community or group responsible for the shaping and transmission of a particular Tradition. (58) Such group or Circle would normally produce such tradition in response to particular needs, hymns for worship, law for legal purposes or processes etc. This means that the production of tradition, can to a large measure, be influenced by the sociological, political or cultic factors operative at the time.

And from the Tradito-historical study of our Text, we have asserted that our Text is a prophetic call narrative for which the circle interested in the prophets would have been responsible and whose central concern is to discuss the problem of prophetic legitimation and the related issue of Yahweh's ability to save his people who are suffering oppression. From these two main issues dealt with and the historical milieu the narrative is meant to address, we have a pointer to a similar period when such issues were at stake in Israel and for which our narrative would have originally been given a Literary shape.

This would have been during the Babylonian Exile when the political and social condition of the deportees created an identity crisis both for Israel and Yahweh her God, as a result of which, new traditional bases were sought to explicate the situation. It is a point not worth emphasising that the destruction of Jerusalem and her Temple, (59) with the consequent deportation of the people to Babylon or Egypt, raised doubt about the potency of Yahweh even amongst his faithful worshippers. While in Exile, some of the deportees even held the belief that it was the prophets who led them astray, especially as they reflected on the religious events in Jerusalem which preceded the Babylonian invasion and destruction of Judah. Before the invasion and during the national political /

political and economic boom, it is a well known fact that Yahwism was a syncretistic religion. But then came the Josianic revolution which wiped out the worship of other deities venerated along with Yahweh whom the people believed contributed to their security and prosperity. And as the revolution was followed by the Babylonian defeat - including the theological crisis created by the death of the just King Josiah at Megiddo 608 B.C. - the popular religionists came to the conclusion that it was because they left off worshipping the old gods that they were now in Exile; while the Yahwist who had supported the revolution say, Yahweh's decision on the fate of Jerusalem had already been irrevocably made and could not have been changed by the Josianic revolution, (cf. Jer.44:15-19; 15:4; II Kings 23²⁶) Therefore in Exile, the question arose, which God should be worshipped? Is it the God whose revolution led to the deportation, or the gods whom the people left off worshipping and came to Exile? OR should it be the god of the captors since it appears that the victors and their god had defeated Israel and her God Yahweh? (60) As such questions raged, some might have even sought consolation by going back to the God of the Fathers as a better substitute for Yahweh. In the midst of all these, the Yahweh alone party would have had enough problems on their hands! Any prophet coming to the people with a message then would have to explain what the Deity of whom he is an advocate can do in the ugly situation facing the Exiles - what is his name which stipulates what He can do; So the question about Name and its explanation would have been what the prophets were facing in Babylon. To support this we see that what Moses is made to say is not (𐤀𐤕𐤍 = IF) I come to the people...., but 𐤇𐤏𐤏 = behold I come to the people and they ask what is your Name (by which they want to know what you can do for them). And in Exodus 4:30-31 the people in Egypt never asked for the name but believed the message brought by Moses. And in order to convince the 'faithful'/'

'faithful' ones who in place of Yahweh were now reverting to the worship of the Ancestral gods, the question of proving that there is no difference between the two became a necessary one. It is Yahweh who appeared to the Patriarchs and Moses, the only difference is that he operated under different titles or names, the Yahweh alone party seems to say, (cf. Ex. 3:6,15;6:2). This led to the reformulation of the confessional title, "I am Yahweh the Elohim of Your Father(s) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". (61) And then the point is made that he is 'Ehyeh' = 'The one who is with his people'.

Along with this was the problem of prophetic legitimation. The conflict which began in Jerusalem between true and false prophets did not abate with the destruction and deportation. The view that it was the prophets who brought about the evil of the Babylonian defeat was there, (cf. Jer. 23:15 with the struggle of which Prophet's word should come true Jer. 44:28). Without doubt, in Israel's early history, the test for being a true prophet seems to have been linked to prophesying in the Name of Yahweh. But later true and false prophets claimed the name of Yahweh, (Jer. 29:8-9). How then was the true prophet to be known? Then with the story of Moses' Call, the circle responsible seems to say, the true prophet of "Yahweh the Elohim of the Father(s)", is one who is pressed into service like Moses and not one of the professionals. He has got to be unwilling though he will finally obey. And here it seems this feature belongs to this 'group of Yahwists', (cf. Jeremiah's unwillingness and his later bitter statements, or Amos reiterating how he was conscripted, Jer.20:7ff; Amos 7:10ff). Thus the credentials of the true prophet that are being implicitly supplied are: (i) coming to the people in the name of Yahweh /

Yahweh who is also the God of the Patriarchs, and (ii) belonging to the non-professional groups which means being sought out by Yahweh himself rather than vice versa - the Mosaic pattern.

Apart from these theological motives, even the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt within the Babylonian Exile context might have served an important purpose of inspiring those who wished to look on it as a prototype, a mould in which other stories of rescue from ruin may be cast, be it secular or spiritual. One is even made to see the very close parallel between the Egyptian situation and the Babylonian. In Exodus 2:23 we are told the evil king died and was succeeded by another whose reign brought not the anticipated relief. Change of Monarch did Israel in Egypt no favour, which one would normally have expected to spell the release for the slaves wasting away in anguish. Their hopes and aspirations for change on the death of the king failed to materialise, it was even then they cried the more. (62) And of course it was then God heard their cry, knew their condition and brought salvation.

This, one may say, looks like the change of Monarch in Babylon from the King of the invasion and deportation, Nebuchadnezzar II, to Amel-Marduk whose accession brought the Babylonian Exiles no good (Nebuchadnezzar II 605 - 562 B.C., and Amel-Marduk 562-560 B.C.). At this time in history, the narrative of the Exodus would have been used as part of the effort to restore hope to the people in their God Yahweh who always is known in his presence with his people • This would therefore point to a situation of desperation or oppression as the *Sitz im Leben* of our narrative. And a reflection on the use of the passage, whether in later Judaism, Liberation Theology or institutions which use the 'Burning/

'Burning Bush' emblem would justify this.

Thus with the Call of Moses narrative, prophets are legitimised in their office, current questions about Yahweh and his powers are answered and hope about going back to the promised Land of Canaan where Israelites can once again worship their God on the Holy Mountain Zion raised (You shall serve God upon this mountain Ex.3:12 cf. Psalm 42:2ff ?) (63) So the author of our Text was using tradition about the past to theologise on the questions of his time during the Babylonian Exile.

CONCLUSION

From what we have said so far, it becomes clear that what we have in the Call account of Moses is no biographical account because it has been heavily informed theologically. But neither is it a complete literary invention because it made use of what the people believed about their past. Thus what we have is a theological treatise of the people's belief about their God. And the context in which the Call is put may point to how prophets claimed calls in the past - at the time of crisis when the prophet brings God's word as solution or directive to social and spiritual problems. Thus Prophetic Calls were meant to theologise on the Community's situation of desperation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

- (1) See Gunkel Hermann, Genesis: Übersetzt und erklärt Gottingen; Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht 3rd Edition 1917 reprinted 1964;
And Gunkel Hermann and Begrich Joachim, Einleitung in die Psalmen, Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels 1933 reprinted Edition 1966. Also see Hermann Gunkel 'Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History', in What Remains of the Old Testament ET New York Macmillan 1928 .
- (2) It is to be noted that most Form Critics including Gunkel use 'Sitz im Leben' to cover two things: (i) The situation in life which produced a literary type, and (ii) the subsequent occasions that used it. What both have in common is that the situation in (ii) is usually identical with (i) which is what makes possible the recall and use of the literary type.
- (3) See his work, Estudios de Poetica Hebraea (1963) cf W. F. Albright's work in the same field of Old Testament Stylistics or Aesthetic Criticism in, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan 1968, and also the work of his two students F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman in their Doctoral Dissertation on Studies in Yahwistic Poetry 1950. We may also refer to A. Rofe's criticism on the inapplicability of the Method on the Prophetic Stories which to some extent appears sound and justifiable, see his article JBL 89 (1970) especially pp 429 ff. Also cf. James Muilenburg who suggests supplementing the Method with Rhetorical Criticism Principles in his "Form Criticism and Beyond" JBL 88 (1969) pp 1-18.
- (4) See his work, "Wege der neuen Dichtungswissenschaft in ihrer Anwendung auf die Psalmenforschung" Biblica 42 (1961) pp 255-302
- (5) /

- (5) H. G. Reventlow, "Der Psalm 8" Poetica; Zeitschrift für Sprach - und Literatur - Wissenschaft I (1967) pp 304-332.
- (6) Klaus Koch even thinks that Form Criticism has so influenced all other methods that they are now made to appear as its branches. See his work, 'The Growth of Biblical Tradition' N.Y. 1969 p.77
- (7) Martin Noth Exodus: Commentary Philadelphia 1962 pp 32-33.
- (8) Ibid p.30. There he holds that originally Ex. 2:23 was literally joined to 4:19.
- (9) J. van Seters, 'Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period' VT 22 (1972) p 456.
- (10) F. V. Winnett. The Mosaic Tradition, Toronto 1949 pp.19ff, also Sigmund Mowinckel "The Name of the God of Moses" HUCA 32 (1961) p.121ff.
- (11) For instance Driver would prefer Ex. 5:1 while Noth Ex. 4:23. For a discussion and refutation of their points, see B. S. Childs Exodus: A Commentary, London 1974 pp 51 ff.
- (12) cf Childs Exodus p.51.
- (13) This could be regarded as the public use made of the projected private Call experience.
- (14) I am using 'setting' here for the projected historical situation in which the call occurred in contradistinction to setting as referring to the historical situation which produced and used our literary piece or narrative otherwise called the Sitz im Leben.
- (15) /

(15) See J. Begrich Das Priesterliche Heilsorakel, ZAW Ns 11 (1934) pp 81-92 which is the same as his Ges Studien ThB 21 (1964) pp 217-231: See also his work, "Studien Zu Deuterocesaja" BZAW 77 (1938) pp 6-19, and his combined work with Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen pp 117-139. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship vols. I & II Oxford Blackwell 1962. Also Walter E Rast, Tradition History and the Old Testament, Fortress Press 1972 pp 62 ff.

(16) Such oracles are not contained in the Psalms, cf. for instance Psalm 6:1-7 & 8 ff. In most if not all of the Psalms, what we have is the supplication followed by jubilation with or without the Heilsorakel expressly given. A. A. Anderson says, "Another plausible proposal is to assume that the transition is due to a priestly oracle which promised the deliverance of the afflicted person", e.g. Psalm 22:21; Psalms Vol. I Oliphants 1972 p.38.

(17) G. W. Coats in JBL 92 (1973) p. 8 sees these two elements as reflecting the structure and function of transition.

(18) 'I have come down' used in reference to Yahweh, should be seen as a cultic language and of cultic origin rather than a mark of characterisation of Literary Source documents as Noth has used it in his Exodus Commentary. Although such coming down could be to bless or avenge his people or perform judgment on the erring ones.

(19) Gerhard von Rad has noted in his Problem of the Hexateuch, that Deut. 26:5-9 has in its later half the marks of the DTR, but he however fails to give us by way of reconstruction what the original was. For a discussion of this Text within the framework of the DTR's School, see Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School, Oxford Clarendon Press 1972 pp 33ff.

(20) /

- (20) Here scholars like U. Cassuto and Rendtorff (BZAW 147 (1977) especially p. 148) who discredit the use of Literary Critical approach are exceptions. So also Jacob and Lacocque who have defended the view that the interchange of Divine Names is a purposeful device of one author, See Childs Exodus p.53. Ivan Engnell who holds that P. constitutes the framework of Genesis to Numbers believes the DTR merely supplemented his work with older traditions principally in oral form in the process of editing. But the older Traditions in oral form he does not disentangle.
- (21) cf Bacon, The Triple Tradition of the Exodus 1894; Baentsh Exodus, in Nowack's Handkommētar Series 1903, Meyer, Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme 1906, Gressmann Mose und seine Zeit 1913, Noth Exodus 1962 etc.
- (22) Hyatt and Noth recognise 3:1^{ab}, 2-4^a, 5, 7-8, 16-18; 4:1-12 as J. and 3:1^c, 4^b, 6, 9-15, 19-22; 4:13-18 as E. But F. V. Winnett would assign it thus J = 3:2-4^a, 5, 7, 8^a, 16-18; 4:1-12 and E. = 3:1, 4^b, 6, 9-14, 21ff; 4:17; RJe 3:15, 19ff; 4:13-16 and 3:8^b and 3:17^b as later expansion.
- (23) See even Julian Morgenstern who thinks that Ex. 3:5 should be unhesitatingly assigned to E. "The Elohist's Narrative of Ex. 3:1-15" AJSL 37 (1920/21) p. 247.
- (24) Childs Exodus p. 51ff.
- (25) See AJSL 37 (1920-21) p. 251.
- (26) cf. O. Eissfeldt Die Komposition von Exodus 1-12 1963 pp. 162ff.
- (27) /

- (27) W. Richter is a well known representative of this group, see his work, Die sogenannten Vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte, Gottingen 1970 pp. 59ff.
- (28) See his article, 'The Terms Amorite and Hittite in the Old Testament' VT 22 (1972) pp 64 ff.
- (29) See ZAW 91 (1979) p.441.
- (30) Here compare the remark of M. Noth in History of the Pentateuchal Tradition, p. 28 ^{note} 85, that source analysis successful elsewhere can not apply here due to the extraordinary nature of the elements making up the chapter.
- (31) For a detailed discussion on the three levels of the use of 'Fathers', see J. Van Seters 'Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period', VT 22 (1972) pp 448-459.
- (32) On this see the work of W. Zimmerli, 'Ich bin Jahwe', Gottes Offenbarung, Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament (München 1963) pp 11-40.
- (33) Hyatt writing in 1967 when the source documents J.E. were still highly esteemed in the analysis of our Text says on Ex. 3:14^a, "IF Schild's rendering is correct, it seems to me most likely that Ex. 3:14^a is not an original part of the E.Text, but an addition which was made in the 7th or 6th Century B.C. the era of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Second-Isaiah; when the problem of Monotheism was being debated in a sophisticated manner". JBL 86 (1967) p 375.
- (34) This does not however rule out of the picture the contribution of later like-minded theologians in the expansion of the Text - the post DTR circle.
- (35) /

- (35) See J. van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, London 1975 pp 215ff. and T.L. Thompson, *The History of the Patriarchal Narratives* 1974.
- (36) Werner H. Schmidt is strongly of this view. See his article, 'A Theologian of the Solomonic Era?' in *The Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and other Essays*, edited by Tomoo Ishida Tokyo 1982 pp 55-74.
- (37) Such turning into written form of an oral tradition could be, among many other reasons, for purposes of future testimony, didactic purposes, or to further the aims and aspirations of a particular circle in the community, or to prevent the challenge or mutability of the views thus given Literary fixity, (cf. Dt.4:2, 12:32, Jer. 32, Rev. 22:18).
- (38) See *Rebellion in the Wilderness - Murmuring Motif*, Nashville Abingdon Press 1968.
- (39) See his work, *Überlieferungsgeschichte. iche Studien Tübingen* 1943 ET. *Tradition History of the Pentateuch* 1948 Scholars Press Ed. 1981.
- (40) See his work, *Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament* ET. London 1970.
- (41) cf His statement on p. 9 *ibid*, "Although it is clear that Oral Tradition implies certain living transformation of the inherited traditional material, still in all essentials, the tradition remains fixed and reliable especially because of the unique position of the Old Testament as cultic-religious Literature".
- (42) The force of this question is heightened by the insistence on tradition as genuine evidence for a serious historical reconstruction which/

(42) contd...

which ignores the probability of its having been adapted.

(43) See Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament E.T.

Nashville 1969 p.11.

(44) See Comments of R. E. Clements, 'Pentateuchal Problems in

Tradition and Interpretation' ed. by G. W. Anderson Oxford

1979 pp 96ff.

(45) On this there appears an apparent conflict between von Rad and

Noth, because Noth holds that the essentials of the Sinai

Tradition are already contained in the Grundlage which constituted

the foundation of J. & E. and accounts for the similarity between

them in their narratives. But even in this, Noth fails to satisfy

his readers, because he does not tell us whether the 'Grundlage'

was in its oral or written form - a serious weakness in the theory.

(46) Amongst the many rebuttals of, 'His Credo' theory apart from the

amphictyony on which it is based which has been equally destroyed

are: Norman Gottwald, Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion

of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 B.C.E. SCM 1979 p.723, see FN 72:

J.P. Hyatt, Credo and Independent Sinai Tradition, in Translating and

Understanding the Old Testament, in Honour of H.G. May N.Y.1970;

A Weiser The Old Testament: Its formation and development pp.83-90;

Brekelmans C.H.W. 'Het "Historische Credo" van Israel', Tydschrift

voor Theologie, 111 (1963) pp 1-11; G. Fohrer in Sellin-Fohrer

Introduction to the Old Testament pp 118 ff; L. Rost, Das Kleine

Credo und Andere Studien in Zum Alten Testament pp 11-25; and J.P.

Hyatt again, "Were there an Ancient Historical Credo in Israel and

an Independent Sinai Tradition?" in Translating and Understanding

the Old Testament ed. by H.T. Frank and W.L. Reed 1970 pp.152- 70,

(46) contd...

James Barr, Review of the so called 'Credo Theology', Expository Times 73 (1962) pp 142-146; C.H.J. de Geus, The Tribes of Israel, Van Gorcum, Assen Netherlands 1976 and A.D.H. Mayes Israel in the Period of the Judges London 1974.

(47) C.H.W. Brekelmans, 'Het "historische Credo" van Israel' 1963.

(48) Here compare Pedersen who holds that Ex. 1-15 originally circulated as a cult legend of the Passover which was developed over a long period of time before it finally reached its present written form after the Exile, 'Israel' vols. III-IV pp 384-415 and 726-737. In this he is supported by Engnell who holds that at the centre of this legend stands Moses who is described throughout in 'Royal Categories'.

Whether Moses is described in Royal Categories or not, or whether Ex. 1-15 should be regarded as a Passover legend is not our concern. We only want to recognise the point made by both these scholars that Oral tradition about the rise of Moses to National fame might in all probability have circulated along with the story of Israel's release from Egypt.

(49) Mose und Seine Zeit 1913 pp14ff.

(50) Here see A. R. Johnson, who with copious references has demonstrated how the Mal' ak could be one with Yahweh and also a representative of his $\gamma\eta\gamma\alpha$, see The One and the Many in Israelite Conception of God, Cardiff 1961 2nd Ed. pp.6ff,16ff and 21.

(51) /

- (51) See W Baumgartner (Schweiz Theol. Umschau 14 (1944)) p.98 who has drawn special attention to the fact that this underlying verb 'L'--k' is found only in Arabic, Ethiopic and Ugaritic.
- (52) cf Irvin Dorothy, Mytharion p.90ff.
- (53) Although the true picture of the emergence can not be mapped out with any degree of certainty, yet it could be conjectured that the doctrine arose as a result of either: (i) the re-emergence of previously suppressed illegitimate gods or demons, or (ii) out of the conscious effort at transcendentalising Yahweh with the consequent need for mediatorial figures. Whichever may have been responsible, it is evident that at the time of Ezekiel and Zechariah, the belief was already beginning to gain ground. While by the time of Daniel, Angels have already assumed names and become guardians of Nations.
- (54) cf Deut. 4:12,15 correcting Ex. 24:10; and Ex. 33:20 says Yahweh could not be seen even by Moses. cf Ex. 33:11 which says he speaks with Yahweh face to face. Here received tradition which the people know very well is being subjected to theological scrutiny and subtle amendment, correction or contradiction for ideological reasons.
- (55) This author is of the same mind with the writer of Judges 6:7-8 who holds the notion that when the people are in bondage or are being oppressed, it is a 'prophet' that Yahweh sends to deliver them, and not just a 'Judge'!
- (56) This of course corroborates J.P. Hyatt's dating of Ex. 3:14^a in the 7th or 6th Century B.C. with V.14:6 a little later. For comparison with Deutero-Isaiah, see such passages as Is.40:25;41:4;42:5;43:11; 44:6 etc., and the use of the Exodus motif as a symbol for the restoration/

(56) contd...

restoration of Israel to the Land of Canaan.

Hyatt, 'Was Yahweh Originally a Creator Deity?' JBL 86 (1967)pp 375ff.

(57) For full details see The Dethronement of Sabaoth, pp. 80,107-110,
117-129.

(58) See his work, Tradition History and the Old Testament, Fortress
Press, 1972 pp. 59 ff. See also Hermann Gunkel, Fundamental
Problems of Hebrew Literary History, ET.1928 p.61.

(59) I think here one should actually talk of desecration and partial
destruction since from all indications, it appears that those left
behind in Jerusalem continued to worship there while in Neh.3:6
we only hear of repairs of the walls and gates carried out which
would not have been the case were it complete destruction.
But however, to the faithful Jews, the ruined Temple was seen as
mockery of Yahweh and the people were asking for how long would it
remain so, Psalm 74:9-10 cf. also Psalm 137.

(60) The ability of Yahweh to save began to be questioned Zeph.1:12.
His justice was doubted on the grounds of punishing the children on
account of their Fathers' sins, Jer. 31:29;Ez.18:2, while the more
radicals even denied Him completely, Lamentation 3:34-38. And of
course others merely regarded Him as a supplementary Deity, Ez.14:1-11;
13:18. It was a period of theological crisis for the Deity!

(61) This vital point is the one J. van Seters fails to touch on in his
very brilliant and illuminating thesis on the God of the Fathers.
'Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period', VT 22(1972)pp448-459.

(62) /

(62) It would be disheartening in the life of a slave if his existence brightened by the occasional hope that the tyrant at least had to die eventually i.e. there would some day be an end to it all, is suddenly dashed to the rock by the startling realisation that someone else was there to carry on the oppression for him.

(63) That our Text would have been so used at this time and in subsequent periods of oppression and struggle for survival is evidenced in the way it is made the central Text pillar in 20th Century Liberation Theology. That the narrative has a powerful appeal to all peoples in similar sitz im leben like that of Israel in Egypt requires no emphasis. Probably this is why the Text became again very popular during the later struggle for survival of Judaism when the Rabbinic Literature made much of it as they theologised on the people's plight.

Here cf G.D. Henderson's statement which reports what Dean Stanley in 1872 wrote, "The badge of the Church of Scotland, a bush burning but not consumed, was as true a type of Scotland's inexpugnable defence of her Ancient Liberties, as it was of the Jewish people in their emergence from Egyptian bondage. And so the early history of the Presbyterian Church had been one long struggle of dogged resistance to Superior power". The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History Edinburgh 1957 p.1.

THE PROPHETIC CALL NARRATIVE AS MODEL IN EXODUS 3 & 4

THE BURNING BUSH AND PROPHETIC CALL NARRATIVE

In the previous Chapter, it was established among other things that; (a) our Text in all probability was given its Literary form during the Exilic period by a circle interested in the prophets and who could be said to know all that can be known about the Prophets, and (b) that the Genre of our Text is that of a Call Narrative.

In the light of these findings, the question that inevitably arises is, what then is the relationship between the call of Moses and the Call Narratives of the Canonical Prophets. The answer to this question is the burden of this Chapter.

Gaeme Auld writing recently has said, "Elements of Exodus 3 and 4 are very like narratives of prophetic call. Chapter 4, and also the report of the act of Exodus itself in Chapter 14, both culminate in reports of the people's belief in Moses and his God". (1)

His point is corroborated by facts from a juxtaposition and careful examination of the Mosaic Call account, as we have it in Exodus 3 and 4, with the Prophetic Call Narratives like that of Jeremiah 1:1-10; Isaiah 6:1-13 or Ezekiel 1-3 which reveal such close similarities that one wonders which forms the framework of the other. The Literary dependence of one upon the other appears so glaring that it seems obvious to conjecture that, since Moses is a more debatable historical figure (2) than the individual Canonical Prophets - about whom also, it is now becoming increasingly clear that we know very little (3) - the Mosaic /

Mosaic Call account should be regarded as a literary projection of the Classical Prophetic Call paradigm. Such a conclusion will be far from doing justice to the Call Narratives because it is prone to ignore the startling distinctive features which together make up for the uniqueness or particularity of each Call account. So though the striking parallels that surface from a comparison of the Call accounts may confirm a stereotyped structure, but it may be difficult to deny the Prophetic Personage the origin of some of the elements of the Call Narrative. This does not, however, imply granting the concession, which would be naive, that in the present form of the Call Narratives we have an autobiographical account (4) of the prophets. I believe the elements which appear to point to the involvement of a psychic struggle of the one called with the Deity may not be enough to justify this. Even in the present form of the Call Narratives, how the Prophet prepared for the Call, (whether by meditation or other means) or the state of mind in which he was at the time of the Call are all denied to the present readers.

One point which seems fairly clear about some of them is that they are individuals who have been called to abandon some popularly accepted religious ethos and their hitherto socio-economic securities for a life or vocation which may lead to hardship and uncertainties, (Micah 3:11 ff; Ex.3:2; Amos 7:14). Such a call which involves a change of occupation and a new religious orientation at times earned for the one called such a degree of dependence on the Deity which at times may mean solitariness (Jer 15:17).

The process by which a Prophet is called, commissioned and given special knowledge of God and his responsibility presupposes he is at the /

the time in a complete isolation before God. This means that the writing down of what he experienced is without doubt secondary to what he actually experienced. And from what follows the Call accounts in the individual Prophetic Books, it has become increasingly difficult to know what degree of credibility to ascribe to the Prophets' claim to have experienced God in a direct encounter, and the evident fact that the Prophets' words are often found much related to themes and motifs already current in the religion. (5) The problem here is how much of the content of the Prophetic Books should be credited to the Prophets themselves and how much to their support group, disciples or redactors to whom we owe the collections. IF the Literary form of the Call account is secondary to the actual experience itself, and therefore has its own intention or purpose, is it likely that the redactors or writer(s) did not reshape the Call account as they have done to the content of the Books to reflect a justification of their own ideologies. Such editorial intention may be responsible for the striking parallels in the Call Narratives especially of Exodus 3 and 4 with Judges 6, Jeremiah 1, Isaiah 6 etc.

Thus it becomes pertinent to ask what is the conceptual relationship between the figure Moses of Exodus 3 and 4 and the Canonical Prophets whose Call accounts have been made to look similar. IS it possible to deduce any purpose or intention from the Literary ingenuity of the writers? To answer these questions we would now want to look at what understanding the various Pentateuchal Traditions have about the figure Moses. Here for purposes of convenience and in the absence of a substitute yet, our analysis will use the source documentary hypothesis, although /

although as principles of investigation they are now being seriously questioned. (6)

THE TRADITIONS ABOUT THE FIGURE MOSES AND HIS OFFICE

From the Biblical picture of 'the man Moses' and his office presented in the Pentateuch, it seems that it is a general consensus of the sources - J.E. and D (7) in the various passages traditionally allotted them - that Moses was a great figure in the early history of Israel i.e. from the Exodus to the wanderings in the wilderness. He is presented as the one through whom God's acts of salvation were mediated to Israel, although in this presentation, they at times disagree as to the details of how Moses carried out his functions. As the direct recipient of the words and acts of Yahweh, he is often found representing the people before Yahweh (Ex. 19:3; 24:2 etc.).

This overview picture of Moses by J.E.D., has however been questioned by Noth, who regards it as the ultimate product of a process of harmonizing, balancing and smoothing out of various traditions which grew up at different cult centres to which Moses seems scarcely at home with any in its inception. According to him, "Even if it is only approximately correct that the narrative in the Pentateuch grew together over a period out of a series of originally independent themes, each of which as a rule had its roots in a particular cultic activity then from the very start, we have no right to assume that one and the same figure should have had from the beginning a place in the majority of them" (8) Although one may not doubt the fact that the story of the figure Moses had had its development and expansions over the years, but it may not be out of place to assume that one and the same figure had a place from the beginning in the majority of the narratives.

This/

This is because if the people of the various cult centres of Noth's imagination constituted a people to whom the Exodus event was a pillar of faith, and we have only one account so far of this event, to which Moses has become almost indissolubly tied, then it may be possible to assume that other figures we have with him in the exercise were later additions from the National record of 'revered figures'. This I think is more plausible than Noth's inclusive theory of 'displacement' which fails to tell us how and why the Mosaic figure should come to dislodge other figures who were already well rooted in the traditions at the various cult centres.

Whichever viewpoint is espoused however it is evident from the accounts that the Pentateuchal Moses is presented as a Prophet of Yahweh, and as a standard whose pattern other worthy prophets in the future are to follow. In his prophetic office, he is described as ranking higher than any other prophet by comparison, because Yahweh communicates with him mouth to mouth and face to face, whereas with others it is in dreams and visions, (cf Num. 12:6). We even have it in Num. 11:25 that when a portion (9) of his spirit is taken and shared among 70 elders, it throws them out of their normal state of mind into a state of ecstasy. While Hosea in recapitulating in outline the history of Israel calls Moses Prophet, the one through whom God brought Israel out of Egypt, (Hosea 12:13). This figure Moses to whom different types of prophecy could be traced seems to be more at home in some of the Traditions than the others.

For instance according to J. tradition, Moses in all the events from the Exodus to the end of the wilderness wandering, is of no spectacular theological importance. The central figure is Yahweh and he has all the glory while the image of the man Moses is played down in the background./

background. Thus according to this Tradition Yahweh himself effects the miracles and they happened without any human aid, not even that of Moses, (Ex. 7:17,25; 9:6; 8:9; 14:21;10:13; Numb. 11:18,31). So to J. Moses was nothing more than a messenger whose commission was primarily to inform Israel in Egypt about what Yahweh was about to accomplish by Himself. Moses was called and appointed by Yahweh not to be Israel's leader, but Yahweh's messenger like any of the latter Prophets. In view of this stance, he is presented by this tradition as delivering Yahweh's message to Pharaoh in a truly prophetic terminology, "Thus says the Lord", (Ex.8:1; 9:13; 7:17). As herald of Yahweh's forthcoming events in history, the few miracles ascribed to Moses only serve to authenticate his status of messengership as seen in the prophetic office (Ex.4:1-9). So to J. Moses was no worker of miracles nor founder of a new religion and not even a military leader but a simple inspired shepherd whom Yahweh used to declare his purpose to Israel.

This simple picture of J. about the messenger of Yahweh and his office, when compared with E's portrait of Moses reveals some more developed theological overtones. To E. Moses was not merely a messenger but was something more, a miracle worker and an active divine representative who could or should be feared and respected like Elijah or Elisha whose rod could be carried to heal at a distance from the prophet (II Kings 4:29). As an active agent of Yahweh, his miracles serve as his credentials of authority in the eyes of the people (Ex.10:13 cf Ex.10:12,13^a,14^a). According to this tradition Moses is a מֹשֶׁה and the sister Miriam מִרְיָם (Deut. 34:10; Ex.15:20). As prophet he /

he excels all other Prophets because his charisma is so tremendous that a mere portion of it, when further distributed among 70 elders throws the recipients out of their normal psychic state and stimulates them to ecstasy (Num. 11:25;12:7).

Apart from the problem of the negative context in which Numbers 11 is presented and the Literary problems and accretions of the story in Numbers 12, (10) it seems that the emphasis here in the stories is to display similarities and differences between the Prophet Moses and the general Prophets, and between Moses and those Prophets who had a message to deliver (Num. 12:6 there is a message to deliver, while in 11:29 there is none and in some sense Num. 12:6 could even be a corrective of Numb. 11:29). Unlike Moses the Archetype of the true Prophet, the illumination of the Prophets in Numb. 12:6 is indirect and comes in dreams and enigmatic utterances which presupposes a gap between Yahweh and the mouthpiece. In the case of Moses, his knowledge originates in face to face converse with God and immediate vision. (11) Even in the process of the execution of his office, he could be vouchsafed a glimpse of the 'Form of Yahweh', (Ex. 33:18-23; Numb. 12:8). (12) The Elohist Tradition from all indications appears to have a more developed and complex picture of Moses, and points to a very long cultic tradition about the figure. Probably this is why unlike J., who presents him as Yahweh's mouthpiece who announces Yahweh's oncoming event and then with the people waits and watches it happen, Moses is designated as not only very active in instructions and miracles, but also in intercessions (13) and on occasions in Priestly functions (Ex. 18:19; 32:11-13; Numb. 12:11 and Ex. 24:6). This complex combination of functions reflects a long use of this tradition designated E. and a theological advance on J's tradition.

But /

But according to the Deuteronomist, Moses appears to form a dividing line in Israelite religious history marked by his episodic sermon or instruction on the day of his death. The Mosaic Ministry recapitulates every aspect of prophecy including denunciation, intercession and prediction of the future. Because Moses is the prophet par excellence of the Deuteronomist's dream, and also because his Mosaic prophetic portrait has drawn heavily from the historical experiences of prophecy, what we often find in this tradition looks like the Deuteronomist's understanding of prophecy rather than the description of the person and Ministry of Moses. As a tradition, it appears to have the most rounded picture to which is given the theological authority of Moses. To it, Moses is not only the chief of the Prophets, but the very Archetype and norm of all prophets, through whose coming, the Lord guarantees the constant connection between himself and his people. Such prophet(s) like Moses whom Yahweh would raise up for his people are the ones who should be obeyed and listened to by the people, (Deut. 18:15-22). The importance this tradition attaches to the Mosaic Prophetic office is probably responsible for discussing it within the context of other Israelite office holders. (14) Apart from the fact that the passage makes its misinterpretation easy, I think what it should be seen to say is that in place of the banned intermediaries through whom the Israelites could consult the divine world, God will raise up, periodically when he feels Israel needs them, a prophet like Moses whose Ministry will reflect that of Moses. (15) This is because from the Deuteronomist's point of view, the importance of Moses lies not in his role as leader, or in his magical displays, but in passing on to Israel the/

the form of a proclaimed word or oracle of Yahweh which had been addressed to him by Yahweh himself. Moses is therefore a medium through whom Yahweh speaks to Israel. This Mosaic Prophetic role of intermediation is said to derive from an incident in which Israel gave Moses warrant to represent them before God because they were afraid to draw near Him and listen to His words, (Deut. 5:25-29; Ex. 20:18-20; 34:29-35).

Thus this tradition which without doubt is later than J. and E. develops the earlier J.E. picture (- that is the view presented in those Pentateuchal passages traditionally assigned to J.E. and which for want of a better nomenclature are still so treated -) of Moses from the simple messenger and Prophet/Leader to a suffering intermediary and intercessor. The reader is made to see a Moses who constantly shuttles between God's presence and the assembly of Israel and is prepared to suffer, to assuage Yahweh's wrath against His people, (Deut. 9:18,25; Psalm 106:23). Because this role of intermediation or intercession is associated with the prophetic office from the point of view of the Biblical writers - most probably a Deuteronomistic influence, other great Biblical prophets are found exhibiting similar traits (cf. I Sam 12:19,23;15:11; Jer. 8:18-22;7:16;13:17; 42:2; Amos 7:1-6; and II Kings 19:2ff). These later prophets are thus presented as taking after the great figure Moses. And from the Deuteronomist's perspective Moses therefore becomes the model and the ideal prophet whose example any other true prophet has to follow. In thus developing the Mosaic portrait, the Pentateuchal traditions, especially D., inform us not so much about Moses as about the best expectations for the Prophet in both Pre and Exilic periods.

