

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ELECTRIC GOD

A famous figure of the French Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century, Voltaire, reduced the miracles of the Bible to a laughing stock of the French salons. Voltaire nevertheless believed in a god. In a world then bemused by the technology of clocks, with clock-makers and clock-philosophers everywhere, he examined the astronomical system of the Earth and the heavens and pronounced it a clock. With all of this clockwork, said he, there must be a clock-maker somewhere. So Moses and his men will be readily understood when, in an environment that exhibited electrical effects in many places, they found, behind the grand *son et lumière* show, a great electric god, Yahweh.

It may be that Moses, in ways unsuspected by the psychohistory of science, has infiltrated the lives and work of Newton, Darwin, Edison, Einstein, and others; by his tenacious insistence on the single god, he made all things dependent on a single system incorporating a key machine assembly, and therefore made an integrated philosophy of nature imperative. In one legend, Moses cannot get the great natural bodies Sun, Moon, Earth, Heaven, Stars, Planets, Sea, Rivers that is, all the gods of the Greeks, to intercede on his behalf with Yahweh because, they said, they were but Yahweh's helpless creatures [1]. Possibly Yahweh's invisibility was a model of the ordinary invisibility (immateriality) and omnipresence of electricity, and of its appearing as incorporeal "fire" when it was visible. I think it no coincidence that among the enthusiasts and practitioners of early electrical science were numerous mosaicist clergyman, both Catholic and Protestant. G. Beccaria, pioneer of electrical field theory, was a Piarist; John Wesley, founder of Methodism, wrote copiously on electricity.

By one cause or another, being mortal, Moses died. But Yahweh did not die. Even in the technical sense of "the name of the Lord," he did not die, because the Ark and Altar remained in the Yahwist repertory for some centuries. He was no longer, thereafter, much of an hallucination; he joined the ranks of the

gods as a pure collective delusion. With the ups and downs typical of divine careers, he has come into the present.

Moses' greatest triumph was to bequeath a portion of his mind to posterity by means of Yahweh. Unfortunately, it was the wrong part, the conscience-loaded superego, but so it must go with the birth of religious cults. Since it was the hallucinatory and delusionary operations of his mind that were handed down, these would in some ways not be truly Moses. They would be idiosyncratically Moses, but not completely him.

Moses stopped far short of placing all his religious impulses into the hallucination of Yahweh; he seems to have been previously what might be called a liberal Hermetist, a devotee of Thoth-Hermes-Mercury. His invention-conversion to Yahweh did not eradicate the Hermetic qualities that took deep root during his Egyptian years. His great and versatile skills gave him a reputation throughout the ancient world for being a veritable Hermes.

Julian Jaynes has developed a theory that the human race, for a period of time extending up to the classical period, was of two minds, one rational and pragmatic (corresponding to the traits of the left hemisphere of the brain) and the other mind hallucinatory and occupied by gods who talked to men and appeared before them (corresponding to the traits of the right side of the brain) [2]. Moses, he said, was an archetype of this type of mind. The hallucinations are of a type well-known in psychiatry, often if not always associated with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. This is true, I think, and also Moses was much more than Yahweh, and maintained a pragmatic balance that brought him great and justified fame as a scientist and leader,

There is much to be said for Jaynes' theory. Its analytic side is in line with what is advanced in these pages, and I have elsewhere pointed out that the complex membrane dividing the two lobes of the cerebrum, the *corpus callosum*, may well be the site of schizoid behavior; in fact, I have hypothesized that behavior which is specifically human has occurred because of a possible physiological-psychosomatic microsecond block in transfers of

information and impulses through the *corpus callosum*; this delay would constitute an instinct block and therefore would promote human self-awareness, reflection, and the feeling of talking to oneself, whence one hallucinates others as well [3].

Jaynes was not able to cope with the historical materials, largely because he relied upon conventional ancient history and chronology. As a result, he was put into a position where he had to perceive just the opposite of the actual process. He says that the "bicameral mind" as he terms it, finally broke down because world-conditions became unsettled and the gods that had satisfied the needs of the hallucinators such as Moses lost face. In reality it was the catastrophes of the world whose terrible stresses made hallucinatory leaders out of borderline cases and staunch believers out of normal people. (And elsewhere Jaynes makes this very point.) There is every reason to believe that long cycles of history occurred before the time of Exodus and Moses when there were "golden ages" of Saturn and Elohim, whose central and celebrated significance was the reduced role permitted to mosaic characters, that is, reduced schizotypal behavior.