Thus/

Thus the Mosaic Call account with its commissioning, the divine promise, "I will be with your mouth" (Ex. 4:12) and Moses' reluctance first and later obedience, all appear made to agree with the ideas about Prophetic Call current during the narrator's own time. Because of this the impression one is given by the Biblical narratives is that of a Moses already prophetically interpreted. The Moses of the traditionist's imagination as head of the prophetic list has eclipsed the historical Moses - if any - off the Stage!

Thus if the 'Traditions', especially D., see Moses as a prophet and as executing a prophetic office, we should less wonder why his call to the office has certain similarities with the call of the Canonical Prophets. Having said this, we may now investigate further the two 'Elements' of Call Narrative we argued in Chapter 2 the author has used in constructing the Mosaic call account.

TYPES OF CALL NARRATIVE

Norman Habel, following other scholars, (16) has worked on and developed a Literary pattern into which he shows the Mosaic and Gideonic Call Narratives and those of the Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micaiah ben Imlah could fit. In his thesis, he outlined six basic divisions (17) under which he analysed the various prophetic call pericopes. But a close examination shows that the different Call Narratives can not be so simply subsumed under his six basic divisions without disastrous consequences. This is especially so in his 'division four', where he had to strain the Prophetic Call Narrative (e.g. Isaiah's) to fit into it. Instead of Habel's working-divisions, it appears that the one/

one suggested by Robert Carroll is less rigid and broad enough to take care of all the various distinctive elements in the call narratives. (18)

The fault of Habel's analysis is that in pursuit of a possible Literary pattern, he almost ignored those important elements of the different call narratives which make them uniquely particular. Any analysis of the call narratives therefore has to take care of these unique features as well as the common elements which make for a probable Literary pattern. Before discussing what is held in common by all the various call narratives, it seems that in the Call traditions we have two broad underlying types. These two types I would like to call, "The Making of a Leader or Hero", and "The Making of a Prophet".

As we are now about to show, it seems that in the call narratives of Moses, Gideon and Samuel (19) unlike those of the 'Classical Prophets', the constitutive elements belong to what we may call the tradition of the making of the hero. The core of these narratives appears differently based from those of the Prophets although they are all now similar as a result of the reworking or developments of the traditions about these special great men.

In the Call of Moses, Gideon and Samuel what we have as the underlying framework is the story of the National hero, his life i.e. background, and how God raised him to a position of renown or repute.

Thus as a preamble to the story of the hero, his early life history is given, to show his little or rather insignificant beginnings with emphasis on the depressing situation of the time which prepares ground for the Call and justifies Divine intervention. The details about/

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about the hero's life vary according to the social stature he attained in the society.

- (1) Ex. 1-2 Moses' birth and upbringing - including his training in the King's Court - with emphasis on the deplorable situation of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt.

Judges 6:1-10 The sin of Israel and its consequence which is the domination of the Midianites. With this picture of the awful situation, the stage is prepared for the Call of Gideon to the rescue.

I Sam. 1-2 The deplorable situation of the Priesthood in the Shiloh Cult is painted to justify a revolution or change. Eli in spite of reports of his sons' misbehaviour failed to act, thus making it necessary for God to seek a replacement by calling another person of his choice, cf. I Sam.2:12-17,22 ff and 3:13.

(2) With the stage thus set, the hero is brought in as one discovered and called by the Lord while going about his normal routine of duties. The Heroes are not idle citizens but conscientious workers going about their daily assignment in the midst of which Yahweh encounters them.

Ex. 3:1 Moses was leading the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, Priest of Midian.

Judges 6:11 Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press to hide it away from the Midianites.

I Sam. 3:3 Samuel was lying down within the Temple of the Lord where the Ark of Yahweh was - the place where he was exercising his Ministry, (I Sam.2:18).

(3) /

(3) Thus the Hero is portrayed as having been sought after by Yahweh himself. In all the three accounts it is worth noting that it is Yahweh who invariably takes the initiative. It is he who discovers the hero and bestows upon him His honour and special gifts. Making of a leader is thus purely a divine prerogative and the leader is only a passive recipient of God's blessings.

Ex. 3:2 An Angel/Yahweh (20) appeared to Moses. The word *וַיֵּרָא* here is important as it shows who takes the initiative. The Divine comes to meet the human where the latter is.

Judges 6:12 An Angel/Yahweh appeared to Gideon. Here too it is Yahweh who comes to discover the man of his choice whom he will send on errand to deliver his people.

I Sam.3:10 Yahweh comes to stand forth, calling unto Samuel. The clause, 'as at other times', means this has been the mode of disclosure at the previous two occasions. Thus still, it is Yahweh who comes down to the person of his choice. The one who is called is not described as making any effort towards this end. (21)

(4) The implication of this is that the Hero on his part is presented as one who has not consciously prepared for what has happened to him. He is an unpresumptuous servant of Yahweh. The Call is therefore a disruptive intervention in the life of the individual hero. This presupposes /

presupposes a state of psychic struggle of some sort in the one that is called, about what has happened to him, how it is to be interpreted and what next line of action to take.

Ex.3: 3 Moses was bewildered and wanted to investigate the reality of what was happening.

Judges 6:13 Gideon's surprise and awe is couched in a cultic confessional cliché. Could it be true that Yahweh is still with his people of whom he is one!

I Sam. 3:4-9 The boy Samuel did not understand at first what was happening to him. So during the first two calls, he was responding to the wrong person - Eli, a sign that he was not expecting what was happening to him else he should have known immediately what to do. (22)

(5) As we have said earlier, the call takes place at a critical time in the life of the people and the whole purpose of the call is related to the Divine readiness to act. Because of this, there is always a note of urgency attached to the call. Yahweh, as it were, has taken a decision because the 'cup' of the culprit is full and action has to be taken to save Yahweh's people. Of a necessity, a burden is laid upon the called and he has no option other than to act as directed. Here compare the note of urgency brought into the context by the use of *הנה* , and *הנה* with which the narrator paints a vivid picture of the scene.

Ex. 3:9,10 The word 'NOW' indicates the preparedness and readiness of Yahweh to act and the instrument with which to carry out the action is Moses.

Judges /

(5) contd...

Judges 6:11,13,17 The frequency in the use of the word 'NOW' shows how critical the situation is and points to a change that is now to take place.

I Sam. 3:11 Here Yahweh says, "Behold I am about to do something in Israel", (R.S.V.). It is a signal that one phase has ended, as the context shows, and another is to begin. And the instrument with which Yahweh is to communicate his intention is Samuel. Yahweh has taken a decision, Eli's house is to be phased out!

(6) At this juncture comes the introspective reflection of the called, and the dawning of a sense of inadequacy either on grounds of personal defects or family or clan reputation, or simply fear.

Ex. 3:11 Moses replied how a person like himself should stand before Pharaoh and speak (cf. Ex.4:10 & 6:12). Behind his statement lies his awareness of his speech defect and also probably his sense of guilt at the murder committed in Egypt before he fled. IF so it means he was afraid. (23)

Judges 6:15 Gideon was worried about the very low status of his clan in the tribe of Manasseh as well as his family which probably had no recognition or reputation of any sort, (cf ISam.18:18; 9:22; II Sam. 7:18).

I Sam. 3:15 The Biblical narrative says, Samuel was afraid to deliver the message.

(7) /

(7) In the midst of this internal struggle which the heroes are reported as having vocalised, comes the reassuring word of Yahweh, "I am with you". This comes to assuage the hero's fears and to give him the strength and courage he so much needs for the task he has been assigned.

Ex. 3:12 Yahweh tells Moses, "But I will be with you".

Judges 6:16 "And the Lord said to him (Gideon), but I will be with you".

I Sam. 3:19 Here Yahweh's presence with Samuel is put as a comment on the life of the hero. But what it means is that since the hero went on his commission in the strength of Yahweh, his success is evidence of Divine Presence with him. So Yahweh was with Samuel. Yahweh's being with him is presented as contained in the Divine Word which assures the hero of the successful completion of his task.

We are however to note that throughout the call-confrontation of Yahweh with his servant, there is no physical interaction between the Divine and the human elements. (24) The link between them is the WORD and the call can be described as audition.

As for 'Sign' (25) in this type of call, there is an apparent confusion. It is present in two but absent in the third. What we are to see here is the product of the combination of Yahweh theophany and Mal'-ak theophany in the course of the development of the hero story. The verbal sign of Yahweh theophany and the miraculous sign of the Mal'-ak theophany have been combined in the stories. And what is more, even the miracle signs in their present context are made to carry different /

different theological connotations (Gideon's sign is now generally taken as an aetiology while for that of Moses see Chapter 5 later).

Thus from the foregoing it would seem that the formal sequence of parallels and common Literary pattern with similar themes or identical experiences found in the three call narratives of Moses, Gideon and Samuel (26) may go to establish the point of a common oral or Literary source utilised by the authors of these call accounts. And this probable source we regard as the story of the making of the hero.

Unlike the hero legend, 'The Making of the Prophet' - the probable core of the present Literary Prophetic Call narrative - seems to be based on a setting of messenger-overlord relationship. It may reflect an ancient practice of how the Master commissions his servant to carry out certain functions on his behalf. While executing the Master's orders, the servant functions as the mouthpiece of his Lord and has the backing of his Master's authority. Thus the messenger is an official representative of the Sender himself, (II Sam 10:1 ff). In the ancient world, studies have revealed that, it was a common feature to all prophets that they claimed to speak with the authority of their god. They presented themselves as men charged to proclaim to their contemporaries god's decisions and then his demands. In such capacity they functioned as spokesmen on behalf of their gods.

In the Matriarchal theme of Genesis 24:35-48; and Ex. 4:15-16 and Ex.7:1 we have reflections of this pattern. In the case of Abraham and his servant who had to go to Haran in search of a bride for Isaac, we find what looks like an old form of the commissioning of the messenger who has to deliver his Master's words abroad. (27) There the messenger/

messenger is given specific instructions and a particular people or persons to whom to deliver the message, and after interview between him and the Master, he is sent away with an assurance of the presence of an Angelic being. This responsibility of the messenger as one who represents his Master or speaks on his behalf is shown in a better light in the prophet and Deity relationship. The Prophet is given a message by his Lord and the former speaks as his Master's mouthpiece. Thus in Exodus 4:15-16 we are told of the relationship between Aaron and Moses. (28) In the Text, Moses is told by Yahweh that Aaron shall be his spokesman to the people and he (Moses) shall be to him as God. and in Exodus 7:1, it is said, "And the Lord said to Moses, see I make you as God to Pharaoh and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet."

Thus it could be said that primarily the Biblical picture of a Prophet is one who speaks on behalf of the other because he has been called or commissioned with a message. So the prophet looks like an intermediary between his sender and the one to whom he delivers the message. It is not unlikely that the Old Testament prophets saw themselves and their office in this context of Master-messenger relationship, and we have some of the pre and Exilic prophets including Deutero-Isaiah telling us in full or in part, how they have been called and given divine messages for Israel by Yahweh. In these Call experiences, the emphasis of having been in the immediate presence of the sender is necessary to authenticate the message delivered. Thus most of the prophets with call narrative are found describing how in one form or the other they have interacted with the Deity in the process of their commissioning, (Jer.1:9; Is.6:7; Ez.2:9 cf Gen.24:8-9 and 24:41), (29) after which they are able to say to the people of Israel /

Israel כה אומר יהוה "Thus says the Lord". In this context of Divine messenger, the Prophet's concept of the contemporary imperial rule and the Israelite cultic ideology of Divine Kingship (30) contributed much to the Prophet's understanding and description of his commission by Yahweh. That the imperial political organisation of the Canonical Prophets' time (e.g. the Assyrian domination) influenced their concept of call and the execution of their commission shows that they tried to relate their call to the understanding of their audience.

Thus it is likely that just as an envoy of the great King of Assyria (like the Rabshakeh II Kings 18:17,19) would bring the word of the great King to his vassal-rulers in the City States bordering his empire, so also the Prophets saw themselves as sent with the message of the Lord of Israel to his vassal i.e. the earthly representative King of Israel/Judah and his subjects. And like the imperial envoy, the message of the Prophets is found couched almost in the same form as a written communication from an earthly Suzerain to a vassal, "To AB say..... Thus says ES....." (I Kings 12:12; II Kings 20:5; Is. 38:5; Jer. 2:2; 28:13; Amos 7:15-16 etc.). So as the royal messenger from the Suzerain would have stood in the Court of the great King, participated in the deliberative processes of the Court and then finally received the declaration of the King's wishes from his mouth with the written message; (papyrus or tablet) for the vassal King, (31) so also the Canonical Prophets are described as having been present or participated in Yahweh's Divine Council deliberations.

The Heavenly Council concept of course has firm roots in the traditions of the Near East, and it undoubtedly represents the Mesopotamian and Hellenic /

Hellenic concepts of the Universe as a State. This thought or concept according to Jacobsen, is nothing more than a projection of an earthly political experience onto the ideal plane of eternity.(32) This is because the concept was extrapolated from the real political system in force in Sumer and Babylonia which conferred power to rule on an assembly of the most powerful individuals. The heavenly Council which thus formed a carbon copy of the earthly was thought of as a place where hot arguments, discussion of proposals and debates used to feature among the gods before the decisions that seal the fate of all beings were reached.

The only difference in the Israelite context is that instead of the picture of the rival gods engulfed in heated debates the Biblical picture is that of a supreme King, taking decision amongst his courtiers (33) like the Ugaritic portrait of El in the divine Council as King in the Baal Epic.

Thus with the archaic form of the messenger/Master relationship of the Abraham-Eleazer type through the Suzerain-vassal and heavenly/earthly patterns of communication, the Prophets came to understand their call by patterning it on contemporary administrative strategy.(34) But instead of their call being humanly motivated, it is a heavenly call by the Divine King and Creator of the Universe. This is why for the Prophets with explicit call account, except Jeremiah whose case is debatable, the call is made to presuppose a Council throne setting - be it in heaven, Ezekiel, or Jerusalem Temple Isaiah - unlike the call of the hero which involves Yahweh meeting his agent here on earth and whose immediate context is that of a crisis situation calling for an urgent response in which the hero is to have an active participation.

This /

This is why we find the following features which differentiate the Canonical prophets' call from that of the hero.

(1) Generally for the classical prophets, (Jer. Is. Ez. Amos etc.) we are denied any account of their life history, birth and upbringing which feature in the hero calls. Like in the case of Eleazer when he was sent to represent his Master abroad, the story of the life history of the messenger/prophet appears unnecessary. What is important is the fact of his call, commission and how he fulfills or carries out his commission.

(2) With the exception of Amos (35) we are not told of how Yahweh met and called the Prophets, whether while going about their occupation or routine duty. Their former occupation before call is not spoken of. This is because, unlike the hero, whom Yahweh sought out or discovered, the reverse is the case with the Prophets. It is the Prophets who discover or find out God. So they tell us what Yahweh does at the point in time they found Him.

(A) I Kings 22:19 Micaiah says, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left."

(B) Isaiah 6:1 reports, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up."

(C) Jeremiah 23:18ff From this section it may be conjectured that Jeremiah is saying what the false prophets have not done to show by contrast what he probably has done, i.e. been to Divine /

Divine Council from which source his oracles
and commission have their origin. (36)

This view would make the interaction between
the human and the Divine elements reasonable
in his call account which in its present form
has been expounded to accommodate many
features for purposes of authenticating the
call and commission (37) - a problem through-
out his Ministry (cf. Jer. 26:12,15^b).

(D) Ezekiel 1:26, 28^b tells us, "And above the firmament over
their heads there was the likeness of
a throne and seated above the likeness
of a throne was a likeness as it were of a
human form..... such was the appearance
of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh.
And when I saw it...."

Thus we do not find Yahweh appearing to the Prophets as in the hero
call, but it is the Prophets we find claiming participation or view
of the deliberations in the Divine Council like Isaiah and Micaiah.
They claim to see Yahweh! And invariably they find or see Yahweh
sitting on a throne, a setting that favours the commissioning of an
envoy. In this regard it is difficult not to assume that the Prophets
take some steps to seek God and in response to their endeavour God
gives them a message. This may not be the case in all situations but
it seems that such passages like Jer. 42:7 point to an endeavour of
some kind on the part of the Prophet in the expectation of a revelation.
Although /

Although we now have no means of knowing the difference between an inaugural call and subsequent visions.

(3) In the light of the above, the prophets with 'Call', may be presumed to be 'conscious figures' during the process of their call as there seems to be indications of preparedness for the vision. The fact that they were able to pose questions and have them answered or like Isaiah take part in the Council deliberations may justify this.

(4) Unlike the hero call which is man and the Deity in isolation, the call of the Prophet with explicit throne motif takes place in the presence of Yahweh's courtiers.

(A) In Micaiah's case I Kings 22:19, Yahweh was seen with all the host of heaven standing beside him.

(B) Isaiah 6:1-2. The Seraphim were present and in their adoration of Yahweh were chanting the Trishagion.

(C) Ezekiel 1-2. It is in the presence of a multitude of heavenly creatures.

(D) In Deutero-Isaiah 40:1-8. This is represented by the 'cry voices'.

(5) It is as the prophet appears before or gazes at King Yahweh on his throne amidst his courtiers that a voice (38) from the throne comes to address him. He is either addressed as an individual like Micaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah who has no explicit reference to throne, or as a member of the Council like Isaiah who as we see in Isaiah 6:8 was almost functioning as a member of the courtiers Yahweh addresses.

Here /

Here the cauterisation of Isaiah's lips which takes place before the commission could be regarded as his purification to enable him to sit with the holy ones in their deliberations. (39)

(6) In the process of the address from Yahweh on the throne the Prophet receives his message and the people amongst whom to exercise his Ministry.

Isaiah 6:9	Isaiah is commissioned to deliver his message to 'this people' i.e. Israel.
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Jeremiah 1:10	The message is to be delivered to the Nations.
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Ezekiel 2:3	The prophet is commissioned to go to the people of Israel.
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I Kings 22:19	The message is specifically for Ahab.
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And Amos 7:15	Whose call in a modified form says he was commissioned to go to Yahweh's people Israel.
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(7) Following the commissioning is the reflection of the Prophet on the scope of the task and the people among whom it is to be executed. With the record of traditional intransigence of the people at the back of the Prophet's mind, the failure of the mission is contemplated. And in the present Literary form of the call narratives this takes different forms.

(A) In Jeremiah it takes the form of objection on grounds of personal defect to reflect the call of the National hero Moses and others, thus showing Jeremiah as an unwilling but obedient servant of Yahweh - a mark of the authentication of the Jeremiah oracles.

(B) /

- (B) In Isaiah, the contemplation is put in its positive form as the actual content of the message which is to harden the people's heart and make their ears dull of hearing. (40) Still the basis of objection is the people's reaction.
- (C) In Ezekiel, the anticipation of the Prophet's failure as a result of the fear of the people is ruled out by the word of Yahweh which gives the Prophet the encouragement he requires Ez. 2:6. Here compare the grounds of Eleazer's objection in Gen. 24:5.

Thus with the Canonical prophets, the forewarning of rejection is found as a very strong element in their call. This may be a pointer to a tradition they had behind them i.e. the people's reaction to their own type of message for them.

(8) After the Prophet's reaction, whether verbalised in form of objection or thought but not expressed, he receives the last word either in form of Divine warning or assurance of the Deity's presence with him.

- (A) Ezekiel 2:8 The prophet is warned not to be rebellious like the people to whom he is sent. And as an assurance of Yahweh's presence with him and as a mark of 'Authority', he is given a scroll to eat.

(B)

/

(B) Isaiah 6:11 ff. (41) Yahweh gives the last word in

response to Isaiah's question in 6:11 and he is given a sign of the accomplishment of the mission. The event of the cauterisation of Isaiah's lips by the Seraphim apart from pointing to an assurance of Divine presence with him after his separation from the unholy lot by purification, could also be seen as the usual interaction between the envoy and his Lord common in this type of call.

(C) Jer. 1:8-9

Jeremiah is warned not to be afraid of the people because Yahweh is with him, and as a mark of this, Yahweh mysteriously stretched his hand and touched his mouth. In fact in Jer. 15:16, it seems he also like Ezekiel ate a written scroll.

In all the above, there is a general note of interaction between the Prophet and the Deity in the Divine Council, like Eleazer putting his hand under the thigh of Abraham. Whether this originally constituted the taking of the oath of office or commission - blessing on the envoy at the royal palace, we have no means of knowing. But, however, as presented in the prophetic call pericopes it is a mark of authority and the authenticity of the prophetic oracle. It shows the Prophet has had contact with Yahweh and as a result has been given a message to go and deliver unlike the false prophets who had not been to the Divine Council (Jer. 23:18 ff) and therefore had no message to deliver, (Jer. 23:21 ff).

Having thus examined the two types of 'Call' and what appears to be the distinguishing features of each and their setting, we can now briefly look at the various elements which now, in their Literary form, constitute the 'Call Narrative'.

ANALYSIS OF CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS IN LITERARY CALL NARRATIVE

Right from the outset, it should be noted that because the elements being examined here point to the Literary Stage of the Call Narrative, they seem not to be restrictive to any one particular type. And since in the call narratives we do not have an autobiographical account of the Prophets, they should rather be seen as the presentation by the author/redactor of an ideal situation in which the deity interacts with his messenger/envoy. Being thus the work of a redactional School, it must have had a purpose or intention for the immediate audience. But since a full analysis of this will be beyond the scope of this investigation, we shall limit ourselves to a few hints.

(i) THE TRADITION ELEMENT

One of the common features of both types of call narrative is the forewarning of rejection by the people or king to whom the prophet is sent (cf. Ez. 2:6; Is.6:10; Jer.1:8; and even Ex. 3:19 ff). One at times finds it necessary to ask, is this forewarning of rejection part of the call experience of the Prophet or a later reflection on the reaction of the people to his message. Whether the Prophet was conscious of a possible rejection of his oracle by the people at the time of call or not, it seems that the tradition of rejection by the people had made it necessary to reaffirm by its inclusion, the assertion that the Prophet had nonetheless been called and sent by God. It justifies the Prophet's /

Prophet's apparent failure and the Divine punishment of the people, though it does put a question mark on the necessity of the mission (cf. Jer. 6:10,17; Is. 43:8;42:18-19;28:12;30:9,15; Ez. 33:32, where the bitter fact that nobody listened to them is a common denominator in their experience). The forewarning of rejection, therefore, could be seen as a traditional element belonging to the Prophets' School, included in the 'Call' as a result of the content of the Prophets oracle which is criticism of the central religio-political system. In Jeremiah's conflict with Hananiah, at no point is any detailed appeal made to the Prophet's experience as a yardstick by which the truth of prophecy is to be tested (Jer. 27-28). Rather we find the prophet appealing to an earlier tradition of prophecy of woes instead of to his call and consciousness of God (Jer. 28:8).

This inclusion of forewarning of rejection in the call accounts one would think is meant to provide answer for the possible objection that if the message had truly come from God then the people would have listened to it, (cf. Jer. 23:22 where such argument is used against the false prophets). Thus the refusal to listen to the Prophet's oracle, rather than cast doubts on the Prophet's word confirms it. This is because it is what he at his commissioning had been told to expect. This tradition of the people rejecting the Prophet's message could be traced to Amos and the rejection of his message at Bethel, after which his oracle might have been given a Literary form. And the reference to the static presence (42) in the throne motif may reflect the Jerusalem Temple Tradition of Yahweh's Kingship, used to authenticate the identification incontrovertibly /

incontrovertibly of the one who has sent the Prophet. This vision and the presence or entry into the Divine Council is thus used by the authors as public testimony to reinforce the claim of the Prophet - if not their own, in delivering, "Thus says the Lord".

(ii) THE CULTIC ELEMENTS

Another important feature of the call narrative is the cultic element. The presence of this element in the call narrative is an indication of the role played by the cult in the articulation or formulation of the call narrative. Because of its presence in the narrative different scholars have come to different conclusions about the call accounts. Ivan Engnell sees the cultic elements in Isaiah's call as forming an integral part of the call experience while Reventlow regards Jeremiah's call narrative as a description of a cultic ceremony of ordination. And of course Gressmann, many years ago, had come to the conclusion that the Mosaic call narrative functioned originally as the 'hieros logos' to a sacred place on the strength of the signs of local cult traditions he claimed to have discovered in it. (43) Although the presence of certain cultic motifs and allusions may reflect some relationship to a Liturgical tradition, that does not make it conclusively clear that it constitutes the immediate background in every case of the individual call.

That the scene of the throne visions (Is. Ez. Micaiah) is the Temple is natural but not an absolutely necessary assumption. It does not imply that the visioner was himself necessarily in the Temple, he could be in his house like Ezekiel (Ez.8:1 ff) who in a vision was transported to/

to Jerusalem where, standing at the entrance looking towards the Holy place, he saw Yahweh enthroned on the Cherubim. Here Ezekiel sees Yahweh on a throne in an earthly Temple, but in Isaiah He is seen enthroned in heaven 'high and lifted up'. But when the Seraphim chanted the 'Trishagion', the heavenly and the earthly suddenly became one and the threshold shook!

The point we have to see here is that among the Israelites, the reality of God and the possibility of man's knowing him and dealing with him were taken care of by the cult. This is why in the Old Testament the picture of God we have is that of 'presence' to be sought and experienced at a Sanctuary in an act of worship rather than by postulates or speculations. The Sanctuary was regarded as 'the' place where God's face 'panim' could be seen.

Thus to describe the call of a Prophet outside such conception of a holy place would have amounted to self-contradiction right from the beginning of the story. This is why, even when Yahweh had to call Moses in an arid place, the point that the place was holy, fire, the symbol of Divine manifestation, and Angel (44) probably in this regard representing the members of Divine entourage or Council, were all present. And apart from the heavenly and earthly Temple of Isaiah 6:1ff being one, we also see in his self-imposed condemnation and the subsequent absolution, a reflection of the formal character which stems from the 'worship-life' of the Prophet. The absolution without doubt points to the altar of Sacrifice while the sacrifice of Gideon may reflect a sacrifice in a holy place. But in the case of Jeremiah, it is very difficult to uphold the submission of Reventlow that it should be seen as an ordination ceremony. Apart from the fact that Jeremiah appears to have used /

used the Priestly Tradition Terms for divine ordination (Jer. 1:5 $\gamma\eta\psi\tau\bar{\tau}\eta$ and $\gamma\eta\tau\eta$) and appointment; it is very doubtful, whether the cultic elements in the call really add anything to the evidence, to regard the call narrative basically as a transcript of an ordination ceremony. (45) Instead what I think should be seen in the cultic elements in the call narrative is the fact that in Israelite religious life, Divine manifestation or theophany had, at the time of writing the Biblical narratives, become so intimately associated with the place of worship that neither the Prophets nor their 'School' i.e. writers of their oracles, could think of God appearing outside the realm of the cult in the midst of the Liturgical ceremonies and rites. Thus we have, on Mount Sinai where probably there was no cultic edifice or building, cultic imagery used to lend flavour to the description of Yahweh's manifestation (Ex. 3:1 ff; 19:24; Trumpets are heard which undoubtedly reflect Jerusalem Temple worship or Shiloh).

So the essence of the cultic elements in the Prophetic call narrative is to be seen as being used to point to the reality of the call and as conveying the claim that God has uniquely equipped the prophet for his task. Thus while the presence of cultic and traditional features in the accounts of how the prophets were called by God may not undermine our confidence in the reality of the experiences which they describe, but they preclude our regarding them as records preserved simply for the sake of recounting the experiences. Here one may recall the statement by von Rad (46) that "In the Ancient East people did not write things down simply for the sake of writing them down, the written record was always used as a means to a very definite end." Thus the very/

very fact that a 'call' was recorded may be a pointer to it that it was meant to serve a special or significant purpose by the writers. Such significant purpose one may call here the Kerygmatic function of the Call Narrative.

(iii) THE KERYGMATIC FUNCTION OF CALL NARRATIVE

The Kerygmatic intent of the Call Narratives seems to have influenced both the way in which they have been composed as well as the way in which the prophet actually experienced his call. To attempt a distinction between the two appears difficult because the individual experience and 'tradition' have become inseparably intertwined.

In the first place, it may be noted that it is not unlikely that the call narrative has been used to show that the prophet confirms the narrator's prophetic authority which he exercises by writing the oracles. What the authors report of the prophets they confirm by an appeal to his call. Thus their message in the call narrative (cf. Ex.3:6,14-15; Judges 6:13; Is.6:13; Jer.1:7 etc.) and in the body of the oracle, they authenticate by making it all now the prophet's. In so doing both the call and the superscription are intended to identify the prophetic books as the word of God so that what the individual prophet had originally claimed for himself in his verbal addresses is now claimed for things written down on his behalf to be read by future generations.

At this point one may pose the question, when and how did the call narrative come to be an important part of the prophetic oracle? To answer/

answer this question we may now make reference to the Mari situation and how Prophets who claimed to have received a message were dealt with. (47)

According to some of the Mari correspondence, it was the practice for an Apilu or Apiltu (prophet or prophetess) to send a lock of her hair and the fringe of her garment with a report of her message to the Capital so that the veracity of her message could be tested by divination. This procedure was necessary any time the oracular speaker delivered a message publicly. That the Apilu's message had to be so tested shows that in Mari religious system there were prophets and prophecies of varying degrees, and the need to distinguish between them to detect the obstreperous intermediary was crucial or necessary. The submission of the Apilu therefore to the test and the possible consequence in the event of failure, shows that he was prepared to stake his life upon the message given. Thus we can see from this exercise that it is unlikely that the Apilu belonged to the central social system, else the message would not have been public but private to the King and no test would have been required. (48)

Secondly the Apilu wants to distinguish himself from the false prophets which is exactly what we find Amos doing immediately he was accused and referred to as one of the professional consultants who lived by their oracle, (Amos 7:14^a). (49)

To show that he belonged to a different class of Prophets, he appealed to his call by Yahweh to show his message bore the stamp of Divine Authority. It was also at this point that Micaiah (I Kings 22:18) gave account of the authenticity of his message when he was apparently /

apparently challenged by Ahab. Isaiah's call follows oracles of serious denunciations or invectives in Chapter 5 and so the call appears to take care of any possible challenge.

That these call accounts are immediately appealed to when challenged shows what the call narrative was originally used for, like the Apilu's lock and fringe of the garment. So it was only later it became a tradition by the time of Jeremiah to have it written, like a super-scription or title page, at the beginning of the prophets' oracles, but originally its place was at the point of challenge either by way of rejection or mistaking the prophet for one of the professionals.

Thus with the call narrative restricted to a particular group of prophets (those who probably functioned in the King's Court like Gad, Nathan etc. have no call account, we hear of them when they are consulted or criticise the King), the portrait of the Canonical Prophets stands out boldly against the backcloth they paint of the professional prophets who claimed to announce Yahweh's will to Israel in the 8th and 7th Centuries B.C. But even in this one finds it difficult to say categorically what really differentiates the professionals from the Canonical, apart from the vituperations or pessimism of one and optimism of the other. In their critical attitude, the Canonical Prophets are presented as uncompromising agents of Yahweh either with the Kingship institution or with the central religious system. It may be because of this critical attitude reported of the prophets towards the central religio-political system that they are often found regarded by their audience as mad, rebels or as showing defeatist attitude, (Hosea 9:7; Jer.29:26). Whether the criticisms are theirs or /

or made up on their behalf we do not know, but it may not be enough to justify the adequacy of the labels - central and peripheral prophets on them. (50)

Thus in all probability it seems that the authors of the Prophetic Books with 'Call', use the call narrative as a defense against any challenge arising from the credibility or otherwise of the contents of the oracles.

(iv) THE POLEMICAL INTENT OF CALL NARRATIVE

In the Calls of Moses, Samuel and Gideon, the picture is given that these great Prophet/Leaders were men who had their legitimate trades from the midst of which they were called. As Prophets Moses, Samuel or an Amos would therefore contrast markedly with the picture of the professional prophets probably of the writer's own time who became prophets as a means of livelihood (cf. Zech.13:5 When a prophet has to defend himself by claiming that he has a legitimate occupation). In order to distinguish the true prophets, who are constrained by Yahweh's will from the false prophets who prophesy for what they can get to eat, the picture is painted of the messenger of God going about his job in the midst of which Yahweh encounters him and gives him a message for his people.

It is probably the need for this differentiation - a subtle polemic - that is responsible for the evolution of the concept of Mosaic Prophetic office which is then invested with contemporary notions about the Prophet. This would then distinguish the false Prophets who prophesy for a 'handful of barley' (Ez.13:17-19; Micah 3:5) from the genuine Prophets/

Prophets of Yahweh who are called after the pattern of Moses.

Along with this is the way Kings are referred to in some of the call accounts either in the context of the prophetic message to them and the people or in juxtaposition with Yahweh described in royal terms as sitting on the throne. In such juxtaposition of the earthly with the heavenly King, the writer appears making the point of who his readers should see as the true King of Israel.

For instance in Micaiah's vision, the 'true King of Israel' is seen on the throne while the earthly Kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat are on their thrones (I Kings 22:10). (51) The earthly King - Ahab - was planning how to launch an attack on Ramoth-Gilead and the Heavenly King was deciding on his fate among His courtiers. And in the story that follows, it is the decision of the Heavenly King that over-ruled that of the earthly King.

Also in Isaiah 6:1ff we are told, Isaiah saw the King of Israel, who never dies, on his throne (6:5) in the year that the earthly King died or was incapacitated. (52) Here in the juxtaposition, the writer seems to say the true King of Israel is immortal unlike the earthly King. And in Jeremiah's call, he is sent to the Nations including their Kings to pull down and overthrow, (cf Jer. 1:18 where Yahweh will fortify him against the Kings of Judah and its princes - an indication that real power resides in the hand of Yahweh rather than the King and its princes).

And of course, in Ex. 3:19 Pharaoh will be a victim of God's wrath because he fails or will fail to listen to the word of Yahweh through His accredited Prophet Moses.

In/

In all these references, it seems there is implicit polemics in the call accounts against the King and the professional prophets who unlike the Canonical prophets are neither purified like Isaiah, nor eat scrolls containing the oracles of Yahweh like a Jeremiah and Ezekiel, or have a legitimate means of livelihood like Moses, Samuel, Gideon or an Amos. (53) This and the apparent disparaging references to the King, I believe may be a pointer to the attitude of the writers of the accounts towards these institutions - Kingship and Prophecy - in Israel and the feelings of the group they represent.

Having thus pointed out some of the constitutive elements of the call narratives and the implications of their presence in the accounts, we may now look briefly at the pattern that a literary analysis of them reveals. This Literary structure is due to the fact that what we have in the call accounts is the product of the narrators rather than autobiographical accounts, (54) which does not however annul the reality of the divine-human encounter they point to.

THE LITERARY PATTERN OF CALL NARRATIVE

Habel in his analytical work on the call narratives, (55) has drawn attention to the primary Literary features of the call accounts with an analysis of the recurrent literary and thematic features. But as insightful as his work is, he fails to recognise, as pointed out earlier, the difference between the underlying structures of the two types of the Biblical call accounts. Probably this is why his treatment of the call narratives under his Six major divisions had to be strained at some point with a consequent breakdown. (56) Instead of/

of his Six Divisions namely: (i) Divine Confrontation, (ii) Introductory word, (iii) Commission, (iv) Objection, (v) Reassurance, and (vi) Sign, I would like to use the following: (A) Encounter with the Divine; (B) Preliminary Dialogue with the Called; (C) The Commission; (D) Response by the Called; (E) Divine reply, and (F) Assurance.

In working with these divisions, we have to bear it in mind that the writers have effected some sort of modification on the contents of each call to reflect either the task assigned or circumstances of the call.

(A) ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIVINE

In the various call accounts, the encounter with the Divine either takes place in the midst of one's occupation or in the heavenly Council.

(i) Ex.3:1-4^a (57) Here Moses is confronted by Yahweh in his Messenger Angel and the unusualness of the event is heightened by the emphasis given the mysterious element like in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1. The words מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה may point to it that it was not a vision but the appearance of a heavenly being to Moses.

Although the voice which later came out of the burning fire looks rather uncharacteristic of the God of Moses who speaks in thunder and lightning (Ex.19:19) but the fire element is consonant with other known Yahweh manifestations.

(ii) /

(ii) Judges 6:11^b-12^a Like Moses Gideon is confronted by Yahweh in his messenger Angel as he goes about his normal duty.

That the event is unprepared for is implied by the fact that it is the Divine figure who comes to meet the human person while the latter is busy on his daily routine of duties. Thus the encounter is an intervention by the Holy One and could thus be described disruptive though not ecstatic.

(iii) Isaiah 6:1-2 Isaiah sees the Lord as He sits on His throne amidst His heavenly attendants. As already shown, this is characteristic of the second type of call account with heavenly Council setting where man appears to take the initiative - it is he who sees God not that God calls or meets him. Like Moses' case the mysterious element is elaborated upon and it leads to the bewilderment of Isaiah, a sinful man among sinful lot. The phrase, 'In the year that King Uzziah died', in all probability did not constitute part of the Call. It came in later as superscription either for purposes of dating or intended as subtle polemics.

(iv) Jer. 1:4 In Jeremiah's call, it could be inferred that he was at the time of call in Yahweh's immediate presence although whether in vision or spirit we do /

(iv) Jer.1:4 (contd)....

do not know. He was so near to Yahweh that the outstretched mysterious hand of the latter could touch his mouth as he claims, (cf. Jer.1:7,9 with Ez.2:9; Is.6:7). But the full picture of this direct interaction in the encounter with the Deity appears played down in the background in favour of the 'Word' or voice, the later popularly accepted medium of Yahweh's communication with his people. So here we have both elements of Jeremiah's being in the immediate presence of Yahweh as to be touched by the latter, and also emphasis on the Word which came to him, in the usual DTR parlance. According to DTR's theological concept, the Word like an irresistible force could encounter and impose itself on the individual, even against his personal wishes and inclinations. Through its persuasive content and consistent demands, it could be felt as shattering the ordinary human responses to life and giving rise to a new orientation that differs from what went before (Jer.20:9). So like others, the Word 717 might have come to Jeremiah in his encounter with Yahweh where the latter's hand could reach him.

(v) Ezekiel /

- (v) Ezekiel 1:1-28 Here in an elaborate form, Ezekiel's confrontation or encounter with the Divine is described.
- Instead of saying he sees the figure of Yahweh it is his glory that is described with no attempt made to specify the form of the enthroned Deity - probably because of the veto on images. However like other calls, it constitutes the encounter.

(B) PRELIMINARY DIALOGUE WITH THE CALLED

In this section, the next step is taken by Yahweh or his messenger to prepare the called for his commission. As a necessary preamble to the commission, an introduction is either given to make the commission necessary before the called or Yahweh states how he has prepared the individual beforehand. All these point to an intimate personal relationship which Yahweh as a result of the call, enters into with the individual in the call encounter.

- (i) Ex.3:4^b-9 Moses is called, out of the burning bush and the God of the revelation introduces himself to Moses so that he may know that though the revelation is in a foreign land, it is the God whom his Father(s) have worshipped that is now appearing to him. As part of the preparation, Moses is made to know that he is before a holy God in a holy place and therefore as a mark of 'Sacredness' of the spot, he is commanded to take off his shoes. In the midst of awe and fear
Moses/

(i) Ex.3:4^b-9 (contd)...

Moses is told the purposes of God's coming down to appear to him, which is the release of the Israelites. And he is the agent to be used for the task. Because of the cry of the Israelites Yahweh 'NOW הַיּוֹם ' wants to act.

(ii) Judges 6:12^b-13

In the greetings of the Angel to Gideon, Gideon's sterling qualities i.e. strength or might and valour, are mentioned indicative of the type of task he is to be assigned. Here too, it is a friendly 'dialogue' and is meant to prepare the called for his commission.

(iii) Isaiah 6:3-7

Here the majesty and holiness of God is unveiled before Isaiah, and he witnesses how the heavenly beings adore the eternal King and Lord of the Universe. From what he sees happen in the royal palace of heaven, he rediscovered himself and in contrast to what he sees, realises his state of sinfulness. To lift him from the psychological state of guilt his sin has plunged him, and make him fit to receive the call commission, his lips are cauterised by the Seraphim with a 'coal of fire'. His statement of self-condemnation must have been addressed to the Holy ones in response to which he was cleansed. Thus he dialogued with the heavenly beings, like others, in preparation to his commission.

(iv) Jer.1:5^a /

(iv) Jer. 1:5^a

Here Yahweh tells Jeremiah what He has done to prepare him for his call. Before his birth he has been consecrated and appointed a prophet. Thus God was already personally involved in the shaping of the life of Jeremiah. There are two possible ways of interpreting this statement; either Jeremiah is hereby using his Priestly ancestry and personal divine encounter to show how he has been specially predestined to be a prophet, or is using an adapted form of a 'secular saying' used by Kings. (58) However it is interpreted, the dialogue was meant to prepare Jeremiah for his call. In view of what Yahweh has already effected in him, he is now sure that the coming commissioning is inevitable. Thus he has to receive it.

(v) Ez.1:29-2:2

Like Moses and Isaiah, the sight of Yahweh's glorious resplendence dazzles Ezekiel and in fear and bewilderment he falls upon his face. But the ' הוֹר voice' from the 'Council' resuscitated him and he is told to get ready for a message, "Son of man stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you". Thus like others of the same call, he is here being prepared for the great commission. So it could be said a 'dialogue' takes place between the commissioner and the commissioned to introduce or explain the encounter in preparation for the commission.

(C) THE COMMISSION

As Habel has noted, (59) the words $\gamma\beta\eta$ and $\eta\beta\omega$ are characteristic of this section. In each case the commission is seen as a task beyond the capability of the individuals called, and it invokes serious consideration on their part. While some are commissioned to be Yahweh's ambassadors or spokesmen, others are commissioned to be his agents through whom to bring about a radical change in a critical situation. Thus their words and actions symbolise Yahweh's intervention in the lives of the people Israel. That the individual receives the commission, shows that Yahweh has accepted him as an accredited ambassador and thus gives him claim to a special or privileged relationship with Him.

(i) Ex. 3:10 (and also 16-22

a development) The purpose of the encounter is now made known. It is that Moses should go and bring out the Israelites from Egypt. The call is urgent and the called is required to act immediately, 'NOW'. The urgency may be to emphasise the historical dilemma. (60) It is an inescapable burden of responsibility Yahweh lays on the shoulders of his agent of redemption.

(ii) Judges 6:14

Here Gideon is given his commission as a command with a rhetorical question in the perfect tense. The command is to emphasise the giving of authority and power to Gideon as a mediator. Yahweh himself is the 'great force', behind the action, though he is using Gideon's might and power to effect His divine purpose. Gideon is only a deliverer because Yahweh/

(ii) Judges 6:14 (contd)...

Yahweh has sent him. The command shows Gideon has the mandate of his God to lead the people of Israel out of oppression.

(iii) Isaiah 6:8-10

Isaiah, having been purified from his guilt, can now take part in the heavenly deliberation on the one to be commissioned by Yahweh to His people Israel. So to the question, 'Whom shall I send?' from God, Isaiah answers, 'send me', and the reply comes from Yahweh, 'Go $\gamma\lambda$ '. Moses is sent to bring out the Israelites from Egypt, Gideon is to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites, but Isaiah is to go and speak to 'this people' i.e. Israel. His function primarily is that of a spokesman, Yahweh's mouthpiece. And what he is to speak to the people is nothing but an oracle of doom.

(iv) Jer. 1:5^b

Jeremiah's commission and the preliminary dialogue preparatory to the commission are run into each other. Jeremiah is appointed to the Nations unlike Isaiah who is specifically told to go and speak to these people - Israel. His task is that of God's representative and spokesman, and the full content of the commission is stated in verse 10. Unlike Isaiah's commission, his is to destabilize - pluck up and break down and overthrow before rebuilding. Thus he appears in the context more of an agent than a mere spokesman.

(v) Ez. 2:3-5 /

(v) Ez. 2:3-5

Ezekiel is commissioned to go to the house of Israel. And the reason for the commission is probably indirectly stated, because they have rebelled against Yahweh. Therefore the purpose of the mission will be to change hearts and bring God's people back to Him again. Yahweh himself seems apprehensive of what the result will be and so includes in the commission a note that, Ezekiel would be a sign that He has at least spoken to the people whether they hear or not, - for they are a rebellious house.

(D) RESPONSE BY THE CALLED

After Yahweh has commissioned and delineated the area and limit or scope of operation, the commissioned reflects on his task and makes his own contribution. In his response to Yahweh's assignment to him, he rationalises the situation by surveying the available resources he would utilize. In doing this, he either utters his response with an ejaculatory cry of surprise at the burden of responsibility or by pointing out to Yahweh what from his point of view constitutes a likely hindrance to the execution of the task. From this sense of reflection and rationalisation of the commission one would say that one thing common to all the called is that the call does not displace in them their own observations, thoughts and wills. It appears they are all fully conscious at the time, and could hear, consider and answer. None of them appears to have been robbed of his selfhood. Each assumes full responsibility in his own way. What I am saying here is that, though there are possible traces of ecstasy in the body of the Prophets' oracles,/

oracles, but the way they assume responsibility during call does not exhibit such traits (Is. 21:2-10, where the prophet's mind reeled, fear and trembling overwhelmed him, his hair stood on end and his feet refused to obey, and Jer. 4:19ff - depending on whether it is the 'I' of the prophet or 'I' of Israel).

So the Prophets may not be seen necessarily as objecting in the sense of trying to evade the commission but were making their own contribution by pointing out what may likely constitute an obstacle on their way. Thus the Prophetic 'I' in the commission is that of the individual prophet in dialogue with Yahweh, while in the execution of the commission after Yahweh has invested His authority on him, it is either the 'I' of Yahweh's authority or that of the Prophet depending on the context.

- (i) Ex. 3:11,13;4:1,10 In this section, Moses' simple response of humility and modesty in Ex. 3:11 appears to have been much developed in order to accommodate more theological nuances. For the purpose of this analysis, they all constitute an answer back to Yahweh by Moses in view of the responsibility he is saddled with; whether it is the inability to speak, the fear of the people's rejection of his authority or the meaning of the Name of the God who has appeared to him. Here Moses weighs the great honour being bestowed on him against the background of his own personal ability or worthiness like a Gideon or a Jeremiah.

Against Habel's view that the commission meant a reconciliation between God and Moses on account of his murder in Egypt, like the purification of Isaiah/

Isaiah from his sin (Is.6:6), one would say, that sense seems not implied in the context.

This is because the people, one of whom Moses killed were subsequently punished and some killed by Yahweh Himself as His enemies (in Egypt and at the Red Sea) although Moses in his action seems to have been executing Yahweh's judgement before the time. Secondly, Moses did not acknowledge any act of sinfulness and there is no sign of his purification. Even when he fled Egypt, it was not because of God's wrath, but because of the fear of Pharaoh. So the question of God being reconciled with Moses does not arise. He was only fighting a just course which Yahweh is now properly licensing him to carry out (cf. Ex. 4:19).

So Moses' statement should be seen in the context of the fear of Pharaoh, who must have been seeking vengeance on account of his murderous act. In his appearing before Pharaoh therefore, he stands two possible risks; (i) Suffering the nemesis of his action, and (ii) Being accused of treason or insurrection by demanding the release of the Israelites with the unlikelihood of his people even accepting his leadership (Ex.4:1).

Thus/

Thus the response is made in the context of the commission and its execution, a rationalisation by the called.

(ii) Judges 6:15

Gideon exclaims on hearing what Yahweh purposes to do through him. As he ponders the commission, the unworthiness of his family and clan immediately comes to the forefront. The fact that he is as insignificant as his heritage shows that after accomplishing the task he would have nothing to boast of, but give Yahweh all the glory.

The problem of Gideon as he reflects on the commission is twofold, (i) His ability to carry out the assignment and (ii) the poor or no reputation of his clan. To the first God provides an answer in His reply.

(iii) Isaiah 6:11^a

After hearing the content of his commission or task, to be accomplished among his people, Isaiah retorted, "How long O Lord?". Isaiah does not appear to question the propriety of the commission, but he is saying, if he is to carry out such apparent odious task, he would like to know the length of time for which he would have to endure the hardship his commission involves. He, like others, gives serious thought to his commission. He is not objecting to it, but/

but would want more explanation so as to know for what exactly he has committed himself. In His reply Yahweh provides the answer to his question.

(iv) Jeremiah 1:6

Jeremiah's response to his call is made to look very much identical to that of his predecessors. The basis of his response, inability in speech and age as a youth, look very much like Moses' in Ex.4:10 and Solomon's in I Kings 3:7-9 (לך). And even the framing of the response looks like Gideon's and Isaiah's.

Gideon 6:15	הנה.....לך.....לך
Isaiah 6:11לך.....לך
Jeremiah 1:6	לך.....לך

So he appears to rationalise his call commission along the line of other great prophets of his tradition. And we are not surprised that the answer he receives reflects the answer given to his 'hero Prophets'.

(v) Ez. 2:6,8

We are denied the explicit response of Ezekiel to his call. Thus we miss a very important part of the dialogue. But judging from the emphasis in Verse 8, warning that Ezekiel should not join the lot of evildoers, it may be reasonable to assume something happened after the pronouncement/

pronouncement of the commission to call forth

the rather sharp warning, וְאַתָּה בֶן-אָדָם שֹׁמֵר אֶת

אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מֵדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ .

Thus it is probable that Ezekiel might have thought of the reception of the word by the people and expressed some pessimism. Against that Yahweh seems to caution the prophet, (cf Zimmerli Ezekiel pp 134-135 "Can we see in this (as in Is.50:5) a surreptitious side glance at the possibility of a personal resistance such as appears in Jer. 1:6? What other motive could the summons to obedience have had, made as it is with such surprising sharpness?").

(E) THE DIVINE REPLY

In Yahweh's reply to the individual's response to his call, the irrevocable commission is reaffirmed and the called is assured of Yahweh's dynamic presence which will take care of all foreseeable obstacles. Thus the formula "I am with you" is found to be a common feature of this section of the dialogue. It implies the finality of the divine commission and the inevitability of the divine mission. The Divine word has been spoken, the decision made, nothing should prevent it from being accomplished. A necessity is therefore laid upon the called and there will be no rest until he executes what Yahweh has commanded - a pointer to the concept of prophetic compulsion, (here cf Paul in I Cor. 9:16). Probably this is why the prophets often claim that they are propelled by the 'WORD' rather than the spirit of the ecstatic frenzy.

(i) Ex.3:12^a,14;4:4,12 Here Yahweh's efficacious presence which

renders all fears ineffectual and removes all obstacles is promised to Moses. Moses doubts how he would stand before Pharaoh to deliver Yahweh's command, and the answer is that Yahweh will be with him. In verse 14 this divine presence is brought out more forcefully in the theological explanation of the **אֲנִי אֶשְׁרָךְ** formula. Yahweh is one who does not leave His messenger on his own as he goes about executing His orders. He is with His servant always! In 4:4 Moses is taught how this Divine presence, clothed in the Divine word, can do away with human fears when obeyed. When his rod turned snake he fled from it out of fear, but when he obeyed Divine command to hold it by the tail, his fear was done away with.

In 4:12 Yahweh again replies to Moses' response of personal defect in speech with a promise of divine presence, **וְאֵלֶיךָ אֶשְׁרָךְ**. This divine presence is further emphasised by the fact that Yahweh will be teaching Moses what to say, i.e. he will not be abandoned in the task. Thus this divine presence with His messenger and subsequently with His people has come to be the very name of Yahweh.

(ii) Judges 6:16 /

(ii) Judges 6:16

Just like Moses' own case, Gideon receives a similar reply of Yahweh to his response after pondering his call commission. As with Moses Yahweh promises His divine presence - יְהוָה אִתְּךָ which takes care of Gideon's puzzle of whether God was really with the Israelites in any efficacious sense (Judges 6:13) and fear or feeling of personal inadequacy. Thus to Gideon, the theological formular of the divine affirmation of Yahweh's character as enunciated in the covenant name is portrayed as being exhibited. Because Yahweh will be with Gideon, he will be able to smite the Midianites as one man.

From the promise Yahweh makes it clear that the actual execution of the task is his, through his efficacious presence and his messenger/agent is merely a vehicle for the exercise. Therefore the emphasis on personal prowess does not actually or necessarily arise and Yahweh's demand as a result is inescapable.

(iii) Isaiah 6:11-12

Yahweh in reply to Isaiah's question in respect of his commission, shows for how long the doom would last - "Until cities lie waste....".

Divine answer is aimed at the nature of Isaiah's question - "How Long?" In the reply the irrevocable divine decision is reaffirmed.

(iv) Jeremiah 1:7 8 /

(iv) Jeremiah 1:7-8 In this section of the Call of the Prophet, the Deuteronomist has made Jeremiah appear in line with Prophets of Old speaking only what Yahweh will put in his mouth, not fearing the audience to whom he will deliver the word of Yahweh because Yahweh is with him - 'אֲנִי אֶעֱמִיד בְּיָדְךָ
With this the Deuteronomist shows him as following in the pattern of the prophet like unto Moses (Deut.18:18). Like Moses, Gideon (Joshua 1:5) the reply shows that Yahweh's presence is the assurance or certainty of the Prophet's refuge at all times as he carries out His orders.

(v) Ezekiel 2:8 Yahweh appears warning Ezekiel against pitching his tent with the rebellious house of Israel. The fact that Ezekiel is to carry out his commission irrespective of the result obtained or the wickedness of the people Verse 6 shows Yahweh will be with him like others saddled with a similar difficult task.

(F) ASSURANCE

In concluding his reply to the response of the called, Yahweh gives a further confirmation of his - 'I am with you', declaration. The assurance does not come simply as proof to satisfy the curiosity of the called, but comes to strengthen the commission by giving the word of Yahweh an additional impetus and serving as an enabler to the individual to act as God's agent.

The/

The assurance is a mark that what Yahweh has said will surely be carried out. It takes the form of promise, miracle or direct interaction between Yahweh and the called.

(i) Ex. 3:12^b;4:2-9;4:17 The assurance to Moses is the certainty that Yahweh will bring his people back to worship at the mount of commission. It is a promise whose validity will be proved after executing the commission. But it was strong enough at the time of commission to spur Moses into action, since Yahweh's presence with him implies His involvement and participation in the mission.

In Ex.4:2-9 the assurance takes the form of manifest miraculous feats. They are meant as public demonstration of Moses' claims and authority before the Israelites.

In Ex.4:17 Moses is told to hold the rod with which the miracles are to be performed. Thus from the writer's point of view, Yahweh's assurance is both present i.e. miracles and future - promise to worship at the Mountain.

(ii) Judges 6:21 The assurance given to Gideon to confirm that he had been talking to a Divine figure and has had a commission is the bringing out from the rock fire to consume his sacrifice. His unbelief about/

about his having received divine favour and mandate by asking for a sign is thus brushed off. And he becomes convinced enough to go about his task.

- (iii) Isaiah 6:13 Apart from the Literary problems posed by this verse in the context and its unity with what went before which is very controversial and leads to atomising the text into 13^{a,b,a, a,2nd}; it may, for purposes of this analysis, be taken as the assurance given Isaiah by Yahweh that his message will surely be fulfilled. (61) Taken in this sense, it means the idea of a 'remnant' after the Catastrophe in judgment is showing how thorough the divine judgment would be. The poor state of the 'hope' in the doom Isaiah is to proclaim - 'stump' - shows how severe the proposed destruction by Yahweh would be, it would only leave a 'stump' for Israel which is the holy seed,

- (iv) Jeremiah 1:9-10 To assure Jeremiah that his lack of fluency in speech will not constitute a hindrance in his delivering the Divine Commission, Yahweh reached out his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth. And in accordance with the injunction that he should only speak what he is commanded, Yahweh here puts the very words into his mouth, וַיִּתֵּן דְּבַר יְהוָה בְּפִי. With the symbolic act, Yahweh actualises the Deuteronomic /

Deuteronomic promise of Deut.18:18. With the act the Prophet becomes the embodiment of Divine Word! Thus there should be no dispute about the authenticity of his pronouncements.

To conclude the call, Yahweh again in Verse 10 demonstrates the irrevocable character of the commission. (62) The word $\gamma R \gamma$ is mentioned again, showing the firmness of Yahweh's decision.

(v) Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel is assured of the truth of the commission by Divine action. He is given a scroll written on both sides to eat. This authenticates whatever he utters as the valid oracles of Yahweh rather than his own subjective statements. After the assurance his commission is again reiterated in the following verses.

From the above analysis, it becomes evidently apparent that there is a deliberate literary intention to make the prophets use the same Call-Gattung with very little variation. In this sense, the latter prophets are made to appear as following in the footsteps of the early prophets. Thus the historical line of continuity is made to extend from the Ancient Mediators through the Divine Commission and its form to the Classical prophets. The result of this investigation into the close similarity between the Mosaic Call and the prophetic Call-Gattung, may be represented diagrammatically below.

Major/

MAJOR FEATURES OF THE CALL GATTUNG	Gideon	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Moses	Ezekiel	?
Call from an occupation	*			*		
Awe of Yahweh's immediate presence		*		*	*	*
Presence of a heavenly figure	*	*		*	*	*
The element of fire, mark of Yahweh's theophany		*		*	*	*
Yahweh on throne		*			*	
A voice heard or called		*	*	*	*	*
Complaint based on defects	*		*	*		*
Agent of redemption	*			*	*	*
Agent of Doom		*	*			
Direct Divine interaction		*	*		*	*
Forewarning of rejection		*		*	*	*
Promise of Divine presence	*		*	*		*
Giving of Sign	*			*		*
	6	8	5	10	8	9

From this Table, we find that out of the 13 major features of the Call Gattung, Mosaic Call has ten, Isaiah eight, Ezekiel eight, and Gideon six, while Jeremiah has five. And also in about nine instances where the same feature appears in more than two call narratives, Mosaic call is involved about eight times, Ezekiel seven, Isaiah six, and Jeremiah and Gideon four each.

The consequent conclusion from this is that either the Mosaic call narrative forms the groundwork of subsequent Literary pattern for the other call narratives, or it has been deliberately loaded with features of /

of later calls so as to make it the Standard and Archetype of all other call accounts.

From what we have seen of E. tradition and D's concept of Moses and his office earlier, the latter conclusion is very tempting to accept. (63)

REMARKS

Having now examined the various concepts of the Mosaic office of mediator and prophet; types of call, basic elements of the call narrative and the Literary pattern, it seems that at the time the Mosaic Call assumed Literary form, it was given contemporary prophetic call features so that the Classical prophets Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others may be seen in the call tradition, that had its origin from Moses, thus qualifying themselves as the promised Prophet(s) after Moses.

By so doing, the preservers of the call accounts make them establish a specific link with the past history of Israel, viewing their own call from the historical perspective of the commission of the Ancient mediators of Israel.

Thus, Mosaic Call account which has been influenced by later prophetic call narratives is made the model of the classical prophetic call Gattung by the author(s).

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NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

- (1) See JSOT 27 (1983) p.18
- (2) cf for instance Thompson's statement, "Nothing more historically concrete about the historical Moses and Yahweh can be known than about the historical Tammuz and Ishtar; nor is our knowledge about the wandering in the wilderness qualitatively different from what we know of odysseus' journey'. So to Thompson and others, Mosaic narratives is all heroic tales. See His contribution in Israelite and Judean History ed. by J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller, SCM London 1977 p. 177ff.
- (3) R.P. Carroll, after a careful and thorough investigation, has come to the conclusion that the search for the Historical Jeremiah is fraught with more difficulties than the quest for the Historical Jesus. And it is anybody's guess if similar result will not attend similar investigation into the historicity of other Prophetic figures. See From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah SCM 1981 p.25.
- (4) See R.E. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, London 1980, p.71.
- (5) cf For instance the Books of Jeremiah and Isaiah which are riddled with Deuteronomistic nuances. See for full discussion R.P. Carroll, From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah 1981 pp.13-18, and 77-79. Here too one may like to refer to Gerstenberger and other scholars, who see the Prophets as speaking nothing new or out of their own time, other than merely repeating traditional words and familiar cliches drawn from the cult tradition. See his "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets" JBL 81 (1962) pp.249-63.
- (6) /

(6) See Rendtorff, Das Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch (BZAW 147, 1977) pp.108 & 147 where he says, "A Theological conception which embraces the entire Pentateuch and can be shown convincingly to be that of the Yahwist, is apparently not to be seen", and again, "To the critical observer, the document theory and particularly the image of the Yahwist it now offers presents itself in many respects as a frankly anachronistic undertaking with great methodological problems. The presupposition of sources in the sense of the document hypothesis is no longer able to make any further contribution to the understanding of the formation of the Pentateuch".

(7) Here the source P. is being deliberately omitted because of its little or no significance in this investigation. So the focus is on J.E. and D., since I will not be discussing P's own version of the call in Ex. 6:2-11 and 7:1-9.

(8) Martin Noth, History of Pentateuchal Traditions, London 1972 p.156.

(9) Here it seems it is the spirit of Yahweh on Moses and not a portion of Moses' own spirit. Although no sign of ecstasy is found with Moses, but a portion of his spirit gives it to others. Here Moses is presented in two different pictures; he is a prophet, but more than the ones of dreams and visions, and though not himself ecstatic, the origin of it can be traced to his spirit - a much later development which sees in Moses a confluence of different types of Prophecy.

(10) /

- (10) What probably originally was a positive story of the divine appointment of the Elders, now appears woven into a negative context of Israel's illegitimate request ~~and~~ the punishment resulting from it by the editor. Thus the appointment of the Elders is made to appear necessary as a result of the people's Sin. Apart from this inclination of the editor it would also appear as if prophecy is here being used to legitimise a political office.

And in Numbers 12, Aaron, in all probability is secondary because: (i) The Unit begins with a 3rd person singular feminine verb which suggests it was Miriam who originally murmured against Moses; (ii) She was the only one punished while second culprit Aaron intercedes. It would therefore seem that the story originally reflects conflict over prophetic authority rather than Priestly conflict, because while Miriam was never a Priest, she is explicitly referred to as a נביא. IF this reflects later history, it seems to say that Prophets if arranged in a hierarchical order, for purposes of distinction, the most senior is the one whose revelation is by the WORD. Thus Moses who hears the WORD directly and whose word is always accurate stands at the Apex. And all true prophets take after him.

- (11) Here compare with Prophets who lay claim to a vision or interaction with God as a mark of authentication of their utterances, while ridiculing those they presume not having had such privilege, cf. Jer.23:28;23:16ff; I Kings 22:13-23.

- (12) /

- (12) cf The Canonical Prophets who claim to 'see Yahweh', like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micaiah etc., though they usually refrain from describing the figure or person of Yahweh except the similitude. They, like Moses, are given the privilege of admission to Yahweh's immediate presence or heavenly Council, and so are able to see more of Divine glory.
- (13) According to this tradition, the office of intercession seems to have been associated with the Prophet which may account for why Abraham is called a prophet in Genesis 20:7 because he offers intercession for Abimelech even though the conferment seems made 'honoris causa'. For this reason too some have found it proper to associate the Prophet with a cultic office, since such intercession by the prophet will be made in the course of worship when the Prophet delivers oracles against foreign Nations and calls down curses against particular enemies. This conjecture is based on Mowinckel's thesis of Prophets as cultic personnel which no longer carries any weight. See Psalmen Studien Vol.11 (Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen) Oslo 1923, supported by A.R. Johnson The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, Cardiff 1944 & 2nd Ed. 1962, and also see his recent work, The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody 1979, and A.Halder Association of Cult Prophets among the Semites Uppsala 1945.
- (14) The question of whether the Prophet should be seen in this context: cult personnel who has to read the Law during covenant renewal as H.J. Kraus thinks is controversial and can not be proved with evidence. Even the amphictyony theory the basis of his argument, apart from being currently challenged, appears not able to bear the weight he places upon it. See his/

(14) (contd)

his Worship in Israel, Richmond, 1966 pp.102-112. What he presents here is the revised form of what he had earlier stated in Die Prophetische Verkündigung des Rechts in Israel Evz 1957.

(15) Although the text mentions Prophet in the singular but whether it is to be understood as a series of Prophets from time to time or as a single futuristic Messianic figure is hotly debated. R.P. Carroll in VT 19 (1969) p.401 says, "There are two possible interpretations of what precisely was envisaged by the Deuteronomists in their Sketch of the Prophet. They may have intended their statement to be a prediction with a single fulfilment in the future namely, the coming of an eschatological figure. However the view taken in this paper is that they had in mind a succession of prophets of which Moses was the Prototype", see his FN. 2,3 & 4. The real problem in the Text is the interpretation of the verb 'RAISE' which is capable of being interpreted in its distributive sense i.e. succession of Prophets or as a predictive single futuristic Messianic figure. A.D.H. Mayes has however warned that it should not be interpreted with reference to an institutional office. According to him, "The verse is rather a general reflection on the history and significance of prophecy in Israel in which the prophets are understood in relation to Moses and legitimized through connection of their proclamation with the Law that was given through him". Deuteronomy: Commentary Oliphants 1979 p.282. For more work on the Text debate /

(15) (contd)

debate see, J.R. Porter, Moses and Monarchy, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1963; W.A. Meeks The Prophet-King (Leiden E.J. Brill 1967, and H.M. Teeple, The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet, Philadelphia SBL 1957. cf G.W. Coats explanation on Deut. 34:10-12 in relation to the Text in CBQ 39 (1977) pp.37-38.

(16) See his, "Form and Significance of the Call Narrative" ZAW 77 (1965). He developed the earlier observations of Zimmerli and was later followed by Kilian and Richter with some variations. Out of all of them Habel's work appears more standard which is why we have chosen to use it instead of the others.

(17) (i) Divine Confrontation

(ii) Introductory word

(iii) Commission

(iv) Objection

(v) Reassurance

(vi) Sign

(18) He has suggested, in place of Habel's six divisions, four viz., (i) Encounter with the Divine, (ii) Commission, (iii) Response, and (iv) Sign or vision. See From Chaos to Covenant p.43.

(19) /

- (19) In the following analysis we are omitting Saul and David.

This is because, although their stories have certain affinities with those analysed yet they are different in that while the cases cited had confrontation with a divine figure David and Saul met or were encountered by human figure the Prophet. Unlike Samuel, Moses and Gideon, they were Kings anointed by Prophets with whom Yahweh had contact. Thus their call was second hand mediated by a Prophet. And their period is a transition from hero to Monarch era. J. van Seters has said, and I agree with him, that, "The parallels between the two stories, Gideon and Saul are the result of common authorship not evidence for a prophetic call pattern, as some have suggested". In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History, New Haven 1983 p.256 FN.28.

- (20) See Chapter 2 p.82ff. Where much has been said about these two figures Yahweh/Angel.

- (21) In I Sam.3:21 we may have the redactor's work, as he tries to emphasise the mode of Yahweh's manifestation i.e. through or by the WORD cf. Deut. 4:15. But this does not detract from the essence of the story which describes Yahweh's theophany at the cult in Shiloh amongst his worshipping community.

- (22) It will be an eisegesis rather than exegetical interpretation of the text to think that the inexperienced boy Samuel here sleeping before the Ark as part of his duty in the Temple/ Sanctuary /

(22) (contd)

Sanctuary (I Sam 2:18), was having what is usually called Prophetic incubation sleep. It stands to be doubted if the authors so meant the passage.

(23) cf Ex. 4:19 "And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead".

(24) In the case of Gideon, the Angel touched the Sacrifice and not Gideon himself, Judges 6:21.

(25) Apart from what we said earlier (Chapter 2) the following may be added. The word אוֹת sign occurs some 79 times in the Old Testament, and has its shades of meaning extending from the material through physical potent to oracle. We have as examples the mark on Cain, the Scarlet Cord by which Rahab's house was indicated to the Israelites and Circumcision. The word or oracle of the Prophet as something awaited to happen in the future is also described as sign Deut. 13:2-3. Here in Ex. 3:12 Yahweh reaffirms his promise of Divine presence with Moses as the sign of his victory or success in leading the Israelites out of Egypt which will culminate in Yahweh worship at the Mountain. So sign may not necessarily be limited to miracles as many commentators are inclined to; cf ISam. 2:34; 10:1-2. Even sign as miracle may not of necessity belong to the call experience, but could be an after event struggle of the called to convince himself that he had seen the extraordinary.

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(25) (contd)

It is the state of mind in which the called is left after he had had the encounter with the numinous. He seeks evidence to confirm that what he had seen and heard is real and that he is now a different person; cf the struggle Muhammad had with himself after his call and was in this state of mind. He told his wife he feared he would die, and became so despondent that he was tempted to cast himself head long from a cliff. It was only much later that he came to believe himself a commissioned Apostle of Allah. See Obbink HUCA 14 (1939) p.24.

(26) With some modifications, this pattern could be extended to the charismatic leaders 7'λ], but for the purpose of our investigation these three characters serve as a representative case.

(27) It is very unlikely that J. modelled this account of the commissioning of the servant of Abraham on the Prophetic Call Narratives which involve Yahweh Himself.

(28) Here the question of delegated authority has been raised by K. W. Schmidt in Biblica 63 (1982) pp.206-218 with abundant Biblical illustrations. But one finds it difficult to see the relevance of Ex. 4:15-17 with the Texts cited.

(i) In Ex. 4:15-17 It is Yahweh not Moses who is appointing Aaron to accompany Moses. Though Aaron will speak for Moses - which he never did - it is Yahweh who will teach them both what to say.

(ii) /

(28) (contd)

(ii) So Yahweh is neither requesting Moses to delegate his authority nor is Moses presented as intending to freely exercise his messengerhsip freedom in delegating his authority to someone else, rather it is Yahweh who is directly making Aaron, Moses' Assistant.

(iii) This is therefore different from all the forms of delegated authority outlined by Schmidt where the delegate carries the message and represents the delegator at the delivery spot. In our Text both Aaron and Moses are to be on the spot of delivery representing Yahweh who is physically absent, cf. the cases cited by Schmidt

(A) Jeremiah 51:59 ff Seraiah in Babylon representing Jeremiah.

(B) Jeremiah 36:1-8 Baruch represents Jeremiah where the latter could not be.

(C) I Kings 14:1-18 Jeroboam's wife carries delegated message from Ahijah to Jeroboam. So also Jeremiah and the messengers of Zedekiah Jer.21:1-14.

In view of the above, Ex. 4:15-17 can not even with a twist be made to fit the paradigm of delegated authority.

(29) But in the post-exilic Prophets, such experience of direct confrontation with Yahweh is lacking e.g. Zech. 3:1-5 because at this time, an intermediary in the form of an Angelic /

(29) (contd)

Angelic figure is needed between Yahweh and the Prophet so that the presence of the intermediary precludes the direct experience of the Prophet with Yahweh in his court.

- (30) With the adoption of the Monarchical System, Israel, one would say, moved into the Vassal-Kingdom status in the Divine world order. And although the individual Kings were the embodiment of the human/divine kingship, but nevertheless the individual Kings like David, Solomon etc. still recognised that they ruled only at the pleasure and dictates of Yahweh (The King is Yahweh's servant II Sam. 7:4-5). To heighten this, we find that the picture of the task of the prophets with Divine Council background is that of disaster for the people just as the message of the great King would be to his rebellious vassal.

Isaiah - To stiffen the people's neck the more.

Micaiah - Disaster for the King and people.

Jeremiah - To pluck down and overthrow before rebuilding.

Ezekiel - Hopelessness.

- (31) It may be said that probably this is why the language of the Prophets is much more diplomatic than cultic, see Holladay (Jr.) HTR 63 (1970) p.31 and compare Klaus Koch's statement, "It is noticeable that in giving form to their prophecy, the Nabis do not borrow cultic types of text, they adopt the language of diplomats". The Prophets: The Assyrian Period, Vol.I SCM London, 1982 p.22.

(32) /

- (32) See his, *Before Philosophy*, edited by H. Frankfort
(1949) pp.137-234.
- (33) The Council of this type of a peaceful atmosphere is found in the projection of the Qumran Community concepts of $\overline{\text{nn}}$ and $\overline{\text{nn}}$ either in reference to the Community of the faithful or as the heavenly Council which features prominently in their apocalyptic declarations.
- (34) Although the background picture of a heavenly Council may be argued in respect of some of the prophets in their inaugural call experience because it is not explicitly stated like others, but the pattern of Suzerain/Vassal communication is found adopted by all, apart from the poetic traits which raise some questions.
- (35) The reason why Amos mentions occupation may be his intention to refute Amaziah's statement that he should go to Judah where he could safely live on his oracles. So Amos wants to tell him that he does not earn his living by prophesying. Rather he belongs to the tradition of the Mosaic type and not the professional cultic consultants. (It is doubtful he used the term as an honorific title or cliché).
- (36) There could be other interpretations of this text especially when taken as a rhetorical question which would neither refer to Jeremiah nor the false prophets. But it seems if taken in the context of Jeremiah's contest with the false prophets and in relation to V.22 the logic of the statement would imply that Jeremiah is proving the other prophets wrong because they have not /

(36) (contd)

not 'stood in the Council of Yahweh nor heard his word'. And if his statement is taken then his own message will be as good as that of the false prophets, which he would contest, if he had not been to the Council of Yahweh or heard His word himself. So his argument against the false prophets will be self-defeating except if he is using the text to legitimise his own oracle as having divine origin. But even in this Jeremiah does not appear to have solved all his problems, because V.22 which says the false prophets would have led the people to repentance with their oracle if it had had divine origin would argue against Jeremiah since his oracle failed to convince and convert the people.

(37) As Zimmerli has said, the call account of Jeremiah is a well tailored piece to suit or serve a particular purpose. It has various elements drawn from different sources which have been oddly crowded in and subordinated to the WORD of God which is what the authors want to give emphasis to. See his discussion on the issue in, Ezekiel Vol. I pp.97ff.

(38) The voice of Yahweh which comes with Yahweh's message is often found spoken of as if it were a 'distinct agent' of Yahweh's revelation. Whether the Old Testament justifies such hypostatisation or not is an open question, cf. Jer.1:4 with the views of Jacob in his Old Testament Theology ET London 1974, p.134.

(39) For a full discussion on the theological and symbolic interpretation of Isaiah 6, see Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12 pp 117-134.

(40) The problem here in Isaiah 6:10ff is that if this is the mission of the prophet, it becomes difficult to blame the people for not repenting at his preaching, as well as to justify divine action in punishing the people. Here compare Ex. 3:14 where Pharaoh is to have his heart hardened by Yahweh so as to receive more divine punishment, (see Chapter 5 for the theological explanation we offer). It is on account of this problem that Kaplan has objected to this being Isaiah's call and commission. See JBL 45 (1926) pp 251-259 and VT 14 (1964) pp 164-82 which contains the views of J. Milgrom who supports Kaplan's.

(41) The problem of whether Verse 13 belongs here or not need not be entered into here, See p.195 and Note 61.

(42) Apart from the reflection of certain ideological motifs or beliefs here, it could also be regarded as the probable result of religious thoughts intensified into conceptual pictures, cf Ezekiel 8:1-4 where the throne is seen in the Temple - probably the Ark and Cherubim.

(43) See H. Gressmann, Mose und Seine Zeit 1913 pp.21ff;
B.S. Childs Exodus 1974 pp 54ff; Ivan Engnell The Call of Isaiah, An Exegetical and Comparative Study (U.U.A. 1949:4) Uppsala 1949 pp 32ff; H Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches ich bei Jeremia, Gutersloh 1963 pp 24-77.

(44) /

- (44) It could even be suggested that the fire which surrounded the Deity in the Mosaic Call could be regarded as his Cherubim, who are known to be fire and light beings. And even the word עָרָב by definition means burn. Thus Mosaic Call expressly reflects that of Prophet Isaiah. Though the heavenly beings have dazzling fire-like appearance they burn not like as in the 'Burning Bush' context.
- (45) Rather than taking Jeremiah's statement literally which would mean nonsense, it should be seen to imply that Jeremiah is seeing his Prophetic authority from two dimensions viz:
- (i) His belonging to the Priestly lineage which means his being set apart for God's service before he was born.
 - or
 - (ii) His personal encounter with the Divine which means his call. So he could be having a double authority for his message.
- (46) See Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology Vol.II p.54.
- (47) W.L. Moran, New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy. Biblica 50 (1969) pp 15-56.
- (48) Ibid. p.19
- (49) This issue of whether Amos'reply is to be read as present or past tense will not be entered into here. For the debate on it, see G.M. Tucker Prophetic Authenticity: A Form Critical Study of Amos 7:10-17, Interpretation 27 (1973) pp 423-434; /

(49) (contd)

pp. 423-434; H.H. Rowley, "Was Amos a Nabi?" Festschrift Otto Eisseltdt 1947 pp. 191-98. More complexities in the story are revealed by the fact that, while in Amaziah's message to Jeroboam Amos is accused of 'unlawful'activities which are tantamount to high treason, when Amos is addressed in person it is the question of jurisdiction that is raised. But when Amos wants to reply to his accuser he focusses on question of Authority or Warrant.

In the face of all these, it could be said that Amos was indignant at being grouped with professional prophet consultants who lived by their oracles as in Micah 3:11
3:5 - Prophets who not only sold comforting messages to those who could pay but declared war against those who refuse them money or put something into their mouth. OR even like Ez.13:19 type of Prophetesses who prophesy for handful of barley and pieces of bread. It may be this fundamental error in Amaziah's statement that Amos tries to rectify.

(50) It may be noted that in any attempt to use Wilson's anthropological theory of 'Central and Peripheral' on the Canonical Prophets, one can not avoid vacillating between designating the Prophets central at one point and peripheral at another - a sign of the impropriety of the model on Biblical Prophetic pericope. Here one can not do better than refer to Carroll's critique of the model with exhaustive and convincing illustrations from the Book of Jeremiah.

See/

(50) (contd)

See his yet unpublished paper, "Central and Peripheral Prophets: Critique of an anthropological Model for Biblical Prophecy", read at the SOTS Conference on January 4th 1985 (London).

(51) Here the problem of the integrity of the Text and the issue of whether it was a New Year festival or not is beyond the scope of this thesis, for which see Kingsbury JBL 83 (1964) p.280 and R.R. Wilson Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel, Philadelphia 1980 pp. 208-209.

(52) Here it is difficult to know whether it is Uzziah's death that is referred to, or his leprosy as a result of which he ceased functioning as a King and was confined to a Sanitarium מִשְׁכַּח הַמֶּלֶךְ II Kings 15:5 = II Chron. 26:21. Of course from the Jewish point of view, leprosy renders one a living dead.

(53) cf Hosea 3:4 where Kingship is mentioned along with other things which from the Prophet's point of view have decoyed Israel away from Yahweh as wrong institution and which Israel have to do without for some time.

We may compare how Solomon is subtly described in I Kings 9:18 like Pharaoh in Ex. 1:11,; both built store cities with the slave labour of the Israelites. The stark truth of I Kings 5:13-17, corroborated by I Kings 12:4, is found corrected or contradicted for one reason or the other in I Kings 9:22 which does not detract from the truth. This is more so if we realise /

(53) (contd)

realise that I Sam. 8:10-17 was by a later hand reflecting on the reign of Solomon and puts what actually happened in form of prediction, cf. also Deut. 17:16 ff.

(54) Even where we have the account in the first personal pronoun, there are problems such as in Ezekiel 1:1-3 where the change from first person singular to third person singular is difficult to explain.

(55) Habel ZAW 77 (1965) pp. 297-323.

(56) See above p.149.

(57) For the Form-Literary Criticism and Unity of Ex.3 and 4 see earlier work in Chapter 2.

(58) cf The Egypt Text in a Stele of King Pianchi (25th Dynasty c^c751-730B.C.) which predates Jeremiah. It says, Pianchi (11:1-6) = (speech of Amun), "It was in the belly of your Mother that I said concerning you that you were to be ruler of Egypt, it was as seed, and while you were in the egg that I knew you, that (I knew) you were to be Lord". M.Gilula VT.17 (1967) p.114. So the statement in Jeremiah of his choice before birth may be taken as a democratisation of the Kingship or royal ideology at least in this Israelite context.

(59) Habel p.299.

(60) Ibid

(61) For more exegetical points on this verse see, Otto Kaiser's Isaiah 1-12 pp.133ff.

- (62) As for the dispute over the two middle verbs of the sextet which are regarded as unoriginal, see Giesebrecht in W.L. Holladay JBL 83 (1964) pp.157ff.
- (63) Now that J. has recently been given a late date extending to the Exile by scholars like F.V. Winnett, John van Seters, H.H. Schmid and H. Vorlanders, and E's time of composition regarded as coterminous with DTR's, it appears our conclusion that the classical Prophetic Calls influenced the Literary form of the Mosaic call account, which is exilic, may not be so easily contested.

CHAPTER 4

BURNING BUSH MOTIF IN SUBSEQUENT BIBLICAL LITERATURE AND POST-BIBLICAL WRITINGS

ON UNDERSTANDING THE 'BURNING BUSH'

Having established the developmental stages of our Text, and how it has come to assume its present literary form, with the discussion on the Biblical genre, we may now advance a step further in our investigation by examining that aspect of the story that is commonly found in most Biblical narratives of Divine manifestation, namely 'The burning-fire motif'.

Without mincing words, it is a recognised fact that the 'Burning Bush' incident has been cherished by Judaism and Christianity as a major event in sacred history. From its Biblical account, it appears the author wants to get across to his readers the notion that the burning bush constituted the source of Moses' inspiration as it showed him the presence of the invisible Deity whose voice came to him from within the fire. And it was during the dialogue that ensued that Moses was given a sense of Divine Mission to Egypt, strengthened with the promise of Divine presence with him.

Apart from this broad based idea about the story, on which there is a general agreement, it seems that when we turn to consider critically the 'Burning of the Bush not consumed itself', two scholars scarcely agree as to what actually happened and how it happened. Was the burning bush a real event experienced by Moses in his encounter with the Deity or Divine being, or a motif indicative of Divine Presence? Did a Moses even ever see a burning bush?

These /

These questions and the puzzle of the probable location of the Site where the incident happened as well as the doubt about the meaning or definition of נֶחֱשֶׁת usually rendered thorn-bush or simply bush, (1) make it difficult not to believe that what we have here is a 'literary theophany' in which burning bush has been used as a theological motif indicative of Divine Manifestation. (2) The word נֶחֱשֶׁת apart from our Text, is found used only once in the entire Old Testament and it is in form of Post-Deuteronomistic addition to Deuteronomy (Deut 33:16). The apparent sacred grove of this reference is not found mentioned or referred to, being the first meeting point between Yahweh and Moses, even when the Israelites came back to the mountain to consummate^m their Union with Yahweh, assuming that the later Sinai of the Covenant is one and the same mountain (Ex.3:12).

That a Deity could be referred to as dwelling in a grove on or near a mountain has been said to be a common feature in primitive semitic religion. (3) This view has been corroborated by an extra-Biblical ancient inscription found in the Sinai desert which reads, "The god Safdu who dwells in the Nabs", an expression which appears analogous to the Biblical Divine epithet, "Dweller in the Bush" (Deut 33:16). (4) And also in the Temple of Horus at Edfu between Luxor and Aswan in Egypt, there is recorded a story which says of the great falcon Deity, "Lo you are a flame inspiring fear..... which lives on in a mound of KK - bushes". (5) Although this story dates about 1000 years after Moses is believed to have lived, it is interesting that the tradition preserves the notion similar to that of Moses, that the Deity manifested himself by an awesome flame in a cluster of bushes.

What /

What we could infer from this is that, apart from looking like a play on the Word Sinai, it seems that it was a common phenomenon among the Ancients to associate Divine Manifestation with burning fire and a sacred grove or Tree/bush.

Therefore the understanding of the burning fire in our Text, like other fires in most Old Testament theophanies may be sought in the realm of theological representation of the unapproachable sanctity and overpowering glory of Yahweh as known in later Yahwism. Like other religions, it requires no emphasis that, the Old Testament is of the view that fire has a close connection with the spiritual world, although this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the heavenly beings are by nature composed of fire. (6) Although there are copious Biblical references showing Yahweh's close association with burning fire, yet there is not a single piece of evidence that he was at any time taken for or as a fire-god. The history of religion tells us only of two genuine fire-gods: Agni of Hinduism and Atar of Zoroastrianism. Nearly all other gods of other religions are either closely associated with fire like the Mesopotamia gods Girra/Gibil, Marduk, Nergal etc., or have fire as their epithet like the Greek gods.

So in view of the foregoing, how are we then to interpret the burning bush?

INTERPRETING THE 'BURNING BUSH'

Of the various interpretations advanced by scholars for understanding our Text, like Moses' psychological state of mind at the time of the /

the incident or taking the story as a fanciful tale about theophany in a holy place (7) etc., only one really deserves some serious consideration here which is that of naturalistic explanation.

Though this theory often commends itself more than others amongst scholars, it seems to us that it is itself fraught with as much, if not more, difficulties as the other theories and so it compounds the problems of understanding the text rather than solve them.

While the view that one may see in the burning bush something like St. Elmo's Fire or the delusive appearance of some type of leaves of a brilliant hue, has been branded by Hyatt as vain naturalistic explanation, (8) it seems it is only the theory of Volcanic eruption that is worth giving some attention.

This view which dates back to G.H. Shipwith (9) has been advanced to explain both the Ex.3:2 incident and Ex.19 and 24 theophanies. And due to the fact that the element fire or storm is more pronounced in Ex. 19 and 24, some commentators have tried to see it as the basis of all later depictions of theophany where the details suggest a thunderstorm accompanied by a volcanic eruption or earthquake. (10) Apart from the fact that J. Jeremias (11) has contested the validity of the assertion that Ex. 19 and 24 serve as basis for other theophanic descriptions, one may ask how seriously the Ex. 3:2 account can be regarded as a volcanic eruption in view of the following:

- (i) IF here in Ex. 3:2 we see a volcanic eruption, it is surprising that we are told the bush was not burnt and also that such a situation could give rise to a message for a Moses.

(ii) /

- (ii) Even if the concept of subterranean fire is conceded, it is yet to be proved with Biblical evidence or from extra-Biblical sources that the 'bush' was located close to seeping gases.
- (iii) The Volcano suggestion even appears to make a fool of Moses, who after spending 40 years in Midian (Acts 7:23,30; Ex. 7:7) shepherding the flock of Jethro almost in the same environment could not know better, and so the sight of a volcanic eruption could create a sense of curiosity in him. And is it even unlikely that there would have been stories about the place if it were subjected to volcanic eruptions or subterranean fire?
- (iv) Like the Exodus 3:2 account, the story in Ex.19 and 24 hardly justifies an earthquake or a volcano. This is because in historical times, volcanoes are yet to be attested for the Sinai peninsula and the Seir-Edom region which are more plausible locations for Mount Sinai than the present day Saudi-Arabia.
- (v) Also even if it is granted that it was a volcano, experience shows that the fire of volcanoes goes upward rather than descend from heaven as we have it in Ex.19 and 24.
- (vi) And what is more, if Ex. 24:9-11 were a volcanic eruption it is surprising that the Elders with Moses could ascend it to a point where they could behold a human foot, 'as sitting on a throne', and there stay to eat and drink.
- (vii) /

(vii) And finally, if what we have in Ex.19 and 24 were a volcanic eruption, it must have been suicidal for Moses to be aware of it and yet climb up to the summit or for the congregation to stand round the mountain below. (12)

Thus, it is in view of these problems and many more that we say that what we are having in these theophanies is not a volcanic eruption as is generally held by commentators. What the Biblical author has in mind is not a picture of any natural phenomenon but of something supernatural; not of an actual fire in the 'bush' or summit of the mountain, but something mysterious and awful which could seem to the beholder to have the appearance of a burning or consuming fire - the language of theophany. This brings us to the question, what then was the 'burning bush'?

THE BURNING BUSH AS A THEOLOGICAL MOTIF

In the light of what has been said above and our contention that the 'burning bush' should be seen as a theological motif, we may now briefly look at the language used by the author/writer for some evidence. This is because the only index we have to the thoughts and intentions of the storyteller is his use of language. In this regard, it may be noted that in the Hebrew Bible there are three principal words usually translated 'burn' or 'burning of fire'.

The first word שָׂרַף which is found in a couple of references means to 'consume' and is used in relation to sacrifice. Generally it appears to be destructive in nature as we have in Joshua 8:28; II Kings 23:16 and Leviticus 4:12 and 16:27. It is at times found used when burning/

burning as a holocaust is intended, probably to preserve the sanctity of the objects so destroyed from coming into profane contact e.g. Ex. 12:10;29:34; Leviticus 4:12.

The second type of burn $\aleph \omega \aleph$ refers to the burning of bits and pieces and incense. It is found principally used for the burning of incense and sacrificial pieces which ascend as sweet savour to Yahweh (cf Ex.30:7; I Kings 3:3 and Leviticus 4:10;16:25). Here the difference from $\aleph \aleph \omega$ is in the functional context rather than in the definition.

But the third type of burn is designated by the word $\aleph \omega \aleph$ ba'ar. Where it is used, the emphasis appears placed on what it generates i.e. light, and so it is used in connection with keeping the altar fire alight cf. Neh.10:34. And it is this word $\aleph \omega \aleph$ we find used in Ex.3:2.

From this explanation therefore it could be said that the burning bush fire may not be taken literally but rather metaphorically. The Jerusalem Bible translation appears aware of this in rendering Ex. 3:2 as, "There the Angel of Yahweh appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire coming from the middle of the bush".

And if we here recall our finding in Chapter One, where we observed that the preposition ' \aleph ' translated 'In' could have been a mistake by the scribe for ' ω ' meaning 'as'; and the fact that the author explicitly states that the fire in his story does not burn what it comes into contact with, then we may begin to see that the point of emphasis is on the dazzling appearance of the figure who appeared to Moses /

Moses as a result of which the surroundings was aglow with light like fire. This is why what seemed like fire did not in actuality burn the bush, which was what provoked Moses' curiosity to find out why.

Thus it means what we have in Ex. 3:2 is like other Biblical theophanic fires which though they burn, never actually burn i.e. consume the objects in their embrace, (cf. Isaiah 6:6 where the burning coal of fire with which Isaiah's lips were cauterised never burnt him).

Apart from this, our writer even tells us that the Angel who appeared in the 'flame of fire' also spoke from the midst of it, an indication that what we are to understand here is not the type of terrestrial iron furnace that consumes but rather a symbol of the glowing presence of the Angel/Yahweh when he appears in visible form to man.

So like Ex. 19:12-13; and 34:3 where Yahweh's immediate presence is not to be wantonly approached by man or animal on pain of death, so in Ex. 3:2-3 Yahweh's immediate surroundings is described in terms of fire to give a mental picture of His awful Majesty and holiness when he appears. Thus we are told, Moses is warned not to get near, not in order that he might not be burnt, but rather because the spot is holy.

So the fire is simply a symbol of Divine presence and probably this is why the author does not tell us what happened to it later or whether the entire bush continued in conflagration! The point of interest is the description of Yahweh's self-revelation and what the situation is like when he appears to man. So the issue of fire qua fire is of less importance and any enquiry into its phenomenological equivalent is an idle/

idle task, because it is purely a motif or vehicle used to convey theological message.

Thus we find that immediately the impression is made about the 'mysterium tremendum et fascinans' of Yahweh's self-disclosure, emphasis shifts to the content of the message or word heard, leaving aside the form of the person seen, as well as the seemingly disrupted natural order. The writer's interest is the point that the theophany happened and Yahweh's presence rendered the place sacred because his glory which has tabernacled there has purified it. So though nothing was heard of the spot before, now it is to become (13) the dwelling of Yahweh - they shall come to worship him at the mountain (Ex.3:12).

So it could be concluded that what we have in Ex. 3:2-3 is an account or tradition which reports of a mysterious religious experience which has been reworked in light of the unapproachable majesty of Yahweh of later faith showing the awesomeness of his immediate presence depicted in terms of burning fire. Having thus explained that the 'burning fire' in our Text is a theological motif, we need to say something about how we want to treat the motif in this Chapter.

According to the title of this Chapter, we are to examine the burning bush motif in subsequent Biblical literature and in Post Biblical writings. But there is an ambiguity in the use of the burning bush motif in these two areas we want to explore. This is because while in subsequent Biblical literature emphasis is on the burning fire as indicative of 'Divine Presence' as it was to Moses /

Moses, or guidance and at times judgment with no reference to bush; in the Post Biblical literature it is the burning and unconsumed nature of the bush - oppression and hope of survival complex - that is emphasised leaving out the fire as such. This may be because at this time the Israelites saw their situation fittingly depicted by a bush surrounded by 'fire of oppression' but yet not burnt out of existence. So instead of the burning bush being a motif expressive of Divine presence, it is taken as indicative of Divine participation with Israel in the vicissitudes of life with hope of ultimate salvation.

What this means is that in the Biblical literature, the burning bush motif is used as harbinger of Yahweh's presence or activity in the cosmos, while in Post Biblical writings it is used to convey God's activity among or on behalf of his suffering people. This apparent hiatus between the Biblical and Post Biblical uses of the motif may be attributed to the fact that our story, as showed in Chapter 2, was compiled late and so rather than influence other Biblical literature in the sense that the Rabbis used it, was itself informed by the use of Divine burning fire as found in other Biblical passages. But the subsequent history of oppression and deprivation of Israel from the time of Babylonian exile onwards, however, proved a 'profitable ground' for the application of the burning bush motif in the Rabbinic sense, which is why it is richly used in Post Biblical literature.

So we shall examine the motif of the burning bush in subsequent Biblical /

Biblical literature in the context of the burning fire of Yahweh and in the Post Biblical writings as expressive of what it can be seen to mean for Yahweh's people in suffering or anguish.

But first let us look at the concept of 'Divine fire' among Israelite neighbours to shed light by comparison on the Israelite use of Yahweh's burning fire motif.

DIVINE FIRE MOTIF AMONG ISRAELITE NEIGHBOURS

Among most Nations of antiquity, fire was venerated and many religious rites were associated with it. This was particularly so especially during the pre-Deistic stage, when gods were to a large extent personifications of what we would call natural forces. It is beyond the scope of this investigation to attempt to deal with all the numerous customs associated with fire among the Ancients, for which J. G. Frazer's "Golden Bough" would be an invaluable reference. (14) It may not be out of place to assume that the role that fire played in the religious life of the Ancients was due principally to its ambivalent nature; as a powerful agent for good or for evil, an awareness which might have generated in men great veneration for it. This would mean that the notions of gratitude and fear were mingled in the minds of men and in their attitude to fire. Thus among a worshipping group, it could symbolise either the presence of the deity or the execution of punishment on an offender.

Apart /

Apart from the above, it is even reported that among the Ancients, fire was regarded as an antidote to evil influences in general and thus a means of ritual purification. (15) Fire was therefore used by many either to expel evil forces or to bar their approach. (16) We are told for instance that Odysseus cleansed his house with fire and brimstone (Hom. Odysseus 22:492ff). Because of the sacred associations that had come to develop around fire, the notion was held that it could even be polluted by contact with the dead, and so in the event of death, the polluted fire would have to be put out and a new one brought from another place. Associated with this belief was the notion of the mysterious appearance of "automatic fire" on an altar, which was considered in antiquity as a token of divine favour. (17)

Thus Pausanias tells us that when Seleucus together with Alexander offered sacrifice to Zeus at Pella, the wood on the altar blazed automatically, (Pausanias 1:16 cf I Kings 18:38; Judges 6:21). Also Valerius Maximus mentions a similar 'miracle' at Egnatia, while in one of Vergil's Eclogues a sudden blaze upon an altar was deemed an auspicious omen. (18) While automatic altar fire was regarded as divine favour, the extinction of altar fire was taken as an indication of the withdrawal of the god or goddess, (cf Lev. 9:24).

Among the Persians, fire belongs to the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda, whose body in Persian orthodoxy is always a fiery one, a flame blazing forth in uncreated light. Because it is believed that it could be polluted by contact with corpse, cremation is regarded as an abominable offence, (Vandidad 8, 229ff). Among the Egyptians, one of the several words/

words for flame is used to designate the goddess Sachmet whose iconographic representation is commonly in the form of a Lion, and it is said that the Egyptian Temple on the day of its consecration was supposed to be purified with torches. (19)

In the close association of fire with the gods, we have copious examples of instances where fire is used as an epithet of the gods or mentioned as an expression of glory in the epiphany of the gods. Thus the Greek fire-god Aeon is given the following titles in prayer: "Hear me...Lord who with thy breath hast closed the fiery locks of heaven, thou ruler of fire (*Πυριπολις*), breather of fire (*Πυριπνοε*), strong in fire (*Πυριθυμιε*), joyous in fire (*Πυριχαρη*), having a body of fire (*Πυρισωματα*), sowing fire (*Πυριεπορε*), fire roaring (*Πυρικλωνε*) and receptacle of fire (*Ἐν πυρισχησιφως*)". (20)

Above all it appears that this concept of Divine fire motif is more pronounced amongst Israelite immediate neighbours, the Canaanites. Among the Sumerians, Akkadians, Hittites and in Ugaritic sources, we find hymns and myths describing the gods, Ishkur, Teshub, Adad, and Baal amongst others, as storm gods and divine warriors surrounded by dazzling radiance. The Akkadian Melammu for instance, is described as one who rides the storm and travels on cloudy chariots, and who hurls bolts of thunder and lightning as arrows. In response to his rage, the earth quakes, mountains stagger and the oceans tremble, (21) (cf Psalm 114:3-8; 18:7-15; Is. 64:3; Jeremiah 10:13; Hab. 3:8-15; Nah. 1:2,3-6). Like the Akkadian Melammu, Baal is also described in Ugaritic sources not only as the god of life, vegetation and fertility.

fertility, but also of fire and lightning. Fire is even portrayed as playing a fascinating role in the construction of his Temple-palace. (22) As 'Aliyan' i.e. Almighty, Baal is pictured as rider of the clouds and Lord of the storm, whose voice is the thunder and his dwelling place in the clouds astride Mount Zaphon, (Ugaritic Myth, 4.5. 70 and 5.5. 6-7 cf Psalm 68:4 and Ex. 19:19).

In the hymn of Anat, fire is portrayed as the bitch or quarrelsome woman i.e. mother of the gods, while flame is described as the daughter of El. Both of them, Anat reports she had destroyed in her anger or made an end of. (23)

From the above, we can see that fire has been regarded not only as an important cultic element, but has acquired some degree of sacredness and has been greatly associated with the gods as their means of manifestation or as an attribute of the Deity. Thus it would appear that Israel was not alone in the use she made of fire in close association with Yahweh in her religious life. To examine this in detail, we may now turn to the use made of the burning bush motif in subsequent Biblical literature.

BURNING BUSH MOTIF AS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

As said earlier (p. 225) the use made of the burning bush motif (24) in the Old Testament is that of herald of Yahweh's presence or activity. Prior to the time our Text assumed literary form, burning fire /

fire had been closely associated with Israelite God Yahweh either as means of his self-disclosure or judgment. This burning fire which was already a well known accompaniment of Yahweh in his cosmic activities is what we find in the burning bush story which revealed Yahweh's presence to Moses. When this burning fire of Yahweh appears in the context of His theophany, it stands as a phenomenon that accompanies or mediates His manifestation (25) and in which context it serves to enhance His Majesty. But when used in the true genre or literary theophany descriptions, it is either Yahweh's irresistible weapon or symbol and actualisation of his burning anger. In both contexts, the point is made palpably clear what Yahweh's coming means and the effect that it has on men, in form of the fear it engenders, (cf. Ex.20:18-20; Judges 6:23; Psalm 76:7-9) and nature in the form of the tumult of the elements, (cf Judges 5:4-5; Jer. 10:13; Micah 1:3-4).

However it may be mentioned that traditio-historically the terrifying appearance of Yahweh in the storm or fire theophany appears to be very old. While on the other hand it seems that from the religio-historical perspective, the terminology applied to the storm gods of the Near Eastern mythologies concerning Ba'alshamen, Ba'al/ Hadad, Teshub etc., stand behind the Old Testament statements concerning Yahweh, which use expressions derived from the storm. This of course only appears to be the case but can not be proved beyond doubt, and therefore should not be over-emphasised. Similarity may point better to a common yet unknown source rather than borrowing. That one source was written later does not prove a case of borrowing but only raises question of literary similarity.

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The overview picture of the Biblical narratives tends to see the natural phenomena only as revealers of Yahweh's presence without in themselves constituting Yahweh himself. So though the Biblical narratives could describe Yahweh metaphorically in those terms, yet they neither imply that Yahweh is a storm-god nor a fire-demon (26) per se.

We even have the case of the divine revelation to Elijah on Horeb (I Kings 19:11 ff), in which the traditional phenomena are found deliberately rejected by the author by showing that Yahweh was neither in the storm, nor earthquake nor fire, but in the whisper of the word (וְקוֹל זָרְזֵר). (27) Thus the Old Testament overall picture of Yahweh can not be claimed to be that of a fire-demon or storm-god. Rather the natural phenomena are presented as harbingers of Yahweh's imminent presence. This is why the burning fire motif as found in most texts indicates either Divine presence, guidance, cultic divine acceptance or judgment/anger.

BURNING BUSH MOTIF AS SYMBOL OF DIVINE PRESENCE

According to our Text, what attracted Moses' attention away from his routine duty was the burning fire which he saw. The fire which was burning but did not consume the bush awoke in him a sense of curiosity which led to the awareness of the presence of the extraordinary i.e. Deity, with him. Thus the burning fire heralded or mediated the presence of the Deity to Moses. But here the burning bush could be seen as indicating Divine presence in a double way. First in it, Moses became aware that he was before Yahweh, and second, the /

the burning fire which engulfed the bush but burnt it not may be taken as indicative of Yahweh's presence and protection for Israel in their suffering which as a result will not be able to quench their spirit (cf. Isaiah 63:8-9; see below pp. 248ff). This motif of burning fire as means of establishing divine presence is found more forcefully expressed in Yahweh's Majestic theophany of Ex. 19 where we are told that after Moses had ritually prepared the people and they were set waiting for the arrival of Yahweh, it was thunder, lightning and burning fire which descended on the mountain that announced Yahweh's arrival. The descent on the mountain of the burning fire was the indicator to the people that Yahweh had come, (Ex. 19:16-17 & 18). It may be that it was as a result of this theophanic experience and that of the burning bush where Yahweh spoke from the midst of the fire, that Deuteronomy often presents Him as one who speaks from the midst of the fire (Deut. 4:12, 15,33; 5:4, 22-26; 10:4 etc.).

The implication of this concept is that fire is seen as a gracious sign of divine presence although in this Yahweh's nature seems more hidden behind it than revealed. In the Divine ratification of Covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15:17, God's presence is made known and mysteriously described in the expression, "Smoking fire pot and flaming torch". Although the author of the passage does nothing to tell us whether the smoking brazier and flaming torch were real objects or parts of Abraham's vision, he however made his point which is using them as representing the Divine presence. (28)

Similarly /

Similarly in the case of Gideon, what established the case of divine presence with him was the fire that blazed forth, from the rock when touched with the staff of the 'Angelic Being' (Judges 6:22).

Thus fire, the Biblical authors seem to say, is a means whereby God reveals His presence/identity and it represents the mystery of the glory of Yahweh יהוה יהוה . In this we are to note that in the Pentateuch especially, it appears that behind the Biblical imagery of the 'K^ebhod' is the concrete picture of fire as symbol of Divine presence or glory. This is because, the יהוה Yahweh in most passages has not the abstract meaning "the glory of God", but rather suggests a definite and physical representation. The glory of Yahweh, it seems, is thought to be the material form in which Yahweh was thought to reveal himself to mortal eyes, apart from such anthropomorphic picture of a 'gigantic man' as in Ex. 33:20-23. For instance in Ex. 24:17 we have the glory of Yahweh pictured like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain, and in Ex. 40:38 it assumes the form of 'burning fire' by night on top of the Tabernacle and seen by all Israel. And in Numbers 9:15 we have it that the 'K^ebhod' remains on the Tabernacle in the appearance of 'burning fire' until the morning indicating Divine presence. Even in Ezekiel 1:26-28, we have it conceived in concrete and tangible form like unto a man who from the loins upward glows like molten metal and from the loins downwards shining like fire and surrounded with bright light. Such description seems to imply that the glory of Yahweh in the form in which he makes himself visible to human eyes is fire, (in some cases this could be extended to include the smoke emanating from the fire I Kings 8:11).

Unlike /

Unlike the passages traditionally assigned to J. which speak of Divine presence in terms of fire in its unmasked form, other passages (E. & P.?) prefer to speak of it as encapsulated in a cloud to make it less dreadful to human eyes. Thus in Exodus 24:15-18 - mentioned above - Moses enters the 'cloud-glory' to stand before the uncovered effulgence of Yahweh which is the burning fire of God. As the passage says, the K^ebhod Yahweh had descended and was dwelling ַןןן on the mountain in the form of a consuming fire ַןןןןןןןןןןןן shining through the cloud and seen by all Israel. And it is from here that the voice of Yahweh is heard coming out from the midst of the cloud, (cf Yahweh's voice coming out from the midst of the burning bush). Thus it could be said that the glory of Yahweh is the fiery apparition on the summit of the mountain which Moses ascends to appear before, the earthly manifestation of Yahweh himself. Here we may also mention the perpetual altar fire (LXX. πυρ ἐν δὲ λαλῆς) which had to be kept burning and must never be extinguished as probably indicating the divine presence (Lev. 6:2,5;9:12 whether it was before this altar fire that should not be put out that Yahweh was consulted by the oracular personnel we do not know).

However apart from this symbolic static presence of the Deity in the form of burning fire, we also have references to the dynamic nature of the symbol as indicative of Divine presence and guidance to Israel.

BURNING FIRE MOTIF AS SYMBOL OF YAHWEH'S GUIDANCE

Although here it is difficult to differentiate between the K^ebhod Yahweh /

Yahweh of 'P', which tabernacles in the לְאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד to indicate Yahweh's presence amongst his people and the active presence of Yahweh in 'J' in form of cloud of Pillar, we shall here concentrate on the guidance of Israel in the wilderness wandering by Yahweh's fiery apparition. (29)

The cloud of Pillar in the 'J' narratives which is different from 'P's cloud which has no shape, is presented in the Biblical passages, as a symbol of Divine presence in the wilderness wandering. It shows how God himself led the Israelites through the wilderness when there was no other leader who knew the way, (cf. Numb. 10:31,33-34). This active Divine presence in form of a pillar - which probably reached from earth to heaven, led the Israelites as a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. According to this Biblical tradition, this pillar of fire was only a continuation of the active involvement of Yahweh and his fire in the Exodus event - with it he had appeared to Moses, punished the Egyptians (see below) and led the Israelites through the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24). This pillar of cloud and fire, this tradition seems to hold, led the Israelites throughout the wilderness wandering till the Jordan was crossed and in Deut. 9:3 the motif is even transferred figuratively to the Conquest of Canaan. The views of this tradition seem to contradict that of 'E' and 'P' which appear to hold that it was Moses who led Israel without the pillar from Egypt to Sinai. The apparent tension between these two viewpoints has been built upon by people like Morgenstern. He argues that, if the pillar of fire had previously guided Israel prior to Sinai, it would look rather superfluous for Moses to passionately request Yahweh to designate

a leader for Israel on her onward journey (Ex. 33:12). (30)

But I think on this, Morgenstern and others missed the point.

The reason for the request is not because Moses alone had guided the people without the cloud and now wants someone to assist him.

But rather it was in view of the heinous crime committed by the Israelites in the worship of the 'inanimate animal' that Moses feared the withdrawal of Divine presence and wanted every assurance to allay his fears (Ex. 32:33).

According to this tradition (J), the pillar of cloud and fire did not only guide the Israelites or show the way, but it also at night lit up the camp to give light to the people of Israel. In fact in Ex. 14:19-24 while it gave darkness to the Egyptians it was light for Israel in crossing the Red Sea. At this instance instead of standing at the head of Israelite army, it keeps the rear and separates her from her foes. This means that Yahweh as light for Israel, was already made manifest during the wilderness period.

But it may be remarked that this guiding pillar of cloud by day - with the fiery apparition encapsulated - and the pillar of fire by night has been variously interpreted by commentators (ref. Ex.13:21-22; 14:19,24; 40:38; Numb. 9:15-23; 10:34; 14:14). While it is not easy to accept at its face value the view that an unbroken pillar of cloud travelled at the head of the Israelite 'army' turning into fire at night, it is equally difficult to be convinced by any of the conjectural naturalistic explanations. For instance it has been suggested that a whirlwind sighted in or near the camp of Israel was the means of God's assurance of his presence to his people. Although this does not mean the /

the same thing as saying that a pillar of cloud and fire guided the Israelites, it even implies that the present narrative should be seen as being more symbolically and theologically at home, than being literally and historically accurate. And in this wise, accepting the Biblical account as it is, is in no way different - a theological motif or interpretation.

Also some have suggested that what is being interpreted as pillar of cloud and fire is to be seen in the custom of guiding caravans at night by a lighted brazier or torches. (31) This suggestion has twofold problems: (i) If accepted, it will be difficult for it to account for the pillar of cloud by day, and (ii) It loses sight of the fact that where natural phenomena are the basis for belief in Divine Manifestation, they are invariably natural phenomena that are unusual and awe-inspiring, and not in any case of human contrivance. That a man made brazier or torch could have given rise to such tradition as we have in the Biblical accounts looks rather stupendous.

Even the Volcano theory based on the parallel of the 1905 eruption of Vesuvius does not in any way fare better! It is claimed that the eruption was preceded by the emission of a great cloud of smoke which was visible many miles away and appeared to become pillar of fire at night as the red-hot interior of the volcano shone upwards. Granted that such an eruption were outside the wilderness wandering zone, since no known volcanic activity happened in the area, it would still be difficult to explain how such static sign could have led the Israelites - to which direction? How could such a phenomenon account too for the cloud that tabernacles on the 'Tent' which is associated with the pillar of /

of cloud and which continued in the Biblical tradition till time of Monarchy as the narratives have it (cf IKings 8:11 ff II Chron. 5:14). (32)

Thus, the important thing is, the Israelite conviction that God's presence had guided his people, and the pillar of cloud and fire is a means of expressing this fact. Whether the idea of pillar of cloud by day and fire by night arose from thoughts about the altar fire which does not quench and the smoke of Sanctuary incense we do not know for certain. So I think it is only by taking the elements as theological symbols that one can appreciate the real point that the narrators are making. The point is to express ancient Israel's conviction not just of the presence of God, but of his active guidance and leadership at a difficult time in her life i.e. the tortuous wilderness journey.

In addition to the above, divine fire is also found in the cultic context as a sign of gracious visitation by Yahweh. This is commonly found in relation to the acceptance of sacrifice. By an appearance of fire, Yahweh indicates his pleasure in the sacrifice and as well as his saving presence.

As we have already mentioned, we have an example of this in the Yahweh/Abraham Covenant, where a smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed between the halves of Abraham's sacrifice (Gen.15:17).

In Leviticus 9:23, at the end of Aaron and Moses' liturgical service and sacrifice in the Tent of Meeting fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the offering and fat on the altar - a sort of uncaused /

uncaused or automatic fire like the burning bush. When the people saw it they shouted and fell on their faces, the usual behaviour of the human party when Yahweh so appears, (cf Ex.3:6; II Chron. 7:3; Numb 20:6;16:19-22;14:5,10 etc.). (33) The supernatural kindling of such fire is a sign of God's special approval and acceptance. According to 'P', who is traditionally given this passage, (Lev. 9:23) this is the first appearance of the glory of Yahweh in the newly erected holy place. So by it Yahweh has accepted the holy place itself, sanctified it and the first sacrifices offered in its precincts as well pleasing. The fire which broke out might have derived from the fire element shrouded by the K^ebhod Yahweh of 'P's' conception as we have earlier mentioned, (Ex. 24:17).

Also like in Gideon's case Judges 6:21 where fire from the rock revealed the Divine nature of the Angel/Yahweh, so also in I Kings 18:38 the sending of fire by Yahweh from heaven to consume Elijah's offering with the wood, stones, dust and water (34) proved His divine presence with His servant. When the people saw it, (I Kings 18:39), they fell on their faces as it normally behoves the human party to do before the presence of Yahweh. In I Chronicles 21:26 when David inaugurated the first altar he erected on a sacred site in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, Yahweh answered his call to Him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offerings and peace offerings - a sign to David of Divine favour and acceptance. A similar phenomenon was repeated in the case of Solomon too.

We are told in II Chronicles 7:1 that at the dedication of the Temple, after Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven to consume /

consume the offerings and sacrifices and ^{היה} ^{היה} filled the Temple, - a sign of divine acceptance and Yahweh's entering into the new abode built for him. (35) And as usual, when the people saw it they bowed down with their faces to the earth and worshipped (II Chr. 7:3).

In all the above instances of uncaused fire in the cultic context or holy place, we have a very close parallel to that of the burning bush which happened at the mountain of God where Yahweh is to be worshipped. The burning fire of Yahweh which in all probability had its origin and legitimating effect in the cultic context is thus found extended to other areas of Yahweh's activities.

As Yahweh's burning fire is connected with the Divine acceptance of sacrifice, so also it is with the Divine acceptance of individuals. Yahweh could demonstrate by his fire, his favour on special or eminent individuals by taking them up into heaven in a chariot of fire. Here mention may be made of Elijah who was so translated (II Kings 2:11). (36) Even Philo holds the view that the case of penal judgment in Lev. 10:2 should be seen as translation to fellowship with God, just as the vision of God is connected with fire, (see Leg. All. 11:57 fug. 59; Rev. Div. Her. 309). (37)

Occasionally too, we find the gracious visitation of Yahweh by fire as a sign of divine protection for his people, (II Kings 6:17) where we have a mount full of horses and chariots of fire round Prophet Elisha and his servant. And in Zech. 2:9 Yahweh is a protective wall of fire without and a light within for his people Israel - a recall of the pillar of cloud and fire experience at the crossing of the /

the Red Sea. It may also be mentioned here that to show Yahweh's favour or protection for some of his accredited messengers, He could also send fire, on their request, to avenge them of their enemies (II Kings 1:9ff).

When however we turn to the Apocalyptic literature, we find that Divine fire is mentioned mainly in connection with Angels, Stars, Sun and other heavenly bodies than with God, although fire and light do feature prominently in the visionary descriptions of the transcendental world. As an element in the description of the heavenly world, we have Daniel 7:9 say, 'The Ancient of Days' has a throne of fiery flames whose wheels are burning fire; while in Chapter 10:6 an Angelic being is described as having a face like the appearance of lightning and eyes like flaming torches.

With the above on the use of the burning fire motif as symbol of Divine presence, guidance and acceptance, to which we believe and have showed that the burning bush incident is very much at home and has very close theological affinities, we may now for purposes of completeness round off the picture with the burning fire motif as symbol of Divine anger or judgment.

But in this it should be noted at the outset that in the Exilic and Post Exilic times, the connection found drawn between Yahweh and fire is not so much that of establishing His presence but as showing him as Lord of the elements which may have some polemical intent. This is the time Yahweh becomes Creator of the natural forces including fire, and so the relationship between Him and them becomes that of messenger and Master/Lord cf Psalm 104:4. Thus Yahweh could employ the /

the heavenly fire in judgment or even cause the earthly fire to become impotent against its victim i.e. His righteous one (Dan.3).

BURNING FIRE MOTIF AS SYMBOL OF DIVINE WRATH OR JUDGMENT

Burning fire as a motif expressive of Divine judgment plays a very important role in statements concerning God, his manifestation and actions. Quite in agreement with Israelites' theocentric faith, lightning flashes are seen and interpreted as God's arrows sent from heaven by Him (cf. Psalm 18:14; 29:7; 144:6) or thunder fire and flames are taken simply as his 'Messengers' or 'Ministers' (cf Psalm 104:4; 148:8) and Seraphim His attendants. In His judicial intervention in the course of history, a prominent feature in the Old Testament view of Yahweh, his majesty and irresistible might is designated as consuming fire (cf. Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Is.33:14). Among the Prophets, Divine fire is one of the most common means of Divine judgment. It could smite the vainglorious among the 'Nations' (Amos 1:4ff; 2:2; Jer.43:12; Nah 3:13) or even annihilate the disobedient people of Israel His people (Amos 2:5; Hosea 8:14; Jer. 11:16; 17:27; 21:14; 22:7; Ez. 16:41; and 24:9). In Genesis 19:24 Yahweh is reported as raining down from heaven brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, while in Ex. 9:23 thunder, lightning and hail constituted the means with which He ventilated his annoyance on the Egyptians.

This use of fire by Yahweh on his enemies looks very much like the use some ancient Monarchs made of fire on their defeated enemies.

For/

For instance we find frequent references made by Kings like Shalmanezar I (1274 - 1245 B.C.E.) to the hostile and destructive use made of fire on the defeated enemies and cities. And in the royal ideology, "The fire in its time", is a term that denotes the fighting Pharaoh. He is seen as fire which reduces its victim i.e. aggressor to ashes!

The picture of the role of fire in the vindictive exploits of Yahweh - the true King of Israel - is brought out more clearly especially in the hymnic theophanies of judgment which exhibit a very strong mythological hue. In these literary or poetic theophanies, Yahweh is invariably pictured or portrayed either as a storm-god sending out lightning and cloud, or as a legendary fire-breathing monster, with smoke and fire belching out from his nostrils and mouth. Here we may make reference to a few of these hymnic theophanies:

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|---|
| (i) | II Sam 22:9 Psalm 18:8-16 | Smoke went up from his nostrils
and devouring fire from his mouth. |
| (ii) | Isaiah 30:33;30:27-28 | The breath of Yahweh is like a
stream of brimstone; His name
comes from the East burning and
in thick rising smoke to judge. |
| (iii) | Nah 1:6 | Who can endure the heat of his
nostrils/Anger |
| (iv) | Isaiah 29:6 | Tempest, earthquake, whirlwind,
flame of devouring fire accompany
Yahweh on his visit. |
| (v) | Hab 3:2-15 | Speaks of fiery Anger and flash of
glittering spear. |

While Psalm 50;3 sees devouring fire and mighty tempest round about him. (38)

When we compare this Israelite picture of Yahweh with that of other Nations about their gods we find a very close similarity.

For instance the Babylonian song of creation ENUMA ELISH, says of Marduk after he was created that "When he moved his lips, a fire was kindled" (1,96). While in the 'Gilgamesh Epic', we find Humbaba described by the friend and servant of the hero in this way: "His roar is a flood, yea his mouth is fire and his breath death". (39) And we also have the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal saying in a song of praise to the goddess of Nineveh and Arbela: "The word of their lips is a kindled fire (girru naphu)".(40)

From the above comparison, it seems that the bold Biblical pictures of Yahweh's anger in the hymnic theophanies may have their roots in the world of Legends which tell of fire-breathing creatures (Job. 41:10-13) or the fire-breathing Primal serpent in Egyptian art.

Whatever may be the origin, what we are to note is that the Biblical usage is only in comparison although it is at times difficult to make a distinction between figurative symbolism and the symbolised in mythological speech. However, the concern here is to show the very close association the Israelites made of fire with Yahweh in their concept of Him especially in his Divine wrath.

Because of the context in which most of the poetic theophanies appear, Divine War motif, they seem to have been either hymns of triumph sung at the completion of Yahweh's Wars or a ritual prior to the War of Yahweh. Thus as a result of the terrible nature of Yahweh's /

Yahweh's wrath, as picturesquely described in the poetic theophanies, the Biblical passages seem to say, His anger must therefore at all costs be avoided because it is dreadful and capable of sending the whole earth into convulsion or confusion. (41)

To conclude off this section, reference may now be made to the Eschatological age in the prophetic oracles where divine fire judgment also features prominently. Although from the sporadic references, the view of a world conflagration seems non-existent in the Old Testament eschatological picture (except Zeph. 1:18; 3:8 which appear to speak figuratively of the judgment of the whole earth), it however seems that in the eschatological judgment drama fire will play three roles:

- (i) It will constitute a sign of the day of Yahweh (Joel 2:30). (42)
- (ii) It will constitute the means with which Yahweh will execute judgment on all His enemies (Mal. 3:19; Is. 66:15; Ez. 38:22 and 39:6); and
- (iii) The damned will fall victim to eternal torment by fire (Ethiopian Enoch 91:9; 100:9; 4 Esr. 7:38).

Along with the above, fire is also found used in depicting the heavenly dwelling of the Lord in the perfected city of God in the eschatological age of Salvation (cf. Is. 58:10; 60:1, 19; and 4:5).

Having thus examined the use made of the burning fire motif in the Old Testament we may now go on to look at the use made of the motif in Post-Biblical Literature.

BURNING BUSH MOTIF IN POST BIBLICAL LITERATURE: JEWISH MYSTICISM

The multifaceted Midrashic literature on the Burning Bush tradition serves, in its totality, as a lucid summation and a clarification of Jewish values; communicating and demonstrating what one would call the triumph of the imagination, originality, inventiveness and the inward state of mind. In general, the Literature appears as a testimony to the victory of the indomitable Jewish spirit over progressive disillusionment, in the face of stark historical adversity and the seductiveness to surrender. Because it is purely Haggadic in nature or character, it seeks to admonish and inspire rather than to teach, legislate or instruct. In view of this the aim of the Midrashic literature appears geared towards using the burning bush to answer or explicate various questions in the life of man; either as an individual, or as a member of community, or in the midst of the forces of evil in relationship with God or showing God's action on his behalf. Probably this is why one finds that attention is paid more to the significance of the incident in the private and corporate life of Israel than what actually happened at the burning bush or how it happened. Indeed, the Rabbis hold that each thinking and feeling person at some time or times in his life, in the midst of his own universe (or wilderness) confronts a 'Burning Bush', and a divine voice or dialogue which may prove fruitful or fruitless depending on how it is received. This bid to contextualise the treatment of the burning bush in the day to day praxis of the people probably led to the phenomenal growth of Rabbinic traditions on the burning bush. As Etan Levine has said, "When studying Jewish texts from the earliest Hellenistic /

Hellenistic Jewish sources through the Talmudic, Midrash, Mediaeval, Hassidic and even modern commentaries, we are struck by the richness and diversity of responses to the Burning Bush episode". (43) But we may note, however, that most of the Rabbinic interpretations or meanings of the burning bush are implicit rather than explicit in the story. And because the Burning Bush is interpreted to cover a variety of subjects, and it will not be possible to catalogue it all here, we may limit ourselves to those which appear relevant to our subject matter.

In the first place, the Biblical records bear witness to the fact that all through its variegated history, the Jewish people had had to reckon with and try to cope with different forms of antagonism; either in form of physical forces or spiritual destruction. In the light of this painful reality, the Midrashic literature in treating the burning bush, try to show why God showed Moses such a symbol as the Burning Bush.

According to Midrash Ha- Gadol 11, 2:3, "God showed Moses such a symbol because Moses had believed that the Egyptians might consume Israel. So God showed him fire which burned, yet did not consume thus conveying to him that just as the Thorn-Bush (44) is not being consumed, so will the Egyptians not be able to consume Israel".

In fact in Deut. 4:20 we have the Egyptian bondage referred to in terms of burning fire. Secondly the Rabbis say, God is also conveying to Moses the sign that, "If this people which I am taking out of Egypt with your assistance should transgress my Torah which is similar to fire, I will deliver them into the hands of the four Kingdoms which are /

are also like fire....yet even then they will not be destroyed at their hands (Midrash Ha- Gadol 11. 2:3).

Also on the burning bush as representing Egypt, Rabbi Jose says, "It is characteristic of the seneh - thorn-bush, when a man puts his hand into it, he feels no pain, because the thorns are turned downward. However, when he attempts to extricate his hand, the thorns trap it. Similarly, when Israel went down into Egypt, they were welcomed, as it is written Gen. 47:6. However when they wanted to leave, they were ensnared, as it is written Ex. 5:2".

And Rabbi Phinehas ben Hama the Priest adds: "Just as a bird does not feel when it flies into a thorn bush, but when it flies out its wings are torn to shreds, so when Israel came into Egypt, nobody perceived them, but when they went out, they departed with signs and wonders and battle". And the fact that God is reported speaking from the midst of the burning bush i.e. thorn bush, the Rabbis say God was saying to Moses, "Do you not realise that I live in trouble just as Israel lives in trouble? Know from the place whence I speak unto you - from a thorn bush, that I am, as it were, a partner with them in their trouble". (45) God's choice of the lowly thorn bush therefore reflects his own anguish at the sad plight of his people as well as symbolising his empathy and sharing in the circumstances and experiences of His people Israel. Isaiah 63:9 used to buttress this point says: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them: he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old". /

old".

Thus whether experiencing triumph or disaster, whether secure or exiled, whether in ecstasy or in agony, the Covenant people is believed never to be alone. This opinion counteracted what to the ordinary Jew would have seemed an 'ipso facto' evidence of divine rejection in the face of the anguish of the diaspora and the bitterness of its historical reality. In fact it is said in M. Kasher, Torah Shelemah (Vol IX p.120) that the allusion to God's support of Israel in times of dire need in the past applies not only to the Egyptian bondage but even to the late diaspora as well; "Just as the bush is the lowest of all trees, so is Israel in exile the lowest of all nations". So like the lowly bush Israel has by virtue of her exile become reduced to the lowest of conditions in which state the Lord comes down to rescue her. The burning bush is thus a reminder to the people of Israel to recall or remember the whole road which the Lord God has led them (Deut. 8:2). The fact that the conditions in the Babylonian Exile were almost akin to the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage makes the symbolic exegesis on the burning bush an apparent favourite of the Haggadic Masters.

Some of the Midrash exegetes even understood the symbolism of the burning bush in purely individualistic or personal terms, and along this line of thought, they tried to relate the burning bush interpretation to the universal human experience of depression and despair. They claim that God revealed himself the way he did because the Israelites were in a state of depression. It follows therefore that God similarly bestows his presence on those who are depressed and burdened (see M. Kasher, Torah Shelamah, 134 quoting Barcelona's Commentary /

Commentary to Sefer Ha-Yesirah). It is as a result of this interpretation that a vocalic emendation of the Biblical Text is made, so that the Angel does not only appear $\psi\alpha\gamma\alpha\delta$ in a flame of fire, but with a heart of fire $\psi\alpha\gamma\alpha\delta$ to strengthen and give hope to the suffering and depressed.

This interpretation would therefore imply that the purpose of the theophany to Moses was to give him courage in his commitment and a sense of divine purpose. Thus, that the Angel appeared to Moses enveloped in a flame of fire was a source of inspiration and courage to Moses. The theophany was both divine challenge and message of support conveyed by the understanding of the Text as, "The Angel of the Lord appeared to him with a fiery heart".

On the interpretation of the Angel and his presence in the theophany, we have a record of divergent if not contradictory views among the Rabbis. The Rabbis do not agree on the identification of the Angel who appeared. While, for instance, Rabbi Johanan would argue that it was Arch-Angel Michael, Rabbi Hanina claims it was Angel Gabriel and others that it was Moses' legendary Teacher - the Angel Zagzugel just as Christian commentaries identify the Angelic figure as Jesus. (46) The role of the Angel as harbinger of the Shechinah in the theophany is explained thus; "At first an Angel acted as intermediary and stood in the centre of the fire and afterwards the Shechinah descended and spoke with Moses from the midst of the thorn bush. Thus the Angel came to set Moses at ease and prepare him for his audience with God", (Midrash Rabbah Exodus London 1939 p.53).

On the reception of the audio-visual theophany the Rabbis claim that when Moses beheld the heavenly apparition, there were other persons there with him who did not however perceive anything (cf. Dan. 10:7;

Acts/

Acts. 9:7; Gen. 22:9ff). On this point the Rabbinic view is corroborated by the 'Holy Quran' which says in Surah 28:29-30; "Now when Moses had fulfilled the term, and had set out with his household, he perceived on the side of the Mount a fire; he said to his household: stay I have perceived a fire, perhaps I shall bring you from it news or a log from the fire; mayhap ye will warm yourselves. When he came to it, a voice called to him from the right-hand bank (or western side cf. V.44) of the Wadi in the blessed Vale, out of the bush; O Moses, Lo I am Allah, Lord of the World". (47) Although the Quran here tries to recapitulate the Biblical story, it looks much influenced by Rabbinic views though elements of the story like Mount, fire, bush are all still present.

Along with the above, the point that the divine fire did not consume the bush is interpreted as conveying the message to Moses that God has come to him in peace, and so the divine presence of fire which could have been destructive becomes completely devoid of any friction with the habitat. The lowly thorn bush bore the divine presence but was not as a result destroyed (cf. Elders on Mount Ex. 19:19-20) a beneficial theophany!

Apart from the symbolic interpretations of our Text the Rabbis also hold that there is a very close association of fire with the heavenly world. Not only is it held that fire expresses the glory of God, it is also believed that God's finger and the Angels are composed of flaming fire. Thus according to a widespread view, the Angels are believed created out of the river of fire $\text{גן} - \text{ג} \quad \text{גן}$ (Dan 7:10) which consists of the sweat of the four living creatures before the throne of God. (48) Here we are to note that the fire of God's finger is /

is distinguished from the fire of which the Angelic beings are composed, by being referred to as the sixth form of fire. To show that this fire surpasses all other fires, it is said, "He burnt the rebellious Angels (fiery beings) with His finger", (see b. Joma 21:6 Bar). Here the superior fire burns the inferior fire!

In his own interpretation of the burning bush fire, Rabbi Eliezer says, God showed Moses a flame in the midst of the thorn-bush because, the flame signifies Israel and the thorn-bush signifies the idolaters who are comparable to thorns and thistles. Thus he claims , God conveyed to Moses that so shall Israel be among the Nations and:

- (i) The smoke of Israel will not consume the idolaters who are like thorns and thistles; nor
- (ii) will the idolaters extinguish the flames of Israel which are the words of the Torah. But however, ultimately the smoke of Israel will consume all of the idolaters. (49)

While this shows a temporary mutual coexistence between good and bad - in this case between Israel and the unbelievers, it however promises Israel an ultimate or final victory. This of course could give hope and courage to a people passing through a difficult time of struggle or punishment like it was in the Babylonian Exile. On this question of ultimate victory of Israel over the idolaters, it is not very clear that God would in the end damn and burn all who do not belong to the Israelite race. But it is however well stated that they will not be able to escape the punishment for which they are due.

For /

For instance an eschatological midrash refuting the concept of eternal punishment reads; "From this we learn of God's mercies toward sinners. As it is written, 'And the bush burned with fire'. This signifies the punishment of the sinners. But then we read, 'And the bush was not consumed', that is they are not completely destroyed". (50) This means that among the Rabbis, there is even hope for the unbelievers in the eschatological age though this will not preclude meting out to them their due punishment. Even this concept of eternal punishment for evildoers is not limited to those outside Israel, but also within. In this we are to note that some exegetes hold that the Jewish people in its entirety and reality is symbolised by the thorn-bush. Thus as the thorn-bush produces both thorns and roses, so too among the people of Israel there are evildoers and righteous folk (see Etan Levine Section IV). And from what we have seen above, it seems there is hope for all.

But among the Qumran Sect, the concept of burning fire motif in relation to the deity is conceived purely in terms of eternal punishment or judgment. This fiery judgment of God will be performed either on God's foes or on the enemies of the elect people of God. Within the community it was strongly held that while salvation awaits the faithful, fiery judgment will be the lot of the evildoers.

With the foregoing examples, out of many, on how the burning bush was understood and interpreted amongst the Rabbis, we may now briefly look at the use made of the burning bush motif - if any - in the New Testament period.

THE BURNING BUSH MOTIF IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In Jewish religious tradition, prior to the division of the Jewish scriptures into chapters and verses, the Exodus burning-bush theophany was known and referred to as, "The Bush". This tradition continued into the New Testament period or era and so we find in a majority of instances references made to the passage as 'The Bush', (cf. Mk. 12:26, while Acts 7:30 refers to it simply as "a flame of fire in a bush").

But it is remarkable that apart from the sporadic references to the Old Testament divine self-revelation by means of fire in the New Testament, for instance, like Hebrews 12:18, we do not actually have any explicit known Burning fire Theophanies in the New Testament, with the exception of Acts 2:3 which reports of the descent of the Holy Spirit in cloven tongues as of fire.

And it is even noteworthy that during the New Testament period, fire was no longer a necessary concomitant of Divine Theophany like as of old but its place was being taken by light. For instance, the appearance of the risen Christ to Paul on Damascus road was by light from heaven rather than fire, (Acts 9:3).

So instead of associating fire with Divine theophany it became closely associated with Divine judgment as we find it principally used in the eschatological contexts. In most of such references, however, the uses of fire as punitive measure in the Old Testament are cited as examples of similar future occurrences, (cf. Lk. 17:26-30; 9:54 etc.).

It could, therefore, be said that in the New Testament period, the use /

use of fire was not only pushed into the eschatological age but was also mainly associated with the Risen Christ, though the designation of God as 'πυρ καταναλίσκων' a consuming fire, was still retained, (cf. Deut 4:24;9:3 and Heb. 12:29). Like Dan. 7 and 10, Revelation describes the Son of Man in the usual fire and flame imagery, while in Revelation 2:18; 19:12 Jesus is described as having eyes like flame of fire, while Angels have feet like pillars of fire, (Rev. 10:1). This use of fire in the Book of Revelation looks very much like a step forward in the development of the concepts of the Old Testament Apocalypse. But unlike the Jewish Apocalypse, instead of emphasising the glory of heaven, it is used mainly in context of the coming judgment.

Among the early Church Fathers we do not hear much about the use of the motif of the burning bush, except the case of Origen, who quotes the Exodus passage among others with the comment, "As God is fire, and His Angels a flame of fire, and all the Saints fervent in spirit, so they who have fallen away from God are said to have cooled or to have become cold". (51)

But before the Reformation, however, we have an arresting parallel to the Biblical story of the burning bush as recorded in the annals of Christian Saints. It is reported that on the 24th of March 1400 A.D. the Virgin Mary was revealed at Chalons, France, in a burning bush, the blaze of which could be seen for miles, but which afterward remained green. (52)

Thus the picturesque fire imagery of the Old Testament had been considerably /

considerably transformed or reformed by the time of the New Testament, and the term fire had become more consonant with God's wrath at the end of time rather than with his love. So instead of picturing God in fire, it is in the imagery of light - the symbol of the heavenly blessedness or God's glorious resplendence.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the foregoing we have seen how the Israelites associated fire intimately with their God Yahweh in His theophanies and actions for and on behalf of Israel. In all the various uses of the fire motif, one point is made uncompromisingly clear which is that, Yahweh is never taken or understood as a personified natural element like fire. So though fire expressed things about Yahweh, it was never taken for Yahweh himself, nor given cultic worship. In this we are even told that the Rabbis did not only reject the notion of fire worship, but also compared those who worshipped fire to the Angels of perdition. (53)

But in this, the question remains, how did the Israelites come to associate fire motif with Yahweh. The answer to this question is shrouded in difficulties because of the nature of the Biblical literature. This is because most of the Biblical accounts reflect a later stage in the development of Yahwism than its beginnings. As a result of this, it seems that the characteristic statement by scholars of comparative religion has to be taken with care, like as we find in R. J. Clifford, "It is clear therefore that Yahwist and Elohist traditions in Exodus regarding Mount Sinai borrow motifs associated with the idea of the sacred Mountain in Canaan. (54) The problems with /

with this assumption of borrowing are many, some of which are:

(i) In order to make the idea of borrowing reasonable, first that which is original to Israel which she supplemented by borrowing has got to be fully stated or identified.

(ii) Also it has to be convincingly proved that what is regarded borrowed is truly foreign to Israel and not a common heritage among the people of ANE including Israel.

(iii) The theory of borrowing itself appears firmly based on the identification of a parallel. This is easy when there are only two, but when a third is discovered, it becomes difficult to know who borrowed from whom. So the conclusion of borrowing is actually based on the absence as well as the presence of a parallel. This was the fault of Redford in VTS 20 (Leiden 1970) p.93 in the Story of Joseph and "The Two Brothers". On identifying the Egyptian parallel to the Joseph Story in the account of 'Anpu and Bata', written about 1215 B.C., he concluded that the Joseph Story was based on it. But in listing his parallels he failed to mention the Hittite Story of 'Elkunirsha' which has the same motif and written earlier than the Egyptian Story - 5th to 13th Century B.C. With the presence of such a third parallel, decision becomes difficult to take as to who borrowed from the other.

(iv) /

(iv) The theory also assumes that Yahwism was from the beginning the religion of all Israel and so anything different from the later Prophetic Standard of Yahwism is regarded as borrowed. This view is, in all probability, less than true!

(v) There is also the often made claim that the picture of Baal, associated in Ugaritic Texts with thunder, lightning and Wars with Monsters lie behind the Biblical picture of Yahweh. But what is claimed for Baal and Yahweh are also true of the Canaanite god El, whose picture seems even more akin to the Biblical narratives about Yahweh than that of Baal which are only obliquely reflected. (55)

So in the light of these, it may be better to assume that the similarities in the religious ideas and concepts we find in Yahwism vis-a-vis Canaanite religions belong to a given historical milieu or a common source to which the whole of the Ancient Near East is heir.

And even this apart, the interest of the writer of the Exodus account seems not based on the natural phenomenon but on what it is used for i.e. to establish the fact of Divine presence with Moses. The theological intent is to show that that event in the History of Israel, the Exodus, was sponsored by Yahweh. This is why, like other Prophetic calls/visions immediately the case of Divine presence is established with the use of the natural phenomenon, the author moves straight to what happened, the Word of Yahweh. This is also why in most of the theophanies, if not all, we only know how they begin, but we are never told how they end, if they actually ever ended! After the writer has led/

led his audience to the beginning of Divine utterance, he never comes back to the visual part which vanishes giving place to the Word which alone remains (cf. Isaiah 6:1, he started with seeing and then passes on to hearing and as he went on he forgot to say when and how it stopped).

Thus in the Exodus burning-bush story, we are to see the fire as a theological motif used to express the presence of the Deity. And in its subsequent uses, it seems the Biblical narrators see in the automatic fire imagery a more fitting expression of the nature of Yahweh in his inscrutable ways. The suddenness and terrifying nature of thunder, lightning fire and storm with the accompanying threat of destruction to human life might have been seen as more appropriate in expressing the Majesty and Almightyness of Yahweh in a world peopled by his creatures who owe their lives to his divine will and pleasure.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Here I think the word $\Upsilon\Upsilon\text{I}$ which means thorn, may carry the meaning thorn-bush better as we have it in Is.7:19;55:13, than $\Pi\text{I}\text{D}$ which like the LXX $\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ means just bush. It however seems that the desire to relate the Bush to the type known has made tradition render it thorn-bush. This translation of $\Pi\text{I}\text{D}$ as thorn-bush which Exodus reports was on fire may also have some connection with the 'bramble' $\Upsilon\text{W}\text{X}$ which poetically appears to have some relationship with fire, Judges 9:15 $\Upsilon\text{W}\text{X}\eta\text{~}\eta\text{W}\text{~}\text{W}\text{X}$ let fire from me, LXX $\acute{\alpha}\pi' \epsilon\mu\omicron\upsilon$. For exposition on the fable see J. A. Soggin Judges pp 172ff.
2. This has been partly demonstrated in the previous Chapters, and is to be given fuller attention here.
3. J. Morgenstern "Biblical Theophanies" ZA 28 (1914) pp 20ff.
4. Probably this is why Gressmann saw the Israelite God as a Tree-God, see his Mose und Seine Zeit, p.30.
5. cf D. M. Beegle Moses the Servant of Yahweh, Michigan 1972 p.66.
6. Although Seraphim literally mean 'burning ones', yet they are found described in corporeal terms like in Isaiah 6:2. The notion that the heavenly beings are composed of fire belongs to the realm of Rabbinic Literature for which see below.
7. See for instance Hugo Gressmann who relates similar stories of burning bush or holy trees which fell into flames and were not consumed. He tells the story of Achilles Tatius who narrated concerning Tyre that fire enveloped the branches of a sacred olive tree but the soot of the fire nourished the tree. And again that Nonnus tells of a burning tree upon a floating rock in the sea as/

as well as the story of the pious man who once saw the Holy Walnut tree at Nebk in flames. The ultimate goal of Gressmann that the story should therefore be regarded as aetiological has been contested by J. Jeremias who says: "While many Biblical theophanies are aetiological, to legitimise holy places, that of Exodus 3 is not"; cf Mose und Seine Zeit Göttingen 1913 pp 26-29 with IDB Suppl. p. 897.

8. See M. Noth Exodus Commentary E.T. Philadelphia 1962 p.39; Thomas King, Water Miracle of Nature 1953 p.73 on the St. Elmo's Fire theory; J.P. Hyatt, Exodus Commentary p.73ff and D. M. Beegle, Moses the Servant of Yahweh 1972 p.66.
9. See JQR 11 (1898) pp 489ff.
10. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. VI p. 935 and also G. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion New York 1972 p. 168 who is of this opinion.
11. See IDB Suppl. p. 897ff.
12. Even if an objection is raised by saying that it is the picture or image behind the description that is referred to as connoting volcanic eruption rather than the event itself, then it would mean that, the writer is only using natural catastrophic picture to convey his religious message which amounts to theologisation.
13. cf Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos Haphtaroth and Rashis Commentary Exodus N.Y. p.10, "The mountain became what it is as a result of what happened there. So the 'Mountain of God' should be understood as a coinage of later reflection". This I think is correct because, if /

if Horeb had been Holy before Moses, then in all probability a deity must have appeared there to some people for it to be sacred. And if the people who received such theophany had so regarded the spot, it would have been known to Moses and he would not have been surprised at the unusual natural phenomenon he saw. In fact the spot would have been so frequented by the devotees of the deity that it would have been so conspicuous to anyone approaching it as a holy place.

And of course that would not have been the best place for Moses to lead his flock - the dwelling of the Deity like Olympus to Ancient Greece!

14. See for instance the abridged Edition in two vols. 1957 pp. 259, 350 and 813ff.
15. See J. G. Frazer ² I Adonis, Attis, Osiris, London 1907 p.146. Probably here one may conjecture that the Greek etymology of $\pi\upsilon\rho$ fire may have some connections with the root $\rho\epsilon\upsilon$ which means to purify, to cleanse or sift, cf the Latin 'Purus'.
16. See J.G.F. Riedel, De Shilk-en Kroesharige Rassen, Hague 1886 p.303 in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics p.28.
17. See E.R. Dodds The Greeks and the Irrational 1957 pp.294 and 307 Note 95.
18. See Gaster Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament, London 1969 p.230ff.
19. Theological Dictionary of the O.T. p.419ff
20. See Mithras Liturgy 8. 17ff cf A.Dieterich Abraxas 1891 p.48-62.

21. See P.D. Miller, *Divine Warrior in Early Israel* 1973.

But the suggestion that the resultant tumult of nature attending the theophany of the gods is borrowed by Israel is one that can not be substantiated. It might have been a heritage of Israel as it was to the Canaanites.

22. See Driver, *Canaanite Myth and Legend* p.99, New Edition by J.C.L. Gibson 1978, pp.63,12 & 56.

23. See J.C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1977 2nd Edition 1978 p.80 Section 'D' Anat.

24. Here motif is taken as that element - it may be the smallest - in a story which has power to persist in tradition. In this study we take the motif to be the 'fire' or 'burning fire'.

See D. Irvin in *Israelite and Judean History* ed. by J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller, London 1977 p. 183ff.

25. Some people have seen and interpreted this in the person of the Canaanite god 'Resep', who as a mythological figure is found accompanying Elohim as one of the natural forces at his command. And in the Biblical narrative, as a member of Yahweh's military escort in theophanies which typically involve dramatic disturbances in the weather, Hab. 3:3-5. In the mythologies he or the sons are found described as flames, sparks or simply as pestilence, cf. Job 5:7; Psalm 91:5-6 etc. See W.J. Fulco SJ *The Canaanite God Resep*, New Haven Connecticut 1976 p.50ff for fuller discussion.

26. This is the view of such people like E. Meyer *Die Israeliten* 1906 p.70; G. Hölscher *Geschichte der Isr-jud Religion* 1922 p.67. But see Eichrodt on his warning on how Old Testament mythological /

mythological themes should be interpreted. Old Testament Theology Vol II pp.17-20.

27. This theological correction or contradiction was probably by a later hand coming where it is - after Yahweh has by fire demonstrated at Mt. Carmel that he is a living God. Whatever role the elements mentioned in the revelation might have played in Yahwism in manifesting Yahweh's presence, they are here being played down. Yahweh should not be confused with them. He is only known in his word, a reflection probably of the age of veto on images. So the issue here is that of emphasis rather than the oft repeated interpretation in terms of the changed conception of God's nature (See J. Hempel in Gott und Mensch im AT 1926 pp.43ff; W. Eichrodt O.T. Theology vol II p.19). It is the prophetic notion of God who reveals himself in the whispered word that is being stressed. We are to note that both natural elements and the voice continued to exist side by side in Israelite concept of Yahweh in action. I would therefore doubt if there is any indication here of a personal and spiritual God as claimed by Eichrodt. The need to de-emphasise the elements while extolling the Word may be due to the danger felt posed by the worship of foreign gods like Ba'al and the necessity to show that Yahweh is a distinct or unique God.
28. On this Bruce Vawter, Genesis London 1977, p.212 says: "Fire in all mythologies, a prerogative of the gods if not a god itself is the almost invariable concomitant of Old Testament theophanies". And G. Von Rad, Genesis London 1972 p.188 notes that though the narrator avoids simply identifying Yahweh with the strange phenomena, he does not, either, discuss his relationship with them. Therefore, he /

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he warns, one must not inquire too much about the meaning of these strange phenomena in themselves, but take them as symbolising Yahweh's ratification of a covenant with Abraham and therefore his divine presence.

On whether the incident constitutes a theophany or not, see J Van Seters, Abraham in History and Tradition pp. 260ff who thinks it does not, and G. Henton Davis IDB Vol IV p.61- who thinks it does.

29. See Mettinger Chapter III on this issue of Kabod Theology pp.80-115.
30. Morgenstern J. Biblical Theophanies ZA 25 (1914) p.173.
31. J. Rogerson The Supernatural in the Old Testament 1976 p.43.
32. Some people may even like to see the origin of the cloud of pillar in the incense which ascends together with the smoke of offering from the Sanctuary. But the question is, it is not the origin that matters to the narrator but what it is made to symbolise - divine presence in form of fire.
33. On whether we have two sacrifices here or not with the related discussion, see N.H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers, Nelso 1967 pp. 74ff. and Martin Noth, Leviticus London 1965 pp.80-88.

We may however note that the automatic fire here breaking forth to consume sacrifice or offenders as in Lev. 10:2 may be a primitive element in religious thought well emphasised by Rudolf Otto in his, Idea of the Holy. It may also even point to the desire of the narrator to establish the heavenly origin of the Altar fire - this being the first sacrifice on the newly inaugurated Sanctuary - that would /

would now on continue to burn unextinguished upon the Altar Lev. 6:9-13. By the descent of the uncaused fire the Deity has descended to take his abode on earth in a place prepared for him.

34. The Rabbis classify this type of fire as the 3rd of the six forms of fire and is referred to as the fire that consumes and drinks (see b. Shab.67^a; b.Jeb.71^b).

35. W. Eichrodt on this says, "Because the K^ebhod in the likeness of a mass of fire veiled in cloud is here understood as special form of Revelation, it becomes possible for priestly thought to speak of a real entry of the transcendent God into the realm of the visible without however thereby prejudicing his transcendence". O.T. Theology Vol II 1967 p.31.

36. On the secondary nature of the present story of Elijah's translation as it stands in the pericope, and the legendary nature of the story, see M. Jastrow, The Religion of Babylon and Assyria, Boston 1898 p.461. For the theological import J. Gray says, "Here the element fire apart from the rationalistic and mythological explanation is a common motif in accounts of Theophanies. So the theophany at the disappearance of Elijah may have been elaborated to emphasise the presence of Yahweh and so to enhance the authority to which Elisha fell heir" I & II Kings Commentary London 1964 p.426.

37. See Hertzberg I and II Samuel London, 1964 p.396ff.

38. We have further examples of this even in the Post Old Testament times, see for instance Ecclus. 16:18-19; 43:16-17; Jth.16:15; Wisd. Sol. 5:21-23; Assumption of Moses 10:3-6, although Mettinger would /

would want us to see them simply as references to the motifs of the Chaos battle, Dethronement of Sabbaoth pp. 33ff. I would rather agree with Hertzberg who says of II Samuel 22:9 that, "The theological significance i.e. to extol Yahweh's awful Majesty and the dread that accompanies him on his trail to give salvation to his own, is more important than whatever roots there may be in the comparative study of Religion". I & II Samuel London 1964 pp. 395ff cf F.M. Cross and Freedman JBL 72 (1953) pp 19ff.

39. See A. Schott, W. von Soden, Das Gilgamesch Epos (1958) pp 34 and 110.
40. S. Langdon Babylonian Penitential Psalms OECT 6 (1927) p.68.
41. cf Hosea 2:10 "Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and no one shall rescue her out of my hand" because as Heb. 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God".
42. On this subject, 'The Day of the Lord', which though related is outside the ambit of this enquiry, see for a full discussion L. Cerny The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, 1948; G. von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh", JSS IV (1959) pp. 97-108; M. Weiss, "The Origin of the Day of Yahweh Reconsidered" HUCA 37 (1966) pp 29-71. For other names for the 'Day' see Is. 34:8; Jer. 17:16-17; 46:21; 50:27; Micah 7:4; Ez. 7:7.
43. Etan Levine, Jewish Symbolism and Mysticism, New York 1981. p.1.

44. Generally in the Rabbinic Literature the Burning Bush is commonly identified as the thorn-Bush.
45. Midrash Rabbah Exodus, London, 1939 p.53.
46. For these various opinions, see Aggadat Bereshit, 32:64; Shemot Rabbah 11:8; and Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel for the suggestion of Zagzugel, while for the suggestion of Jesus, see The Constitution to the Holy Apostles V 3:20.
47. Here I am using the Quran, translated with a critical re-arrangement of the Surahs by Richard Bell, Edinburgh 1939. For other allusions to this episode which is one of the Medinan Surahs, see Surah 19:53;20:82 etc.
48. See Theological Dictionary of the N.T. vol. VI 1969 pp.939ff.
49. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer Chapter 40, see also E.Levine Section vii.
50. Etan Levine Jewish Symbolism and Mysticism p.23 Section XI.
51. De Princip ii.8, and see Chadwick Exodus p.48.
52. See Guerim, vie des Saints vii in E.C. Brewer, Dictionary of Miracles p.55 and Gaster Myth and Legends in O.T. p. 504ff.
53. ^bQid 72^a and also Theological Dictionary of the N.T. p.933.
54. R.J. Clifford The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament, Cambridge 1972 p.114. This fault also constitutes the thrust of P.D. Miller Jr.'s article, "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel", CBQ 27 (1965) pp. 256-261. Here one would see/

see 'Common heritage' a better term than borrowing. This would make Israel and her Canaanite neighbours co-inheritors from a common source. So the 'traditions' could equally well be at home with Israel as with her neighbours.

55. See and cf F.M. Cross HTR 55 (1962) pp. 225-59.

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STORY

THE BASIC THEOLOGICAL STRANDS OF EXODUS 3 and 4

Having already used all the parameters required of such an investigation as this in our earlier works, we now, in this section want to look at what the theological message is which the writer can be seen as conveying with the Burning-Bush story; bearing in mind all the results of our Critical Analysis of the Text which have enabled us to see the sources from which the materials used have been derived as well as the nature of the narrative we have in front of us. So the question now is of what theological significance is our Text and what is the interpretation that we can put on it or derive from it? Here it may be remarked that for the Jews, as well as for any worshipping community, it is most unlikely that 'Scripture' was intended to be exhaustive in what it explicitly stated, rather its exhaustiveness lies in what it could be interpreted to mean either in the ears of the audience or by the individual interpreter. It is this dynamic nature of the 'Biblical Text' which precludes its confinement to a single interpretation that gives it its timeless significance and relevance to every generation in their existential context. Thus what is drawn out from the text can only be seen to be implied rather than stated explicitly in it. This is because doing theology is not simply regurgitating what has already been explicitly stated on the pages of Scripture but rather a reasoning or closer interrogation of the text for what the author ~~appears~~ to say but which he has not explicitly said but only implied. The corollary to this is that two theologians may consequently not say the same thing or say it differently, due to the differences in the depth of insight and the choice of the angle from which to look at things.

Bearing /

Bearing this principle in mind we may like to recall the point made earlier in Chapter 2 that Ex. 3:1 - 4:17 is a 'Prophetic Call' narrative rather than a cult legend or hieroi logoi of Hugo Gressmann (1) and his school's assumption or belief. That the unreasonableness of such a misnomer is self-evident may not require elaborate demonstration. This is because if it were a cult legend, what was it meant to legitimise, Sinai cult in the wilderness long forgotten and living only in memory? And if it has been estranged from such context, then obviously the assumption passes judgment on itself; what it is now used for is what is important to us in knowing the mind of the author and the message he communicated to his audience.

(A) YAHWEH

(i) YAHWEH IS THE GOD OF ISRAEL

One such message the author appears here to be communicating to his audience is the claim that, 'YAHWEH is the God of Israel'. This claim or assertion presupposes some apparent identification problems for this God bearing this title Yahweh, (cf Deutero Isaiah who tried assiduously to address himself to similar problem). The issue of who this God is, the meaning of his name, how he is to be addressed throughout all generations, his relationship with the 'gods?' of the forebears etc. run through the entire narrative. This very God whose name is new and who is not presented as the object of devotion of the suffering exiles in Egypt is presented as acting within the Covenant context with the Patriarchs - a God who knew his people but who probably was not known by his subjects. In the midst of the harmonization policy of the author to show that Yahweh is the God of Israel, the valid point stands out clear that Yahweh is not part of the traditions inherited from the Patriarchs. /

Patriarchs. Israel learnt this name during her period of crisis which occasion validated the efficacy of the name for them. This fact of the acquisition of the Divine Name, the date of which had become vague to the author, is now given basis in the Call narrative of Moses who tradition accepts as having contributed this distinctive element to Israelite religion. (2) Thus the acquisition of the name is made to occur at the post-Patriarchal period but pre-monarchical.

In order to drive his point home, the author shows that behind the name Yahweh and any other Divine name/appellation known to Israel, there stands only just one figure Deity. This highly philosophical concept appears aimed at meeting a purely theological need. Even the fact that a name is here claimed to have been revealed is open to question since it is prior to intimate knowledge of this Deity. This is because name, as it were, reveals the nature and potentials or character of the bearer. And since the nature or character of the Deity are seen in his activities through the prophetic interpretation of the events, then it means the name which spells the dynamic nature of Yahweh came from the religious experience of the worshipping community. But the author of our passage says the name was revealed and not deduced from what the God of Israel became to his people. This is the Name of the God of Israel!

His redemption of the exiles in Egypt is not a new enterprise in the course of his salvific work for Israel but only a fulfilment of his covenant vows with the Patriarchs on behalf of their progeny. That Yahweh the God of Israel remembered his covenant with the Fathers and consequently went into action, the author is presenting him as a God faithful to his promise and never failing his people. This point is buttressed /

buttressed with the centralisation of the 'Exodus events' between the covenant made and remembered and the promise to lead to a land flowing with milk and honey. (3) Thus from the inception of Israelite history to her settlement, Yahweh is presented as the God who is responsible for the protection and salvation of his people. He is the God of Israel.

Therefore even the vestiges of the Patriarchal deities that were still surviving in the time of the author or which were beginning to re-surface in view of the Babylonian exile and sufferings are made to be seen as marks of this very same Yahweh the only God of Israel. This is why the author continuously kept claiming that Yahweh is the same God the Patriarchs worshipped. He Yahweh himself is made to claim it!

This therefore means that in the figure Yahweh, all the deities of the past i.e. the various or different Patriarchal Elohim coalesce, with the name Yahweh thus becoming the distinctive symbol of Israelite Deity with whom no other god could stand comparison. (4) The author(s) is thus implicitly saying that the Patriarchal divine epithets should not be taken as independent concepts which only later amalgamated with the image of Yahweh, but rather that from the very first, they served as mere characterisation of the God of Israel Yahweh. In this theological exercise, the author has not only welded together two apparent different epochs, Patriarchal and Mosaic, but has also unified the Patriarchal deities who probably were only but few of several deities of the time. All the Elohim of the Patriarchs are now one with whom Yahweh is to be identified - a pure ideological schema!

With /

With the identification of Patriarchal deities and affirmation of the promise of land made to them and their offspring, the author hints ~~at~~ the exilic and post-exilic attempt at monotheism, the oneness of Israelite Deity. IF Yahweh is one and the same with the God of the Patriarchs, then inevitably he should be committed to the same course and purpose like him.

This identification of Yahweh with 'El or 'Elohim and the constant assertion that He is one, is found fully spelt out in Deutero-Isaiah and in Deuteronomy e.g. Deut. 6:4;4:35 etc. That it is in Deutero-Isaiah that such instances are so plentifully found should not be seen as an accident. Rather it should be taken as evidence of the fact that it is this prophet more than any other that had the certainty of the unity of God and so was never tired either of proclaiming it with inspired passion or commending it for acceptance. In such passages like Isaiah 40:18;41:13;43:12;45:12 and many others, Yahweh is found claiming identity with 'El or 'Elohim. The frequent 'I AM' of Yahweh in these chapters anticipates or runs parallel to the identification 'programme' we find in this 'Burning Bush' narrative.

With this identification the author of our Text might have been providing an answer to contemporary questions that e.g. Yahweh had become impotent as a result of the Exile and so can neither do good nor bad, even his hands are no longer long enough to save (Is.59:1) neither does he even see what is happening. With the story of the 'Burning Bush', and the subsequent Exodus, Yahweh is made the 'only God' who hears the cry of Israel, leads the people out to the promised land and gives them a secure territory. This first Exodus would therefore not only counter the accusations, but set out by implication, Yahweh as a God to be desired /

desired by the Babylonian Exiles who were much longing for liberation and a return to their own land. (5)

And as a character painting of this Deity Yahweh, the true God of Israel, he is presented as one who operates from both earth and heaven in his programme for the salvation of Israel. Thus His transcendence is found cleverly or theologically balanced against his immanence by adapting the anthropomorphism of the tradition used in the compilation of our narrative (see Chapter 2).

This is why the picture we have in our narrative is that of a God who is here on earth addressing his Prophet/Agent and at the same time in heaven whose voice only is heard. Thus though it is evident from the narrative that it was a Divine figure who met Moses and whom Moses was afraid to look at, yet the author puts before us a picture of the scene of words, where Moses only heard the voice/words of Yahweh (cf also Ex.20:22;19:19:24:10/11). The way the author has handled the anthropomorphic elements of the tradition shows his theological tendency to make it fit the new exalted concept of Yahweh in the exegesis of later prophetic understanding. IF this is the case, what specifically does the author want to teach about Yahweh and His Salvation for Israel?

(ii) YAHWEH AND THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL

Because of the author's theological inclination, the Exodus event is not just pictured as a sheer demonstration of Yahweh's love for Israel in order to attract them to Himself, but rather as an act which he had to perform in His own honour as part of his responsibility in the contract or promises already made with the forefathers. (6)

The /

The bringing out of the Israelites is therefore in order that He might lead them into the land which he had promised, (cf Deut. 6:23; 26:3,15). (7)

Due to this concept that Yahweh's dealing with Israel is a gradual unfolding of his divine plan for their salvation, the coming into bondage in Egypt and the subsequent suffering there is seen as part of Yahweh's work. It is not to be interpreted as the neglect of his people nor due to the fault of the Forefathers. Yahweh had long ago predicted what was to happen, (Gen. 15:13-14). Yahweh had allowed or made them come into exile in order that he might lead them out, ("He has broken that he may bind" Hosea 6:1-2; Job 5:18). And since the coming into Egypt is not without his foreknowledge and sanction, therefore their salvation or rescue is going to be without qualifications. (8) Israel's salvation from ruin in Egypt has no pre-condition, no repentance, all that Yahweh requires is that they accept his prophet's message of His power to lead them out. Thus the basic 'Biblical Doctrine' of an unconditional offer of salvation lies at the foreground - cf Deutero-Isaiah's theology (e.g. in 41:8-10). Yahweh does not require or request repentance for sin from his people neither moral transformation before coming to them with salvation. The cry emanating from a state of hopelessness and helplessness irrespective of personal righteousness is what sends Yahweh into action. The aim is to paint a picture of a compassionate God who empathises with those who suffer and who saves first before counting the cost.

This of course reminds one of not only Deutero-Isaianic theology but also of Jeremiah and Ezekiel's theology of salvation without pre-condition of /

of repentance or moral transformation after exile had begun, though they do not tell us how and where the people's sour moral capacity in Jerusalem suddenly improved for the better in exile, (cf. Ez. 34-37; Jer.24; 29-33). (9)

But in this passionate relationship of Yahweh with his people and his involvement in their existential situation, the line is carefully drawn by the author that Yahweh nevertheless retains his distinctive feature of detachment and sovereignty. He does not commit or subject Himself to his people's manipulation. So though he is close to them, he can not as a result be circumscribed by them. He retains his inscrutability by not disclosing his name, He is rather to be known by what he does - יהוה אשר לא יראה . The full knowledge of Yahweh is to be had from his mighty acts in the salvation of His people.

(iii) YAHWEH AND HIS MIGHT

The impression which the author of our Text gives of Yahweh as he spells out His plan for Israel's rescue is that of a show of strength. Although Moses is to proclaim the humble message - 'Let my people go' - in form of a request, Yahweh says, he will surely be involved in a show of strength with Pharaoh - "unless compelled by a mighty hand" (Ex. 3:19;6:1). It is not only the release from Egypt that will involve a show of might, but also the acquisition of the promised land which they will take after Yahweh had driven out the former inhabitants (Deut. 4:37-38). The price of Israel's salvation and protection, the author seems to say is the demonstration of Yahweh's powers in contest with Israel's enemies. This show of the strength of Yahweh against Israel's enemies /

enemies is a favourite of the Deuteronomist. As Childs says, (10)
"The formula of Yahweh's bringing Israel out of Egypt with a strong
hand shows the Deuteronomic stamp on an older, inherited phrase.
It points to the redemptive purpose of Yahweh with Israel from which
the Deuteronomist develops his theology of election". (11)

(A) YAHWEH'S MIGHT IN PUNISHMENT

That Yahweh is a mighty God who brooks no rivals is seen in his
punishment of those who would impede his course. How Yahweh does
this is part of the teaching of the writer of our Text. This is done
in the point made about the King of Egypt. Yahweh was not going to
punish Pharaoh and his men for enslaving His people Israel, nor for
making them build Pharaoh's store cities. (12) But rather Yahweh was
going to punish the King with his men because he will not listen to the
orders He gives through His prophet.

Yahweh does not just punish faults committed but refusals to obey his
voice. It is in accordance with this principle, that Pharaoh is first
to be given the chance to say yes or no to the Divine Command. His
response would then, if negative, justify the subsequent punishments to
be meted out on him. In enunciating this principle of divine punish-
ment, the author is also indirectly presenting an apologetic for Prophetic
Oracle which commands obedience.

But this leaves unanswered the question of how justified is God in
allowing the question to be put, since he already knows that Pharaoh
would not say yes to His orders. This issue is left untouched because
real /

real facts of history or justice are not the author's concern but theologisation on Divine discipline which he wants to defend is contingent on man's response to God. To him, it is the ultimate result of disobedience to Divine injunction. Man's responsibility is to obey what God says through His Prophet! But this does not mean that God could not in his almightiness raise up some people on whom to demonstrate his power.

And as the later story of the Exodus shows, all the punishment meted out on Egypt left the Israelites untouched. Even the water made blood and the hail-storm did not reach their camps! It was only on the disobedient Pharaoh and his men. These portents convinced and converted the Israelites to Yahweh, but we do not know what could have happened if Pharaoh had obeyed the command and granted Moses' request without any resistance. So the punishment of Pharaoh and his men is justified on grounds of his disobedience so that, 'he may know that Yahweh is God' (cf Ex.5:2;7:5;9:14;10:2;11:7; Deut.4:35;29:6 etc.). This means that the release of Israel was in the context of a battle between Yahweh and Pharaoh to show who is more powerful. After many signs, Yahweh eventually triumphed and His people Israel carried as booty jewels and ornaments and garments from their conquered opponents. The context in which this despoliation of the Egyptians occurs shows that it is being interpreted by the author as punishment on the Egyptians and Divine favour on Israel (cf. Isaiah 43:3;45:14). (13)

The situation of the exit of the Israelites - according to Exodus account - does not seem to favour a friendly bestowal of rich gifts. Yahweh had fought for them, so they despoiled their victims of war. But /

But they only took it because Yahweh had so directed as a mark of His victory.

From this teaching that Kings and people can not hinder Yahweh's Divine plan of redemption, our narrative goes on to give hints about Yahweh's sovereignty over nature.

(B) YAHWEH'S MIGHT OVER NATURE

In the history of Israelite religion, Yahweh's redemptive activity is usually found inseparably connected with miracle or the miraculous. While the redemption points to his love for his own, the miracle bears witness to his power over man and nature. And so they are usually found displayed where Yahweh wants to further or advance the knowledge of Himself in the face of threatening obstacles, so as to awaken faith by bringing his people to safety through hard times. This is probably why miracles are found playing a major role in the critical periods of Israelite history. (14) Thus Divine Miracles are to be seen as Yahweh's education of his people in an unconditional trust in him which would then be secure in hard times even without special miraculous demonstration.

This is why the miracles we find strung together in our narrative require a fresh consideration. It is usually held by commentators that the miracles are meant to legitimize Mosaic authority or that they are mere preview of what is to follow. On the contrary they may even be seen as misplaced elements of tradition which in themselves lack any significance. That the author of our Text has used the miracles here in a special sense is evident from a closer examination, which also reveals that it is a Text that has been much developed.

As /

As we have it in the story, Moses requested signs as means of authenticating his mission before the people of Israel, that the God of their Fathers has really appeared to him (Ex. 4:1,5,8,9).

Then in answer Yahweh provided a series of miracles. But contrary to what is said here, the miracles are found used before Pharaoh and his men as a demonstration of the might of Yahweh (Ex.7:8-13,14-24). And apart from the vague statement of Ex. 4:31, (15) we are not told in Ex. 6:9 that Moses resorted to the use of the miracles when his people failed to believe his message, nor is he ever found using the miracle of hand-turned-leprous.

The implication of this is that there appear to be two possible levels of understanding and interpreting these miracles in this section of our Text. The first which is that of Mosaic Prophetic legitimation is already clearly stated in the passage, but the second 'level' which is that of Yahweh's power over nature or as creator (16) is only implied. Note that before Pharaoh the miracles only point to Yahweh and not to Moses! According to Eichrodt, (17) "The Old Testament designations for the miraculous are used in the sense of the portentous which points to an invisible power. As such they indicate most strikingly wherein lies the real importance of the miraculous for faith i.e. not in its material factuality but in its evidential character". He then went on to say, "The Israelites rightly see in God's sovereign control of Nature as manifested also in his miracles, proof that the created order is totally dependent on the will of him who called it into being".

So in the miracles we have evidence not only of Mosaic status - a truly commissioned God's mouthpiece, but also a testimony of the ability of Him who sends him to make and unmake via the spoken word $\lambda\gamma\lambda$.

Even /

Even to a Moses in the 'Burning Bush' dialogue with Yahweh, the miracles would convince him that he was having the backing of one who controls nature in his mission. Throughout the miracle demonstration, Yahweh was only bringing out a new substance from either a corrupt one (Leprosy) or one of a different nature (snake) through his Divine command which reminds one of his Divine fiat in creation.(18) The miracles show his power to bring creature into existence and make it disappear - (snake), create one substance from another -(blood), and ability to turn man into what he pleases - (leprosy). Thus his control over nature is made to spread over all of creation.

This is well spelt out in His speech to Moses over his inability to speak. He definitely told him that it is He Yahweh who makes man what he is, dumb, blind or deaf. It would seem that originally the miracle of hand-turned-leprous followed from here to demonstrate the veracity of Yahweh's claim that it is he who makes man what he is. The proclamation here that Yahweh not only knows what man will be prior to his birth, but that it is even he who chooses what to make of him, has no better pointer to Yahweh as Creator. This finds support in the fact that in the bringing out of Israel from Egypt, Yahweh was in a way recreating them as a people for Himself. With this testimony given about Yahweh the author seems to have fully enunciated the theological points he wants to make about the Israelite God Yahweh and His powers.

Having spelt out in outline the theological strands of our Text about Yahweh, we may now look to see what it says about Yahweh's plenipotentary per excellence - His Prophet.

(B) PROPHET/MOSES

(i) THE PROPHET IS YAHWEH'S INSTRUMENT IN ACTION

The Book Exodus appears concerned with the primary task of depicting the role Yahweh played in the socio-political predicament of his people in Egypt. The answer to the question of by what means Yahweh played this role is the burden of Exodus Chapters 3 and 4. As a prelude to the power demonstrations of Yahweh in Egypt, it is out to show that when Yahweh's people are passing through crisis situation, it is through a Prophet that they are rescued. This belief of the author of our text appears echoed elsewhere in the Old Testament. For instance, Hosea 12:13 says, "By a Prophet, the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt and by a Prophet he was preserved" (cf Ex. 33:1), while Judges 6:7-8 says, "When the people of Israel cried to the Lord on account of the Midianites, the Lord sent a Prophet to the people of Israel.....".

Thus it seems believed by these traditions that in a time of crisis, it is a prophet that Yahweh sends to his people to warn or to deliver. This may be the reason why when in Egypt the people of Israel cried as a result of their anguish, God sent to them a proclaimer of his message rather than a war leader. What Moses brought to Egypt was the news of what Yahweh had decided to do for his people's salvation.

And it may even be noted that the 'Burning Bush' narrative played a role in Exodus similar to that of the Call narratives of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in their respective Books. According to Macdonald, "The revelation of God to Moses at the burning-bush is the starting point for the earliest known Samaritan tradition and teaching about Moses; it /

it is chiefly in the mediaeval material that the birth by supernormal means is emphasised". (19) On the strength of this, it means the burning bush narrative circulated amongst the Samaritans as Moses' Prophetic Call just like that of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the books of their name. So as an account of Moses' enlistment into Divine Service what message can we derive from the Divine-human encounter?

(ii) THE CONSCRIPTION OF THE PROPHET/MOSES INTO SERVICE

The first thing to note here is that Yahweh is presented in our story as accosting Moses on a working day, not at a festival or during worship within the cult. The God who appeared to Moses, our author seems to say is a God with whom contact is possible where He chooses to manifest Himself. Such encounter may not necessarily entail ecstatic or shocking abnormal insights or visions - a feature whose absence characterises the Deuteronomic prophets in their inaugural visions.

But in this, one thing is important, which is wherever this God thus appears to his servant, the spot automatically assumes the form of a Sanctuary because He has hallowed it with His presence. This is why such spots could be described in Temple imagery.

To the exiles in Egypt or Babylon this could have been very instructive that Yahweh could establish his presence in any place of his choice according to his will. This would distinguish him from the gods of the nations whose presence and encounter is restricted to the four walls of the Temple and instructive enough as an apologetic for the Temple which lay in ruins in Jerusalem. (20)

That /

That Moses is described as a shepherd before his call has the theological message of the miraculous or mysterious way Yahweh in his grace functions to accomplish his Divine plan. Moses as shepherd here in an occupational context is different from the honorific use of the title to designate Leaders, Kings or Deity in their roles as overseers of the people which is metaphorical. The use here shows the beginning of the called compared with his later status which by juxtaposition should be seen as the grace of Yahweh. This means the called has not in any way expected what he is made later in the community of Yahweh - Leader, King, God's mouth-piece. This theological thread appears to run through the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, (cf II Sam.7:8; I Sam.9; Amos 7:14ff; contra. Isaiah 51:1; I Cor. 1:26-31). (21)

The call of Yahweh's servants from such or similar background is probably meant to instil a sense of discipline or responsibility in them. (22)

Even the particular occupation of 'shepherding' appears as a good preparatory ground in a sense, for ruler/leader of the people though not necessarily a pre-requisite for success. The task of watching over the flock, feeding and protecting them, healing the sick and bringing back that which has strayed correspond to the duties which a faithful and godly leader/ruler owes to the people committed to his charge.

Along with this, that Moses had an occupation before his call shows that it was Yahweh who found Moses not that the latter sought for the former. This note is sustained all through the narrative by Moses' remonstrance against Yahweh's persistent entreaties.

(iii) THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE

Moses was called from the sheepfold to be Prophet/Leader of Yahweh's people almost as David and Saul were taken from the pasture from following the sheep to be Kings over Israel.

According to our narrative Yahweh did not only commission him with a message but also told him how to deliver it with a promise that whatever he is to utter will be divinely communicated to him (Ex.3:10,16; 4:15). The implication of this is that the true prophet of this tradition is God's oracle personified. What he is sent he delivers, and what he is to say he is taught by Yahweh. Thus every oracle of the Prophet has its origin in Yahweh and should be obeyed. As a prophet Moses comes to the people in the name of Yahweh - not of a strange god - and he has the responsibility of bringing the people to Yahweh's Holy place to worship Him (Ex.3:15;3:12 contrast Deut.13:1-3). (23) Thus Amos was later to say Yahweh does nothing without revealing his secret to his faithful servant the Prophet (Amos 3:7). (24)

(iv) THE PROPHET'S STATUS

Because of the Divine authority behind the Prophet, he commands obedience from both King and people. Disobedience to him is disobedience to Yahweh. Even amongst Yahweh's cultic officials, it seems the author is implying by his subordination of Aaron to Moses that the Prophet ranks higher than the Priest (cf Ex.4:16;32:22). (25) He is the man whom Yahweh appears to and speaks with face to face, (Ex. 3:2;33:11). The Prophet therefore of Mosaic tradition is superior to those whose means of contact with Yahweh is via dreams.

With /

With these deductions from our Text, it would appear that the author has the intention not only of authenticating the body of materials ascribed to Moses in the traditions by claiming he was genuinely called as a prophet but also to set him up before his audience as a prototype of Yahweh's Prophets. His narrative of the past is made to validate the present!

Having thus examined the implicit theological intentions of our narrative, we may now look at the 'Exegesis' of the Text.

EXEGESIS OF THE TEXT

CHAPTER 3

In this section as we look for the theological significance in the exegesis of the Text, some points made earlier may, if necessary, be recalled and clarified in order to present a comprehensive thought or message of the Text.

3:1

The way the author begins his story is such that would awaken interest in his audience or reader. He had already set before us two scenes: The Israelites crying in Egypt and Yahweh monitoring their anguish in heaven (Ex. 2:23-25). Now the third scene is set, Moses is shepherding his father-in-law's flock in Midian. The question, what happened next or what relationship have these three scenes, puts the reader/audience in suspense in anticipation of what follows.

From /

From the form of the Hebrew word מִןּ used which is 'participle' it can be inferred that the author wants his audience to believe that Moses was carrying out his routine duty. IF this is so then it means that what happened to him later was an interruption and unexpected. This seems the view of the author which he wants to communicate

It was during this assignment that Moses came to the מִןּ of the wilderness. On the exact designation of this Hebrew word, no dogmatic claim can be made because the construction is ambiguous. Different translations render it differently: RSV - 'West side of the wilderness', KJV - 'Back side of the desert', Jerusalem Bible - 'To the far side of the Wilderness', New Jerusalem Version - 'Into the wilderness', or by others, 'Back of the Wilderness'. Whether we translate it West, Back, far side, etc., the meaning intended has a geographical flavour. This type of definition would certainly be seen to derive from the desire to identify the revelation location with Sinai. That the place of this revelation and Sinai are the same appears the view of the author which he wants his readers to accept. This is evidenced in Yahweh's injunction to Moses in Ex. 3:12 to bring the people back to the spot after their release, which Moses did and it was Sinai. The view that we have something missing between מִןּ and wilderness which could be conjecturally supplied as '.....seeking after pasture in the wilderness', is imaginative and is not supported by the Biblical evidence we have though it may sound reasonable. (26)

According to the author Horeb is outside not within the wilderness. That he could so describe the location may point to the assumption that he had a specific locale in view. On the question of the Name Horeb, it /

it may be noted that it is a biblically attested fact that one locale could have more than one name as can be seen in both Old and New Testaments, (cf. MT. Hermon called Sirion and Senir, Deut. 3:9; Psalm 29:6; and, Sea of Galilee called Sea of Chinnereth, Tiberias and Gennesareth, Mtt. 4:18; Lk.5:1; John 6:1; Numb. 34:11). Thus the author was merely using any of the names that had come to him through tradition. Although whether he means by Horeb the territory where the mountain of God - Sinai is located we do not know for certain.

Much has been said about the meaning of, 'The Mountain of God'. (27) There are two possible viewpoints, and any interpretation will be determined by which of them we espouse. The first is to hold that prior to the Revelation, the mountain was already known and recognised as Mountain of Elohim where supernormal events occur or second, that it was only called Mountain of Elohim because of what happened there.

IF we accept the first view then it would imply that Moses was psychologically prepared for a message from the god of the mountain which is the view of Barton and others. (28) This would run counter to the message of the Text which says;

- (i) Moses was surprised at what he saw which was why he was curious:
- (ii) He did not know until told that he was in a holy place and should take off his shoes:
- (iii) When eventually he realised that it was a God talking to him - which probably he did not know at first - he hid his face in fear.

For him to have known the place for what it is and expected a message and yet behave as he did when he got one is highly questionable.

The alternative to this is to hold that the mountain was already a holy place but unknown to Moses. This will not be different from the second view that the mountain became Mountain of God after what happened there. At least Moses was not aware of it!

The solution would therefore be that from the author's point of view, the mountain is so called because that is what it came to be known and called by tradition. And as he was writing post-eventum, he could not have called it any other name. The main message of our Text is to show Moses as an obedient servant of Yahweh conscripted into Divine service rather than the view that Moses knew the mountain to be holy and expected a message which has no Biblical support.

3:2

Moses' search for grazing has accidentally landed him in a distinct locale - the premises of God's residence. He is now at the Mountain of God and outside of the grazing field. At this point, the elements of sheep and shepherding are switched off, as it were, from the story. From here on it is Moses and the Mountain of God. This change in the story is ushered in by the happening of the unexpected - An Angel appeared unto Moses. The form of the verb נִפְלַח used with the Angel as subject is 'Niphal' which literally means - An Angel made himself seen i.e. physical cognition by Moses. (29) Here there are two tensions in the narrative which the author wants to take care of: (i) The problem of who discovered who - God or Moses: (ii) Who commissioned Moses, Yahweh or His messenger Mal'ak.

The /

The Revelation did not happen in the open field before Moses came to the Mountain of God. To guard against any wrong interpretation of this as Moses having sought God, the author says even when Moses came, he did not see anything until the Mal'ak made himself visible to him. Thus the initiative is still on the side of God.

The second tension is theologically woven into the texture of the entire story. It concerns very important issues, the credibility of Mosaic mission and the nature or person of Israelite God, Yahweh. In handling these issues, the author treated the original story of Moses meeting with a Divine Messenger in the light of later knowledge and conceptions of the transcendent Yahweh. (30) This is why we have the following apparent friction in the story:

A Mal'ak appeared to Moses from the midst of the bush.

But what Moses saw was fire apparently encapsulating this figure.

From the midst of the Bush God called.

In 3:8 Yahweh says I have come down

After self-introduction by Deity Moses was afraid to look on God.

In 3:12 God referred to himself in the 3rd person - "Worship God on this mountain".

From the evidence there appears to be no palpable distinction between the Mal'ak who appeared to Moses and Yahweh the God of Israel who commissioned him and enjoined him to worship God on the same mountain after Exodus from Egypt. In order to play down the stark anthropomorphism of the hero story, and thereby avoid any reference to any likeness whatsoever /

whatsoever of the deity or the naive immediate intimacy of God's relationship, Moses and Yahweh are presented in dialogue without physical interaction. (31) This is important because the author describes the scene as happening here on earth. The anthropomorphism would not have posed much concern if the scene were in heaven and the Revelation was by vision (cf Jer.1:9; Is.6 etc.). This adjustment or adaptation of the hero story in light of later prophetic calls takes care of the issue that it was Yahweh who discovered Moses, called and commissioned him. His call and the traditions about him thus become authentic or legitimised. So though the Mal'ak element of the Oral tradition remains, it is on Yahweh and his word that attention is focused.

The Angel appeared in a flame of fire. As we have argued earlier this motif fire of Yahweh should be distinguished from the ordinary fire of human experience which nourishes itself on what it seizes. The Mal'ak was within the fire and it did not hurt him. The fire burned in the bush but the bush was not consumed. (32) The fire spoken of here in the passage is only fire in comparison. It is a legitimising symbol and belongs to the second layer of the tradition used. The author wants to say that the presence of the Divine figure who appeared to Moses set the bush alight which Moses mistakenly took for a burning bush but was surprised when he discovered it was not burning the objects around.

What then is the theological significance of the fire? Primarily it establishes the Presence of Yahweh, (33) and secondarily it symbolises to Moses that Yahweh's revelation to him is in the context of rescue and not judgment - it does not consume, and also for the Israelites in Egypt that their oppressive measures will not be able to quench their spirit because He Yahweh is in the midst of the fire with them. This last symbology /

symbolology of the fire - popular in Rabbinic Literature, is the one that is often emphasised leaving out the above two symbolisations. The reason may be because of the appeal it has for any people under persecution or oppression but who believe there is hope beyond the crisis.

The revelation was 'out of the midst of a bush'. The interpretation of the Hebrew word translated 'Bush' has been a problem over the ages mainly because we have only two references to it in the entire Old Testament. The identity of what is called Seneh here is in dispute (as discussed in Chapter 4) while its association with Sinai is not a settled question. But it seems the Mosaic Revelation has been long connected with Seneh mentioned here.

Before the introduction of chapter and verse into Jewish Scriptures (as said earlier in Chapter 4), our Text was known and referred to as, 'The Bush' (cf Mk. 12:26). And when Deut. 33:16 wanted to refer to the Deity of Mosaic experience, it called him, the one who dwells in the Bush. Whether this late addition to the Deuteronomic corpus here reflects the original designation of this Deity prior to the evolution of the 'verbal name' יְיָ we do not know! One can only conjecture that the 'growth' so designated - bush - might have been known in close relation to some superhuman manifestations e.g. like the 'Iroko tree' with spirits in Africa. The lowly scrub (34) now identified as Seneh, though ^{it} aids some homiletical deductions from the passage, appears unlikely the one referred to here.

3:3

"And Moses said....." which begins this verse should be seen as the technique /

technique of the story teller rather than a report of what Moses did. In all probability it looks like what Moses muttered to himself or is supposed to have said to himself. What made Moses become inquisitive is the nature of the fire he thought he saw. In picturing him in this light the author wants to show that Moses up to now was still a 'novice' in Divine-human encounter which is why he did not deduce immediately from the type of fire he saw (35) that he was before the brightness of the glory that surrounds Yahweh in His earthly manifestation, (cf when Yahweh called Samuel, the latter ran to Eli not knowing it was Yahweh calling). In so presenting Samuel and Moses the writers want to say what happened was sudden and a sort of interruption in their lives, unprepared for.

That what Moses saw startled him and aroused his desire to examine it at close quarters shows that any psychological explanation of what happened to Moses is completely foreign to the thought of the author. (36)

Thus from the context, the author has shown that what he is describing is not the ordinary fire as he presents Moses as saying what he sees is not the fire that burns the objects in its embrace.

3:4

The sudden shift from YHWH to 'Elohim has nothing significant to warrant the change as source indicators (see Chapter 2). Though Cassuto's theory that Yahweh is used when the deity is spoken of objectively and 'Elohim when it is reference to what Moses hears, sees or feels subjectively is inviting but is not (very) valid. (37) As we have said earlier /

earlier in the examination of 'Theological Strands' of our Text, what we have here is the identification of Yahweh as 'Elohim. IF, 'Yahweh your Elohim', of DTR proclamation is to be seen to be true, then Yahweh must be made to function right from this crucial period under the two titles. IF he has been so acting right from Mosaic period then Deutero-Isaiah's claims will not be seen as arbitrary.

It is significant that it was when Moses turned to the 'burning fire', that a voice came to him. (38) The source of Moses' message is the mysterious fire symbolising Yahweh's presence. This means he had a true call! Also the integrity of the one who called is protected. Moses heard a voice like Samuel which presupposes the inability of the called to see the caller (cf Ez. 1:25-2:1). The Being who appeared and was seen in the old story here assumes temporary transcendent position i.e. engulfed in the fire and obscured from sight. The 'voice' that called, addressed Moses by name and Moses answered in the traditional response formula (cf Abraham, Abraham, Gen. 22:11; Jacob, Jacob Gen. 46:2; Samuel, Samuel, I Sam. 3:4ff). The strange figure confronting Moses already knows his name just as He could know the end from the beginning without waiting for the events to happen (Ex.3:16-22; Is.46:9^b-10). The mark or identity of the true God of Israel.

3:5

Moses is warned not to come too close to the Being that has appeared to him (contrast the Angel to Gideon, the Angel to Manoah and Yahweh with the Angels who visited Abraham Gen. 18-19; Judges 6:12ff; 13:1ff). The Angel is here made to assume the full status of Yahweh of later Israelite /

Israelite concept - the one who can not be approached without precautionary measures. Secondly the ordinary field has become sacred because it has been infested by Yahweh's infectious holiness which has tabernacled in it. The result of this is that Moses has to observe the cultic regulation which requires shoes to be put off when approaching the 'Holy Place'. The author of our Text, is here using contemporary cultic language to describe the meeting site of Moses and the Mal'ak of Yahweh. Apart from describing what happened to Moses in a picturesque way it makes some theological point about Yahweh and what constitutes His Holy place. Yahweh is a God who makes holy wherever He chooses to appear.

3:6

Already we have been told, the voice which addressed Moses called from the midst of the bush which was aflame! When Moses turned to look at the burning-fire, apparently no figure was seen. But now he is afraid to look at God after the latter had disclosed his identity which had hitherto been hid from Moses. In other words, when Moses realised the status of the Divine Being before him, he hid his face out of reverence. The little conflict thus presented in the story is another evidence of the development of the old story into a call narrative.

In the self-introduction of the Deity which assumes an unasked question from Moses, we have the probable old form - 'I am the God of your Father', in the singular confused with the plural which enumerates the Patriarchs. While the singular form appears appropriate in the context of an individual, the plural would appear to suit the community - 'Your Fathers'. (39)

Thus in our story, the singular would be more reasonable in a Moses' case /

case since the intention of the Deity would be to allay his fears about the 'strange figure' who has appeared to him as the author presents the case. The addition of the Patriarchal names should be seen as later development to make the story include the eponymous Ancestors of Israel and not limited to Moses' forebears (40) - the doctrine of the Unity or oneness of the God of Israel.

'Moses hid his face', appears to imply that up till the point of the self-introduction by the Deity, Moses was looking at God whom he did not know to be God. The author uses the verb ~~7372~~ here to mean Moses turned down or away his face in reverence - worship not implied, he did not fall down or prostrate himself.

But it is astonishing that the figure Moses is here presented as giving reverence to and is afraid to look at the face, he is later to argue with relentlessly. The theological point of the author is however made, which is that, Moses did not look at God because nobody can see God and live (cf. Ex. 33:20,23).

3:7-10

Contained within verses 7 to 10 are two different notions about the God of Israel. In verses 7 and 8 Yahweh is almost pictured as being in his Divine Council disclosing what he has observed to his courtiers. The contents of the two verses appear like the premonition of Yahweh which serves as preamble to the decision taking in his Council. But in verses 9 to 10 Yahweh is presented - in his Mal'ak status - giving a commission to his chosen agent to save his people from ruin. What Yahweh /

Yahweh appears about to perform from his speech at the Divine Council, Moses is represented as being sent with full authority to perform. Thus once again, we have the skilful combination of the old story of Moses and the Mal'ak with later prophetic call notion.

In this conflation of two concepts the author of the text as it is, presents Yahweh as at first formally declaring to Moses, after the self-introduction, why he has chosen to confront him i.e. Moses, the way he has done. The reason for Yahweh's coming down is because of what he has observed. On the strength of this observation, Yahweh says, he has made up his mind about the salvation of the people of Israel. Then he discloses the content of the full agenda to Moses as friend to friend in conversation.

Having disclosed his plan, he comes back again to the subject matter which is contained in verse 7 now summarised in verse 9 and Moses is told it is through him Yahweh would perform the deliverance. Thus the author seems to have tailored the hero story successfully into the new call narrative - with Yahweh apparently acting in heaven as well as here on earth!

In this Literary art, the writer of our story appears to have made the following theological points:

(i) In verse 7 the concept of the distant Yahweh above is found balanced against the concept of Yahweh's nearness. Though Yahweh could from above monitor what is happening in Egypt, yet occasionally like here he does come down to get involved in the socio-political situation of his people. Thus Yahweh is neither permanently up in heaven /

heaven in neglect of his people nor is he so mixed up with mundane things as to lose his detachment and sovereignty.

(ii) Israel is fortunate to have a God like Yahweh who 'acts', the author seems to say, a God who hears when one cries to him, answers him and saves him from his troubles. In order to show Yahweh as a living God and provide answers to contemporary questioning about Yahweh's capabilities, the author employs about 6 active verbs for Yahweh in two verses - 7 and 8, he has seen, he hears, he knows, he comes down, he delivers, and he leads out (cf similar instances like Ex. 3:20; 15:6 12; 10:11, 18; 24:11 and 34:5 - the active Yahweh God of Israel).

(iii) Israel are the 'people of Yahweh' without qualification, and as a result their suffering causes Yahweh great concern - it makes him forsake his heavenly throne for a while in order to intervene, a consolation to those in distress. Although when Israel sin against God they could become 'lō'ammī' and 'lō'ehyeh', instead of 'ammī' and 'ehyeh' (Hosea 1:9), but at this time of distress they are unconditionally Yahweh's people.

(iv) When Yahweh intervenes in the predicament of his people, he offers them 'complete salvation'. He frees them from suffering and enables them to regain their independence and security. As this offer once met the needs of the slaves in Egypt so also it dangled like a bait before the face of the Babylonian Exiles. Thus the land of Canaan, physically occupied by real inhabitants whose heinous sins might have polluted the environment is described in the nomadic shepherd's idiom or mythical term as flowing with milk and honey, (cf. Ez. 20:6 where it /

it is called the most glorious of all lands). Cassuto interprets the idiom as meaning enough pasture for cattle producing milk and with trees whose boughs afforded man, without the necessity for hard toil, food as nourishing and as sweet as bees' honey, and a land yielding rich harvest as a result of human labour (Exodus Commentary p.34).

(v) In verse 9 two out of the 6 active verbs in verse 7 and 8, are selected for the sake of emphasis. Yahweh claims he had heard the cry of the Israelites and seen their oppression. Theologically it means Yahweh is not simply acting on impulse, when the cry which he heard came, he investigated which is designated by, 'have seen.' Thus the case is proved and the necessity for action justified. On the strength of this, the author's contemporaries in anguish should not regard their pleas to Yahweh as unheard or unnoticed for action. When Yahweh hears, deliverance follows (cf Psalm 34:17).

(vi) Lastly the hitherto remarked conflict between God coming down to deliver and his sending Moses to bring out the Israelites from Egypt should be seen in this light of the author's theologisation. The author wants to say that the bringing out of Israel from Egypt should be seen as the glory of Yahweh who initiated the move, chose his servant and supplied the necessary courage by 'being with him'. But since God can not operate among men without human Agent, God used Moses as an instrument to fulfil His purpose. Thus the place of Yahweh and that of his accredited servant in the salvation of Israel are set in their proper perspectives. The ultimate glory is Yahweh's and Yahweh's alone!

When the commission in verse 10 unveiled before Moses the task he is to face - the bringing out of Israel from the grip of Pharaoh, the mission sounded preposterous to him and he remonstrated. "Who am I", he said to God, "that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt". This protest which on the surface looks humble in spirit, has been given various interpretations. Was the humility here expressed merely as a cover up for fear, or a true expression of Moses' lack of strength, courage or ability to carry out the enormous task. (41) Each commentator's interpretation depends on how he wants to see Moses, as a prophet, leader, or politician.

Without doubt he must have seen himself as being ill-equipped for the responsibility he is given. His response is "that of stunned surprise". (42)

To allay Moses' fears and sense of bewilderment, Yahweh gave him a promise to make up for his human deficiencies. Moses' "Who am I", is met with the Divine, "I am with you". In this immediate statement of Yahweh in response to Moses' surprise, the author implies that Moses is thus being assured that what he lacks will be supplied by Yahweh's Divine presence with him. This is the guarantee for his success. Again Yahweh is saying that, principally it is he who will do it i.e. the deliverance, with Moses only as Agent. The sign that Moses will succeed is thus the Divine presence with him, which will be teaching him at every point, what to say, what to do and how to do it (see Ex.4:15). Thus the sign in verse 12 with the demonstrative adjective $\overline{\text{נָּךְ}}$ refers back to this guarantee of Yahweh. And it was because Moses did not fully comprehend what this being with means, that he asked Yahweh for a range of his capabilities. /

capabilities. IF you are going to be with me, and since I have never experienced your 'being with', give me your name i.e. your nature and what you are capable of Moses seems to say. To this Moses received the answer, you will know this from what I will be. Yahweh is a God known in his 'being with'—actions.

It is this Divine presence - a favourite of DTR and especially Deutero-Isaiah (cf Is. 41:10,13,14;43:2,5 etc.) which is referred to here as sign. Worship on the mountain will only be a sign after the mission had succeeded while what Moses needed on the spot was sign that he will succeed. This is contained in Yahweh's promise of a joint mission with him, (43) (cf Joshua 1:5 the promise of Yahweh to Moses' successor in office).

In Yahweh's injunction to Moses about worship on the mountain, Noth in his Exodus p.42 has noted what he calls an unjustifiable transition from the singular address made to Moses to the plural address to the Israelites. This note of criticism, I think, is unwarranted in view of the nature of Hebrew verbs in the Pentateuch. The Text as it is, appears not to merit such criticism. Yahweh said to Moses, after you - singular i.e. Moses, have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you - plural i.e. Moses and the Israelites, shall serve God upon this Mountain.

It would have been absurd if the second clause had been singular as it could possibly be interpreted to mean the exclusion of the Israelites from the obligation to worship Yahweh at the mountain after the release from Egypt.

With the injunction for the people to worship God on the Mountain, the author implies that:

- (i) There should be a sort of thanksgiving to Yahweh for the successful escape.

- (ii) The first obligation of the redeemed people should be the acknowledgment of the Deity of their rescue, cf Ex.20:1-3.
- (iii) This should be a memorial for later generations, a worthy precedent always to give to Yahweh the praise and honour due to him. Yahweh is presented as legislating that the glory of his salvific works on behalf of Israel must be given to him in his worship (cf Is.42:8 "My glory I give to no other nor my praise to graven images").
- (iv) Lastly, that Yahweh here speaks of what will happen after the rescue which is yet to begin, points to his all knowing ability and hints at the fact that Moses' success in his mission is a foregone conclusion. Yahweh, the author seems to say, can not fail and what he says can not come back to him unfulfilled (Is.55:11).

3:13-15

This group of verses has been the most stubborn in terms of interpretation for scholars and commentators all through the ages. As an overcrowded passage the problem of determining its meaning is compounded by the peculiar features of the construction of its language. Insoluble though the problems appear to be, yet it can not be ignored because of the vital role it plays in Mosaic tradition and in the Old Testament faith in general. On the meaning content of 'Name' and the origin and interpretation of נִיְיָ and נִיְיָ there is a massive bibliography which we may not attempt at cataloguing here. (44) Since our task here is the theological significance of the Text as it now stands, much of the argument regarding origin and text emendation may not here be entered into /

into again.

In the previous verses i.e. 11-12, Moses had expressed fear or surprise at the task before him but it seems that after the 'sign' that he will succeed had been given - Divine Presence with him, he had partially accepted his commission. So in verse 13 he begins to grapple with possible problems that may likely arise. Given that I come to the people, what do I tell them about the nature or character of the God who sends me, he asked from Yahweh i.e. What is your Name? Here it must be made clear what Moses is demanding to know from the strange figure of his Revelatory experience. Is Moses here asking for a mere vocable to communicate to the Israelites in Egypt or he is asking for some informations specifically distinctive about the one who has commissioned him. A disclosure of the potentials of this being to Moses for onward transmission to the suffering Israelites in Egypt would sound reasonable as it would convince them that they were not just pinning their faith on mere bubbles. Thus the people as well as Moses would like to know the Name - powers and potentials of this Deity. To support this meaning of Name as it is in our Text we may compare the Biblical uses of Divine Name in such passages as: (i) Ex.23:21 ".... My name is in him....". Here it is very likely that God meant more than the mere vocable. He enjoins obedience to the Divine figure in our reference because it has been endowed with the fullness of his Being, powers and authority. Therefore the respect and obedience due to God he would command; (ii) Numbers 6:27. Here putting Yahweh's name on Israel means invoking his powers of protection and blessing on the people, and (iii) Deut.12:5 which refers to the establishment of Yahweh's presence. Thus the name is synonymous with the personality in its full powers and potentials. (45)

To/

To this question of Name by Moses, Yahweh is presented as declaring the cryptic phrase, "Ehyeh 'ašer 'Ehyeh". After years of effort to unravel the meaning of this phrase, it seems that the only one thing scholars agree upon is that it is an explanation of a Name rather than a Name itself. Added to the age-long confusion in the Text is the fact that three answers are given to Moses' one question. But they are all trying to show the relationship between אֲנִי הָאֵל and אֲנִי הָיָה . If what we have here in verse 14 is an interpretation of a Name i.e. YHWH rather than a Name, then we may ask whether a name was really ever given to Moses by the Divine figure who encountered him. Although the Name YHWH is as opaque as its verbal root 'Ehyeh' because its pronunciation is uncertain - its vowels were supplied as late as 700 A.D. - yet efforts have been made at defining אֲנִי הָאֵל which is what the God of Israel here claims is his Name.

As Schild has noted, as a verb, it could either mean or express identity or existence. (46) As he well said, if it denotes identity as it is now, it means God can not be identified and therefore Moses had no positive answer to his question (p.296). But then he goes on to affirm that it should be seen as denoting existence, i.e. God defines himself as "the one who is, who exists, who is real" (p.301).

But if his suggestion is accepted, then the question has to be put, of what significance would this have been to Moses and the suffering Israelites in Egypt to know that the God of the revelation is a self-existent Deity - a message with philosophical import. Even could Moses have doubted that the Divine Being who appeared to him is an existing Being. To have thought otherwise would have been contradiction in terms.

Although /

Although the syntactical principle on which Schild (47) based his interpretation appears sound, but what purpose would such philosophical phrase have served for Moses though its place in early Christian exegesis may not be doubted. The problem Moses had was not whether this Deity who has revealed himself to him exists or not but whether He would be able to perform what He has said - release the Israelites from bondage. Added to this is the fact that Yahweh is nowhere in the Bible found designated as YHWH except for Hosea 1:9 which is not a straightforward matter. And as J.P. Hyatt has said, (48) "It seems to me most likely that 14^a is not an original part of the "E?" text, but an addition which was made in the Seventh or Sixth Century B.C. the era of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah and second Isaiah, when the problem of monotheism was being debated in a sophisticated manner", we should see Ex.3:14 as a later development of the story of the Burning Bush.

IF it can thus be seen that 'Ehyeh 'aser Ehyeh' is a relatively late theological attempt to explain a name, suitable to the time in which it was made and not to that of Moses, and if also Ex. 3:15 which identifies Yahweh with the 'Elohim of the Fathers can be seen from the construction as a much later development, and probably an explanation of Ex.3:14, then the conclusion is reached that what we have in Ex.3:13-15 is a desperate attempt by the author(s) to supply what originally was absent in the Revelation of a Mal'ak to Moses.

IF this is the case, then what was the intention of the author(s) in supplying what originally was absent in the story? This brings us to the examination of the construction within the context to discern what role /

role it now plays theologically. Noth has said in his book (49) "It is important to note that the verb 'hyh' in Hebrew does not express 'pure being', 'pure existing', but an 'active being'; and in the present instance this certainly means an 'active being' which does not take place just anywhere, but makes its appearance in the world of men and principally in the history of Israel". IF we accept that 'hyh' is an active verb of the same derivation with יהיה then as an answer to Moses question, it means the author wants to point to the activities of the Divine Being in question, as the revealers of the character and nature of God i.e. his name. This means that Yahweh is in our Text being made to say to Moses that his name is contained in what he does i.e. he is known through his actions. (50) Yahweh is a God known in his action and so his name is the active God which is what he should be known and called throughout all generations. As a God known by what he does he remains a mysterious God since what he will do next may not lie within the speculation range of any individual though he may reveal his secrets to his prophets (cf Amos 3:7 contrast II Kings 4:27; Is.55:8).

But at this point too the author is careful to say that this God revealing himself to Moses and declaring himself as one known by what he is or does is no other God but one and the same God with the 'Elohim of the Patriarchs. (51)

3:16-17

Here and in the following verses, Yahweh arms Moses with what to present before the Israelites in Egypt and with the method of deliverance.

In /

In its form, 3:16-17 recalls 3:7-8 though here there is reversion in the order as the "Land flowing with milk and honey", is made to come after the enumeration of the cities Yahweh will dispossess in favour of His people Israel.

Moses is commanded to assemble the Elders of Israel to whom he is to relay his experience - the appearance to him of Yahweh the 'Elohim of the Fathers, and the message of deliverance from Egypt. As Joshua 20:4; Judges 8:14 and Ruth 4:2 tell us, we know that the Israelites during their settlement in Palestine had elders or sheikhs who constituted what we may call the governing body of each locality. But as we are told here - though Exodus 4:29-31 says the command was executed, it seems doubtful that such organised system of government already existed in Egypt amongst the fugitives!

However in the author's presentation, Yahweh is seen speaking with some degree of emotional attachment and in the context of intimate relationship. I have taken cognizance of or paid attention to you and what has been done to you in Egypt, like the phrase, 'My people', betrays elements of attachment. The word $\overline{\text{YR}}$ used by the author is one of the Hebrew designations for careful or watchful interest. Yahweh the God of Israel, the author thus implies, is a God who not only watches over the people but is equally well concerned with what happens to them.

3:18-20

Before Aaron is joined with Moses in the commission, he is asked to go to Pharaoh in the company of the Elders to demand the release of the Israelites. /

Israelites. Though Yahweh appeared only to Moses, all the Elders are here instructed to appropriate the revelation. Here the form of the request to Pharaoh assumes that of Ex. 5:3 which was used as correction when Pharaoh did not understand the first form, "The Lord God of Israel" in Ex. 5:1. It is significant that Pharaoh only later argued about not knowing the 'God' of the revelation but not whether the revelation occurred or not.

But when verse 17 which implies that Israel would be going for good is compared with verse 18 which requests for only three days journey, one wonders why such statements which are apparently contradictory should come from Yahweh. It may be asked that if verse 18 is meant to be a diplomatic arrangement with the aim of verse 17 in view, then is the divine arrangement not to be seen as an act of duplicity? From other Biblical instances like the anointing of David by Samuel, it should without doubt be seen as an act of concealment rather than Yahweh sponsoring a deceit. In its present form, it may even throw some light on how the Israelites in the original story, cleverly escaped from Egypt by playing a trick on Pharaoh which probably justified their pursuit when they failed to return at the appointed time. Whether it was this clever 'ruse tradition' that was later amplified and its success attributed to Yahweh - cf Yahweh aiding Jacob to cheat Laban - we do not know. (52) But rather than see the conflict in the statements put Yahweh in a despicable position, it should be seen as theologically pointing out that when Yahweh is on the side of the oppressed, there is really nothing he can not do against the oppressor in order to free the oppressed. But in this, he even makes it possible for the potential victim of His wrath to escape His anger by putting before him a demand which /

which will be easy for him to accept since failure to heed His orders will surely meet with disastrous consequences.

In presenting the demand of Yahweh to Pharaoh, we find that note of urgency or ultimatum $\Pi\eta\gamma$ attached like as in Ex. 3:10. It shows the swiftness with which Yahweh was making His intervention. There should be no delay!

But the Prophet of Yahweh, the author seems to say, must not however think that it is all going to be easy. So Yahweh unfolds before Moses the process that will lead to an ultimate triumph. In this, Pharaoh's intransigence will play a major role and it will be met with adequate response from the Almighty Yahweh - he will experience the might of Yahweh's outstretched arm. (53)

Pharaoh will not allow the Israelites to go not even after witnessing palpable evidence of 'Divine figure' in action. This means Pharaoh will only allow Yahweh's people to go after experiencing disaster i.e. the full force of Yahweh's wrath. The author is thus implying that the release of the Israelites by Pharaoh will only come as a result of his defeat by Yahweh. Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh will bring about Israel's freedom.

3:21-22

The despoliation of the Egyptians by the Israelites on the orders of Yahweh has been variously interpreted by scholars. For instance David Daube (54) sees in the despoilment a paradigm for the release of a slave wife who is expelled or let go with some valuables. Apart from his questionable rendering of the Hebrew words in the passage, the suggestion seems/

seems not to merit credibility since in the Biblical example of Hagar - a slave wife, there is no evidence of expulsion with bestowal of valuables (Genesis 21:14). Secondly the jewellery borrowed by the women was meant to be put on their children not on themselves.

Like Daube, G.A.F. Knight seems to have missed the point when he said that, "The jewellery and the gold are obviously handed over willingly and represent the equivalent of the income the Israelites ought to have received over the years as a living wage. Thus you shall seek restitution from the Egyptians; for Yahweh is the God of justice". (55) It is very doubtful that the author meant to say that the Egyptians willingly handed over the jewelleries to the Israelites to compensate for their lost or unpaid wages.

From the way the narrator has recounted the story, there appear to be signs of manifest pride and exultation not because of the 'property' the Israelites got, but because he sees in it another instance of the triumph of Yahweh and His people over both their oppressors and their gods. In fact Yahweh says the despoliation should follow after he has crushed the might of Pharaoh's resistance.

So whatever might have been the nature of the probable historical event, (56) here put in theological perspectives, what we can see in the context is that Yahweh after defeat made Egypt the prey of the Israelites. Like I Sam.15 and Joshua 6-7, where Yahweh orders what is to be done to the defeated enemy and their property, Yahweh orders despoilment of the Egyptians as mark of his victory and favour for the Israelites, (see how Isaiah 60:6,13 ff uses the despoilment paradigm in the New Jerusalem of his dream which will deck herself with the wealth of the Nations they shall freely lavish on her).

CHAPTER 4

In this section of our narrative, especially Ex. 4:1-9 Moses speaks once and Yahweh takes over with painstaking explanation and series of demonstrations just like Ex.3:13 where Moses' single question is given three answers with detailed instruction about his mission. These sections give one the impression of a developed story with some intentions. Like in Ex. 3:17 we find the author in Ex. 4:8-9 grappling with the problem of separating the narrative concerning Egypt from that concerning Israel. Thus the Nile water which appears to have Pharaoh in mind rather than the Israelites is found in the section discussing the authenticity of Mosaic mission to Israel. Secondly, the single miracle of rod-turned-snake in Ex.4:1-3 appears referred to as 'signs' in Ex. 4:17. What may be responsible for this may be the confusion in the mind of the author between the incidents at the Burning Bush and the events of the later Exodus tradition.

However, these minor details notwithstanding, the focus of Chapter four is quite different from Chapter three. Here the problem is no longer Name or character of Yahweh, or issues about how Pharaoh will be subdued, but instead it is about the Prophet and his people. Right from the spot of the commissioning according to the author, Moses looks away to the spot of the delivering of his message. On this reflection, as it were, immediate practical problems or obstacles appeared before him. They concern his acceptability by the community.

This hint of the author seems to point to the agony in the preparation of the Prophet before he eventually comes out with his oracle of, 'Thus says the Lord'. This means that during the Prophet's preparation homework before making public appearance, he has to arm himself with answers to /

to likely questions from his audience. But as to whether this preparation is through 'Divine Dictation' or the prophet's own sagacity, only an interview with one of them could provide an answer.

The implication of this preparation is that a prophet must have some knowledge of his audience if his message is to make any sense to them. As Moses was involved in this sort of preparation, it seems from the aid Yahweh gave him that the method of Yahweh in convincing his people of his Deity is via the miraculous. When Moses contends that the people will not believe him, Yahweh gives him miracle signs that they may believe. His demonstration of power is the means by which he convinces people of his Deity. Thus, the signs given which are transformation of one substance into another rather than extol the power of Moses, proclaim the might of Yahweh in bringing out something new from the old - creativity. To Moses it is a practical demonstration that he is being backed in his mission by a power at whose behest things in nature and even 'human frame' undergo different changes in absolute obedience. And the awareness of this power backing Moses is meant to convince the Israelites of the authenticity of the Mosaic tradition.

4:1

After Moses' expression of psychic diffidence (Ex.3:11), and anxiety about the name of his commissioner (Ex. 3:13), have been assuaged, the next area of struggle is entered. In Ex. 3:18 Yahweh had told Moses that the people will believe and though he kept quiet till Ex. 3:22, now he chooses to re-open the matter. (57) He hints to God that the people may /

may say that his experience at the 'Bush' was an illusion. And if faced with such reaction of incredibility, what should he do to convince them. This problem of the 'people's unbelief' is the main issue to which the author tries to address himself in Chapter four (cf. Ex.4:1 "they will not believe "; 4:5 "That they may believe" : 4:8 "If they will not believe..." "They may believe the latter sign "; 4:9 "If they will not believe..." etc.). This issue of Prophetic legitimization or claim before his audience is similarly found faced by Jeremiah in his oracle when he was confronted by Azariah and Johanan with the insolent men of the crowd who told him, "You are telling a lie, the Lord our God did not send you " or where he passionately claims, "Of a truth the Lord has sent me to you..." (see Jer. 43:1-2;26:15).

Thus what the author is discussing here in Exodus 4 may be a burning issue during his time! (cf Childs Exodus p.77).(58)

In handling this issue, the author gives a sample of some miracles. And except these miracles are meant to point to or emphasise an aspect of Yahweh's character, performing them would hardly legitimise Moses as a prophet more than as a magician the people must have been familiar with in Egypt. As the issue is, Yahweh has not appeared to you, the author picks on one aspect of Yahweh's power - miracles of turning one substance into another and theologised on them. The essence of it is to prove that Yahweh is God and Moses is his accredited messenger!

4:2-5 THE ROD TURNED SNAKE

Though some people have tried to read some meanings into the miracle stories from Moses' supposed historical background, (59) what concerns us here /

here is the theological significance of the narrative.

The first thing we may note here is that this miracle and others following are given only to be used if and when the people fail to believe what Moses claims he is before them. The miracles are therefore supportive of the primary task which is the proclamation from Yahweh. Miracles only occur in the context of unbelief. So the primary duty of the messenger of God is not to perform sensational feats but to deliver the message and only in the event of unbelief to resort to miracles or signs. It appears that this is how miracles or signs are found used in later prophets as aids to belief.

In seeking this aid with which to convince his audience of the reality of his experience, Moses appears helping himself to clear away doubts in his mind that what he has heard and seen are not mere illusions. So while in the wilderness the miracles confirm his newly acquired status, before the Israelites in Egypt, they are sacramental i.e. visible evidence of the truth of the invisible power behind Moses' mission. And if we recall Ex. 2:14, then the miracles as evidence will be seen as very necessary in the Mosaic context.

In the turning of Moses' staff or crook (60) into a snake, the following points may be noted:

- (i) The instrument with which the miracle is performed is provided by Moses. Yahweh himself only issued the commands and His words performed the changes through Moses' activities. Like the divine fiat in the creation story in Genesis, He commands and it happens.
- (ii) In performing the miracle through Moses, the latter now realises that he has acquired a new status - a channel through which the divine /

divine word flows to perform wonders. He has become a special individual because of the Divine encounter.

(iii) To the Israelites and Moses it means that there will be nothing impossible in the mission which Yahweh has commissioned. IF an ordinary staff could turn snake and become staff again, then it means that the release from Egypt which may appear to them as an impossibility will happen. There is nothing too hard for Yahweh to do, (cf. Gen.18:14; Lk.1:37).

(iv) The running away from the live snake by Moses looks like a dramatisation of his implied tendency to evade his commission by suggesting that the people may not believe him. Yahweh's command that he should hold the snake by the tail - the most dangerous part where not to hold a live snake, teaches that the prophet in obedience to his Lord can perform even the most difficult task or dangerous operation and emerge unscathed. Moses was not hurt! This is because he has Yahweh's word supporting him (cf Philip 4:13).

As a symbol of Divine power with Moses, what had hitherto been his staff Ex. 4:2 has now become God's rod Ex. 4:20 which he has to take care of and must not forget, Ex. 4:17. It has been transformed.

Following this miracle of staff turned snake is Verse 5 which like Verse 8 appears hanging loosely in the Text. As they are in the present form, it seems their role is to separate the miracles and prevent the Chapter from being a mere catalogue of miracles. It could therefore have been part of the development of the Text.

The second miracle at the burning bush scene reported here has raised both problems of interpretation and fitness in the context. Of the three miracles with which Moses is armed by Yahweh, it is apparently the only one not used before the Israelites or Pharaoh. IF the essence of the miracles was to convince the Israelites that Moses had the backing of Yahweh, then where lies the usefulness of this miracle taught but not used. Added to this, one wonders why a demonstration of the loathsome disease leprosy should be one of the miracles to authenticate Moses' call. Even in popular parlance, it seems that the 'deadly disease' leprosy was taken by the Israelites as a scourge emanating from Yahweh's wrath and therefore a mark of his displeasure. It is probably in view of this that people like G. A. F. Knight have suggested such explanation like, Moses falling over the rock and finding his arm numb quickly, in fright, put his hand between his thigh which prevented it from bleeding and thus imagined a miracle. (61)

Another less ridiculous interpretation is that which sees in the miracle, an attempt by the author to explain a tradition about Moses by ascribing the origin of his defect - probably this also affected his mouth and impeded his fluency - to an affliction from God at his call. (62) IF this is the case, the call of Moses would be seen as having left an indelible mark on him.

However, the miracle as found in its present context has more to say than the above probable origin. As we have said earlier, it would have been more appropriate between Ex. 4:11 and 4:12 where Yahweh discusses his powers to kill and to make dumb or deaf. This miracle would have been /

been a fitting demonstration of this power of Yahweh.

In the disease leprosy, early Israelites saw the manifestation of Divine power and attributed its cure only to God as an act of divine grace since the affliction comes directly from Him. (63) IF this is the case then the miracle looks appropriate in its place as a demonstration of Yahweh's power over man, and His ability to afflict and to cure - a sign of His might to convince His people and His messenger of His authority. Thus Moses learns the lesson that when the messenger is in Divine service, he surrenders himself completely to Yahweh and is prepared to accept whatever Yahweh will make of him.

For the Israelites, the author wants to teach that affliction and cure of diseases belong to Yahweh and in obedient surrender to Him, He takes care of His people's wellbeing ("see now that I even I am he, and there is no god beside me, I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal" Deut. 32:39; cf also Ex. 15:26; 23:25 etc.).

4:9

This third miracle of turning 'Water into Blood', is different from the other two miracles and raises its own peculiar problems. In its present form as presented for instance by the R.S.V., it stands as a supplementary sign commanded to be performed in the event of persistent incredulity of the Israelites. Taking it in this form, one gets worried that a miracle which in all probability has Pharaoh in mind should appear alongside those meant to authenticate Mosaic mission before the Israelites.

But a closer examination of the MT shows that the Hebrew verb $\pi R \zeta$ translated /

translated future by the RSV is neither perfect nor imperfect but a preterite tense. It is therefore difficult to know who is previewing the later plagues in Egypt, whether the translators or the author of our Text. Even the name 'Nile' is absent from the MT.

This therefore raises the possibility that this miracle might have happened in the wilderness - in the probable pool of water at the foot of the Mountain, and so the miracle would have been in line with the other two which were taught and dramatised.

Secondly 'taking water and pouring it on dry ground', would be more meaningful here than in the Egyptian context where this was not reported done but only that the Nile water turned into blood.

However, as the narrative now is, it shows that Yahweh is Lord over nature - He could turn the source of life i.e. the Nile water to the Egyptians, into death - blood. Because He is the creator of everything including man himself, He is free to turn them into whatever He likes to serve His divine purpose.

4:10-12

Here in this section it seems that Moses having apparently been convinced that the miracles demonstrated will be enough to authenticate his mission before Israel, now looks away from the people and reflects on his own person.

On a second look, on the task before him and its demands, he reminds God that the 'diplomatic negotiations' with Pharaoh which his mission involves will require a certain degree of fluency of speech which is a quality he has /

has not got. What do you do about this, he asks God. Moses is found here beginning his question with a 'particle' of entreaty which means he is not here presenting a serious objection but rather a petition. In stating Yahweh's reply to him, the author makes some emphasis on God's role as Creator, to whom the Prophet/messenger and his human infirmities remain subject. Like the case of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5) Moses is told that his being dumb is not without the foreknowledge of Yahweh because it is He who creates man what he is. It is Yahweh who determines what a man is or is to become! In this context therefore, it means that the Prophet/messenger's infirmity will only serve as a living witness against him that it is the grace of God that has made him what he is in spite of himself (cf II Cor. 12:9ff).

After Yahweh's rhetorical question to Moses, He gives him again the assurance of His divine presence to teach him on the spot what he is to say. Here the following three points may be made.

(i) From the promise of Divine presence can be inferred the point that Yahweh will not be left on the mountain while Moses goes on his mission but the two will be there on the spot. Thus there is no division between earlier statements Ex.3:8 and 3:10 that, 'Yahweh will lead the people out of Egypt' and that 'He will use Moses to do it'. Yahweh does it through His human Agent Moses! The two will be present at the scene.

(ii) It could also be said that it probably shows how the prophets had their messages after their inaugural vision. Here the author seems to say that the Prophet wouldn't have to prepare his message beforehand. Instead the continual teaching 'Presence' of Yahweh will give all the guidance and directives on what to say and do from time to time (cf Jer. 28:11; /

28:11; I Kings 22:14; and Mtt. 10:19-20; Mk.13:11; Luke 12:11-12; 21:14-15). (64)

One may say that the fact that we are not told that in the subsequent negotiations with Pharaoh in Egypt, Moses had cause to come back to the mountain to commune with Yahweh and have new directives issued validates this point of 'accompanying presence' ex-silentio.

(iii) It is significant that while the objections on grounds of the people's unbelief receive response of demonstrated miracles, that on grounds of the human deficiency of the messenger receives only the assurance of 'Divine Presence', (cf Ex.3:12 with 4:12). This may be a pointer to it that what the Prophets coveted most was this assurance of Divine Presence which alone could either make up for their inefficiencies or render them impregnable to external assaults (cf Jer.15:20).

4:13-17

In verse 13 as in verse 10, it seems Moses has become aware that by his further objections, he was beginning to tread on 'dangerous grounds', so his tone changed from brusque objection to entreaty, Oh! Lord; Oh my Lord! With this literary touch or presentation, the author makes it possible for the reader to see Moses and Yahweh in a friendly combat.

In the traditional source critical analysis, verses 13-17 are regarded as E's parallel of J's 4:1-12. Such a division would make the Divine anger which flares up in 4:14 less than reasonable in the context.

Rather the anger requires all the Divine persistent patience and encouragement in 4:1-13 and the near intransigence of Moses to make its full impact./

impact. But even in this, note has to be taken of it that though Yahweh's anger boiled over on Moses' continued obstinacy, yet he is left unhurt (cf the burning bush fire which does not consume). This theological point of Yahweh's patience and love with his incomprehending child - here his messenger and later Israel - is thus brought to the fore (cf Hab. 3:2 "Yahweh in his wrath remembers mercy"). Thus in His anger Yahweh instead of smiting Moses makes concession, - He provides Aaron.

In view of the problems raised by the inclusion of Aaron in the mission, it is a consensus among scholars that it should be seen as a later development of the story. Though he is assigned as Moses' mouthpiece, Moses is found later dealing directly with Pharaoh without an intermediary, while as an assistant, Joshua would qualify more than an Aaron who was Moses' antagonist (cf Ex.33:11 and Contra. Numb. 12). Even the issue of his description as Moses' 'brother' and his designation as a 'Levite' are not without their peculiar problems with which we may not be very much concerned here.

So, though Yahweh's remark to Moses that he was not unaware of the existence of Aaron, a better speaker, before deciding to call him was an indirect scolding of Moses to think less of fluency of speech as pre-requisite of a successful mission, yet He appointed Aaron as a compromise to shorten the already prolonged dialogue.

And before spelling out the role of Aaron in the mission - a prophet in relation to his God (cf Ex.7:1; Jer.1:7; 15:9; Ez.3:1-3) Yahweh first allays Moses' fears as to whether Aaron would be willing to take up the appointment. He promised Aaron's willing participation and assured Moses /

Moses of His Divine presence with the two of them, ending on the note that the miracle rod should not be forgotten.

Thus Aaron's inclusion in the mission is presented as having Divine authority, though it seems the way the author puts it, he wants it to be seen as an accident made possible only by Moses' objection.

From the way the scene closes, we are left with the impression of a Divine messenger who ineluctably ^{or contrary to his wish} goes out to do all that the will of his God has imposed upon him. Thus the author's point that Yahweh irrupted into Moses' life and conscripted him into Divine service is sustained all through - Moses is an unwilling though obedient servant of Yahweh.

CONCLUSION

With the above theological points made, we believe to have covered all the basic theological thoughts in our Text. And in doing this, we have not failed to point out at various points, some evidences which show that our Text has grown through development from the 'hero story' to a later tradition which has given it its present shape of a call narrative.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. See Mose und Seine Zeit, Göttingen 1913.
2. There may be no need making conjectures about the original nature of this Deity; whether he was the god of Mount Sinai, or of thunder and lightning, or a god who dwelt in 'bushes' or trees, or whether he was borrowed or adopted from the Midianites, the Kenites or wherever else he could have derived from. In fact much has been written on how Moses learnt or adopted the Name that scholarship, one would say, is now wearied with further trials or conjectures in this field of endeavour. Among many works that could be cited on the topic are such representative few as: H.H. Rowley From Joseph to Joshua, London 1950 pp 149ff who claims Yahweh was a Kenite Deity; J.P. Hyatt VT 6 (1955) pp 130ff who believes that Yahweh was the Patron Deity in Moses family; F.M. Cross HTR 55 (1962) pp 225-59 argues persuasively that Yahweh is a remnant of a sentence name originally constituting a cultic formula of 'El, Menahem Haran ASTI IV (1965) with a rich bibliography in Note 33 p.51 and S. Mowinckel HUCA 32 (1961) pp 121-133 etc.
3. This rhetorical phrase was probably adopted by Israel to express a theological idea or reality. In its picturesque character it aims at giving a theological interpretation of the blessedness of God's coming action of grace in contradistinction to the present unpleasant historical situation of his people.

If not, how could this be taken as seriously describing a geographical area physically occupied by very real people i.e. the Canaanites. In its /

its theological dressing it pictures Paradise - Garden of Eden restored - here on earth, a very strong appeal to those under strain and stress!

4. Although Alt's monograph has tried to spell out what Patriarchal religion was, it is no longer being held as decisive on the matter. For the inadequacies of his work see F.M. Cross HTR 55 (1962) pp 225-59; C.H. Gordon JBR 21 (1953) pp 238-43; Menahem Haran ASTI IV (1965) especially p.51ff and Note 34; H.G. May JBR (1941) pp 155-158 etc.

For the theological purpose of our author, the separate individual gods of the Patriarchal age worshipped as God of my, your Father (Gen.31:53) and which in the Exilic and post Exilic age distinguished Yahwism from Patriarchal religion are here grouped as God of your Fathers and identified with Yahweh for purposes of monotheism, cf H.G. May JBR 9 (1941) p.158.

5. Here cf the Statement of D. Daube, "The story of the deliverance of Hebrew slaves from bondage to Pharaoh has had a powerful appeal to the religious imagination even to the present day when oppressed groups have reappropriated its symbolism. This habit, he says, of looking on the Exodus as a prototype, a mould in which other stories of rescue from ruin may be cast goes back to the Bible itself where the Exodus story constitutes the basic pattern of deliverance to whose presuppositions all other Liberation motifs are accommodated". Exodus pattern in the Bible, London 1963 p.11 cf also the way the Exodus story is made the pivot around which 'Third World' Theology of Liberation revolves, see Fierro /

Fierro Alfredo, "Exodus Event and Interpretation in Political Theologies" in Bible and Liberation, N.Y. 1983 pp 473-481.

6. Genesis 12:7; 15:13ff; 26:3; 28:13; and Ezekiel 20:9 says, 'Yahweh acted in Egypt in spite of the People's sins for the sake of his name so that it might not be profaned in the sight of the Nations.'
7. It seems that it is principally in this context that Yahweh is associated or referred to as God of the Fathers cf Deut 1:21;4:1;6:3; 12:1; Ex. 3:8,13,15 etc.
8. This is in spite of the people's sins in Egypt as presented in Joshua 24:14 and Ezekiel 23:8. IF we agree with the author of our Text that Yahweh had been Israel's God since the time of Abraham, and we accept these texts for what they say, then the later change in Yahweh's attitude as one who punishes sin bcomes a problem since here he is indifferent.
9. cf Raitt T.M., A Theology of Exile, pp 106ff. Here however distinction is to be made between Hosea's doctrine of forgiveness without pre-condition which entails only the responding action of turning away from evil ways - conversion, and Deutero-Isaiah's teaching on salvation without pre-condition in which Hosea's turning away from evil ways almost entirely disappears so that room could be made for a living turning to God, a process which culminates in its vision of the turning of the Gentile world cf Is. 45:22;44:22;43:23;53:1-6;55:7 and 55:3,6. It is to this latter doctrine that the theological principle of our Text is seen related. Thus it has got nothing to do with the second theological strand in Hosea which sees the nation's repentance as /

as pre-requisite to Yahweh's saving action. For a discussion on these fragmentary salvation sayings in Hosea and their relationship to what can be boldly claimed as Hosean in origin see Emmerson pp 9-55.

10. See SVT 16 (1967) pp 30-39.

11. For some recent look at the Theology of Election which is not our concern here, see R.E. Clements Old Testament Theology: A fresh Approach, London 1978 pp.87ff.

12. As we have said earlier, the people's enslavement is part of Yahweh's plan so that the iniquity of the Amorites might be ripe enough for visitation Gen. 15:16.

13. We shall return to this in the section on Exegesis.

14. Among many well known instances that could be cited are the Crossing of the Red or Reed Sea, the Struggle of Elijah and Elisha against the incursion of Baal Worship, and the story of the threat to Jerusalem by Sennacherib etc.

15. Ex. 4:31 raises questions. Here Aaron is reported delivering the message and doing the signs before the Elders of Israel. He thus performed the miracles as accompaniment of the message. But they were meant to be proofs in the event of disbelief! Secondly in Ex.4:17 Moses is told to remember to take the rod with which to do the signs and Aaron is to serve only as a mouthpiece. It is without doubt secondary as it stands.

16. We are however to note that real direct theological statements about creation in the form of large complexes occur only twice in the Old Testament/

Testament i.e. in Genesis 1:1-2:4^a and 2:4^b-25. But apart from those, we find such prophets like Deutero-Isaiah making much of the theology of redemption and creation for which he is very popular. In such passages like Is. 44:24-28; 42:5; 43:1; 54:5 as in our Text, we have creation treated not as a subject in its own right but as a subordinate issue supportive of the primary doctrine of Yahweh's powers and ability to redeem his people. For a detailed discussion see G. von Rad Old Testament Theology vol.I 1962 pp. 136ff and R. Rendtorff, "Die Theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglauben bei Deuterjesaja", in Z.Th.K. 1954 p.3ff with L.R. Fisher VT.15 (1965) pp 313-324, Carroll Stuhlmueller C.P., Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah Rome 1970 and Saggs, The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel London 1978 pp 30-63.

17. See Old Testament Theology vol. II 1982 ed. pp 162-3
18. cf The Babylonian Creation Epic Enuma Elish, where Marduk gives proof of his divine power by calling an object into being by his word of command and by making it vanish again in the same way.
19. See his work, The Theology of the Samaritans p. 189.
20. IF we accept DTR's influence in the compilation of our Text, we may here compare the views expressed in II Sam.7:6-7; I Kings 8:13 and contrast I Kings 8:27.
21. Here the message is that great men of God are invariably people with little beginnings; cf the Biblical Joseph later described as 'Controller' of Egypt was taken from prison. The first disciples of our Lord styled ignorant /

ignorant men Acts 4:13 and even the great 16th Century reformer Martin Luther was picked from a miner's cottage.

22. That a man of such occupation could come forward to the people proclaiming a message may be seen as evidence of an encounter. The fact of what he was is juxtaposed with what he has become as testimony to the truth of his mission. This is one sense of the use of the occupation (cf II Sam 7:8). But as a title used in its metaphorical sense, the King or the Gods could be pictured as performing the function of a shepherd over God's people Israel who are then pictured as their flock. They are seen in their capacity as overseers of the people not sheep, cf Damascus Document XIII:9;
ANE ^{relating to the Old Testament} p. 164 & 165 where Hammurabi is so designated, and in the Hymn to the Sun God, Shamash is given the title in his relation to the world. See more examples in A.A. Anderson The Book of Psalms vol I 1972, pp 195ff.
23. Here Moses' task becomes twofold; He is to deliver Yahweh's message and also act as leader of God's people. This reflects the developed tradition about Moses. See R. Davidson's emphasis on the political leadership role of Moses in *Courage to Doubt* SCM 1983 pp.61ff.
24. Whether this is the work of the redactor or part of the original work of Amos we may not be concerned with here.
25. This interpretation could be taken as the second level of understanding the Text. The first level is that of seeing in the Text the enunciation of the true role of the Prophet - the mouthpiece of Yahweh who speaks that which Yahweh puts into his mouth cf Jer. 1:9; Ez. 2:8-3:3.

But /

But taking the story as saying something about the relationship between Moses - the father of the true Prophets-and Aaron - the Ancestor of the Priesthood;- in Yahweh's conflict with Pharaoh, then the Prophet is apparently placed over and above the Priest in the Divine order of things in Yahweh's community, cf. Moses consecrating the first Priests while later Prophets chose and anointed those to be Kings. The Prophet is the true watchman of God's house to whom everything is entrusted and who is found faithful, cf. Ez. 3:16ff; Heb.3:2; Numb. 12:7.

26. See U. Cassuto Exodus Commentary p.31.

27. See Martin Buber, Biblical Humanism London 1968 pp 44ff and E.J. Young W. Th J. 30 (1968) pp 2ff and their references. In view of the quest for location or identification one may ask that, if the Israelites had known the site of this inaugural revelation to Moses whether they would not have dedicated it with a shrine.

28. See his work, Semitic and Hamitic Origins, Philadelphia 1934 pp 334-335. His assumptions appear improper to serve as basis for reasoning to get to know what the psychological state of mind of a historical problem like Moses was at the time of Revelation.

IF the divine element in the story is subsumed under the category of the psychological, then Moses would be seen as acting on a mistaken conviction that God had appeared to him with a commission to deliver Israel from Egypt while he did not. This would make the subsequent story built on the revelation to crumble. It is very unlikely that the author could have meant this. So the interpretation is imposed and does not grow out of the Text. See Childs Exodus p.72.

29. /

29. Here compare other instances where the Deity is the subject like Deut.31:15; Judges 13:3,10,21; Genesis 35:9; Numb.16:19; 14:10 and contrast the 'Kal' form of the verb with man as subject which means, discover - Numb.22:31; Ex.16:7; I Kings 22:19; II Chron.18:18; I Chron.21:16,20 and Is.35:2 etc.
30. See our earlier work on the Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical study in Chapter 2. There we have demonstrated the falsity of the idea that the Mal'ak Yahweh was introduced to guard against the transcendence of Yahweh, whereas it was the basis of the original story reshaped in the light of later transcendent concept of the God of Israel. On these two levels of tradition compare what Noth says, "The Narrative of Moses decisive encounter with God is made up of two elements, the narrative of the theophany at a particular place in the wilderness and the narrative of the sending of Moses". Exodus Commentary p.38.
31. In the light of this exposition, such stance like, Moses only heard words but saw no image of Cassuto Exodus p.31 and D.M. Beegle p.66, is questionable. Such view is usually supported with the statement that Ancient man believed that it was not possible for human to see or touch God and live. But was this the view of Ancient man or what later theologians thought should be an appropriate concept of God in His relation to man? cf. Genesis 18-19 and see what Noth says in his Exodus p.38, "The wording i.e. of the Text, suggests that God is thought to have appeared in some visible way". See also Calvin, Harmony of the Four Last Books of the Pentateuch, who sees in the Mal'ak some foreshadowing for Jesus Christ, vol. I 1950 p.61.

32. cf Isaiah's burning coals of fire placed on his lips which did not hurt him and Ezekiel's 'living creatures' who though in the flashing fire of Yahweh were not hurt. Apart from this to say fire burns is to imply that it is consuming something which keeps it burning. So to say fire burns but does not consume is another way of saying it is only like fire but not fire else it will be contradiction in terms. The glowing presence of Yahweh in our Text could be compared with what we have in Ex.34:30-31 where we are told when Moses stood in the immediate presence of the Divine resplendence for long, it altered the skin of his face and the people of Israel were scared to the point of running away from him.
33. cf R.E. Clements Exodus p.20 where he says inter alia, "We must note that the importance of the fire here is as a sign of the presence of God", and see also Ex.14:19 where the pillar of cloud/fire is equated with the Divine messenger who led Israel out of Egypt.
34. See Chapter 4 on the Burning Bush motif in early Judaism.
35. But it may even be remarked that the fact that Moses was curious points to it that he doubted what he saw to be the fire he used to know since it fails to behave as such. So from all perspectives we have the indication that what is reported here is the 'Literary fire' of Yahweh's manifestation.
36. The idea of camp fire appears to make a 'big fool' of a Moses who after 40 years in Midian as a shepherd ought to have known better, while that of glistening of the berries of a bush in the sun will first have to convince us that it was a sunny and not a cloudy day.
37. Cassuto Exodus p.32.
38. /

38. In early Israel the receipt of oracles was not unassociated with the Altar fire cf. II Kings 16:15 and see further discussion on the matter in J.R. Porter, "Ancient Israel" in Divination and Oracles ed. by M. Loewe and C. Blacker, London 1981 pp. 191-214.
39. Note that when the subject is singular the form is singular but when subject is plural the form is plural, (cf. Ex.3:6;15:2:18:4; and contrast Ex. 3:15,16; 4:5 which has the community in mind). This I think is a more likely explanation than the point that in Ex.3:6 'abika instead of 'abotekha is used for the Patriarchs in a collective sense.
40. cf J.P. Hyatt, "The latter part of the verse (3:6) which contains the formula, 'The God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob', is the result of a later theological reflection", VT 5 (1955) p.133. And see also H.G. May JBR 9 (1941) p.157, "God of my, your, thy Father while a genuine title in Patriarchal religion, God of your, my, thy Fathers is late, found almost exclusively in passages that are quite late". But even in this can it be said that the Mal'ak of Moses' experience made this bold claim or he is only being made to make it.
41. Cassuto has argued that it expresses humility and unworthiness which Professor Davidson has said leaves him completely unsatisfied, see *Courage to Doubt* p.62 and Note 10 p.221. Childs says in his *Exodus* p.73, "The nature of the questions of objection which fluctuate between portrayals of genuine modesty, fear of the unknown, reproach of the people and excuse making, adds a tremendous richness to the scene". cf Similar Biblical passages of the response formula like Judges 6:15 I Sam 9:21; I Kings 3:7; Jer.1:6 etc.

42. See R Davidson p.62.
43. The claim of this passage that the name Yahweh was revealed for the first time here to Israel and through Mosaic mediation accounts probably for the importance attached to it in the study of Mosaic Yahwism. And it is the only Biblical revelatory statement in which God is pictured as making known the nature and character of the Name Yahweh.
44. For a discussion on the interpretation of the Name see, A. Murtonen, A Philological and Literary Treatise on the Old Testament Divine Names, Studia Orientalia 18 : 1 (1952), G.H. Parke-Taylor Yahweh the Divine Name in the Bible 1975, Raymond Abba JBL 80 (1961) pp 320-328; S. Cohen HUCA 23 (1951) p.585ff; J. Gray JNES 12 (1953) pp 278-283; J. Obermann JBL 68 (1949) pp 301-23; Hyatt J.P. VT 5 (1955) pp 130-36; F.M. Cross, Canaanite and Hebrew Epic p. 68-71; G. Pettinato BA 39 (1976) pp 50ff; D.J. McCarthy SJ CBQ40 (1978) pp 311-321 and N. Wyatt ZAW 91 (1979) pp 437-442.
45. See Edmond Jacob Old Testament Theology 1958 pp 83ff.
46. E. Schild, Exodus 3:14 "I am That I am" VT 4 (1954) pp 296-302.
47. See pp. 298ff and cf also Hyatt J.P. JBL.86 (1967) pp 374ff.
48. J. P. Hyatt JBL 86 (1967) p. 375.
49. Exodus p.45.
50. We may here compare Jesus' statement in John 17:6,26 "I have manifested thy name... I made known to them thy name.....". Jesus is in all probability not saying that he has successfully shown to the /

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the people who God is in his Being i.e. his quintessence; but rather that in his (Jesus) own activities he has demonstrated what God is in relation to man - cf also Mtt. 11:2 where the activities reveal the Messiah.

And even when Philip demanded to see the Father God, he received from Jesus a similar answer to that of Moses from Yahweh - he was pointed to what was going on, Jesus and his activities i.e. God in Action - cf Ez.6:13;7:27;11:10;12:16;34:3 "You shall know that I am Yahweh" i.e. from my action in punishment you will know me.

Edmond Jacob, Old Testament Theology E.T. London 1974 p.52 has pointed out that existence like other concepts is a concept of relation i.e. it is only real in connection with another existence. Hence God is he who is with someone.

51. This statement which Yahweh is presented as making looks very much like a compromise or normalisation of the traditions which the author(s) aims at presenting as a unity.
52. At least we have three versions of how Israel left Egypt: (i) Ex.12:33ff hurried departure; (ii) Ex.13:18-19 in an armed military column; (iii) Ex.14:5 they fled which was why Pharaoh and his men pursued them.
53. For uses of Yahweh's 'strong hand' יָד חֲזָקָה and a 'strong hand and outstretched arm' יָד חֲזָקָה וְזֵרוע מִשְׁתַּרְעָה see Deut.4:34; 6:21;5:15;7:8,19;9:26;26:8; Ex. 13:9;32:11; Neh.1:10; Dan. 9:15; Jer. 32:21; and Psalm 136:12 etc.
54. See Exodus Pattern in the Bible p.58ff.
55. See Theology as Narration p.27.
56. /

56. If we take the request to go for 3 days journey to sacrifice to the God of the Hebrews as original - at least as the author appears to make us believe, then the borrowing of ornament would be in order for such an occasion. It is probably the failure to return these borrowed items and the notion that they had fled which led to their being pursued by Pharaoh and his men (Ex.14:5). But this original story has been theologised to mean despoliation of the Egyptians and no longer as an account of unreturned borrowed ornaments.
57. In Ex. 3:18 Yahweh said and knew that with what he had said the people will believe. But when Moses countered the point, He goes on performing miracles with which to convince the people. Does it therefore mean that Moses was right or Yahweh meant the miracles for Moses?
58. It is not therefore surprising that it is almost prophets of Exile alone that are given call account Jer. Is. Ez. etc. Is it unlikely that this can be accounted for by the fact that at that trying period for Yahweh religion Divine oracle had to be tested or pass the test of validity by legitimation?
59. For instance it seems Ezekiel Kaufmann would want to look at Moses from the point of view that he, Aaron and Miriam were members of a family of primitive diviners like the Arab Kahin of pre-Islamic times.
And like Josephus he recognises that, "Moses must have had not only some Egyptian education but also extra-ordinary native qualities in order to accomplish what he did". See Albright W.F. BA vol.36 No. 2 1973 pp 48-76, and The Works of Flavius Josephus Trans. by William Whiston Book II Chapt. X-XV. London.
Acts 7:22 appears to lend some credibility to this view when compared with Ex. 7:11-12 "Moses was brought up in the wisdom of Egypt" and "Pharaoh /

"Pharaoh called in Wise men of Egypt" to counter Moses' miracle

60. We have Biblical references of the miraculous use of Prophet/
Angel's staff cf. Judges 6:21; II Kings 4:29 etc.
61. G.A.F. Knight, Theology as Narration p.29.
62. It is surprising that Moses and his sister Miriam Numb. 10:12ff
are both reported to have had leprosy as an affliction from God.
Although this does not however justify the interpretation that it
points probably to the type of the group of people Moses led out
of Egypt.
63. See Hyatt Exodus p.82.
64. cf M. Noth Exodus p.46.

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