Yet, as one studies Moses as a person, it is plain that his peculiarities as a human being are remarkably well reflected in Yahweh as a god. If Yahweh were given a worldly childhood and experience, like some gods and god-heroes, instead of being presented full-blown, they could be like the childhood and experience of Moses. If Yahweh were extinguished from Biblical history as a god and become a kind of sequestered ruler speaking only through Moses, he might appear inexplicably incoherent, stupid, non-revealing of his motives and reasons and of his knowledge of the world. Moses would be continually besought by his people to seize the name and authority of the hidden power.

One is placed in a tight logical-psychological corner here. Speaking now for persons bred in cultures colored by mosaism, one's conception of a father is Moses' conception and is also, in fact, Moses. So when one says Moses is like a father, and is also

like Yahweh, who is the father, one is measuring a standard by the standard itself.

One has to make a very simple statement, which sets up a very different anthropological perspective, namely: "I would not want Moses, hence Yahweh, for my father." When asked "Why?" one responds in the pragmatic manner: "Because I do not like the consequences." Then one lists those experiences that emanate from fathers like Moses-Yahweh. Those that evolve from other kinds of fathers are possibly better; in any event, one rejects the mosaic consequences.

THE NAME OF YAHWEH

Recently circles of biblical scholarship were agitated by some newly uncovered tablets of the ancient city of Ebla in Northern Syria that were reported to contain the name "Ya." If this were a contraction of "Yahweh," it might be Moses' Yahweh, and place the god several centuries earlier than we have him here. One of Moses' inventions would be struck from our list. More lately, it appears that the syllable might have had several usages in the Semitic languages, and that no single tie with Moses' Yahweh has appeared [4].

There is some likelihood, however, that Moses derived the name from the Midianites or another tribe thereabouts when he was in exile. Buber, for instance, says that Yahweh may be related to "Ya-hu," that is "O He!" of the Dervishes and that this cry occurs once in *Genesis* during the blessings of Jacob [5]. The name is not foreign to *Genesis*; Abraham uses it, but more commonly used is Elohim, and most likely, Yahweh was implanted in the Book of Genesis by Moses or Yahwist editors [6].

A suggestion can be made that would lend integrity to such an assertion. In the years of the grandson of Adam, "men began to call upon the name of Yahweh." I make the identification, as have others elsewhere, of Yahweh with gods of lightning and fire, such as Zeus and Jove, and I place the beginnings of the great electrical gods around the time of Adam and Eve, replacing

Elohim and Saturn. Yahweh may have been inserted into *Genesis* to claim his own from times long past.

Ziegler maintains that "the original god of the Hebrews at the Exodus was Zeus." The Greeks change H to E and final H to S. (Jeremiah is Jeremias). The "Y" was originally a "Z". Thus YHWH becomes ZEWS or ZEUS, and with the erroneous transliteration of Y for J, "Jews." The Etruscan-Roman case, "Jove," pronounced "Yowe" is so close to Yahweh that the Roman Jupiter may be considered as basically the same entity [7].

Another theory holds that Moses framed the word from Egyptian roots, meaning "I am." Egyptian was familiar to all Hebrews and was Moses' native tongue. A Jewish legend says that Yahweh's first word when he announced the Decalogue was Egyptian: "Anoki!" ("It is I") [8]. The Bible has Yahweh announcing the well-known "I am that I am" from the Burning Bush. The phrase has been played upon endlessly, which is what a religious phrase should be and do for people. Moses is given to understand this when he asks Yahweh for more concrete identification, and it is denied him.

Let me now assemble the name of Yahweh in the context of this book. Moses, learned as he was, had known the syllable "Ya"; he heard it, and also other compound words including it, in Egypt and then in Midian among the Kenites and the nearby tribes. It was a godword, part of various sacred epithets. He heard a sound very much like "Yahweh" streaming with light from the Burning Bush. This is the essence of god, he thought; it is the name of god and is hinted at in all the "ya" syllables that I have heard.

Now he asks what it is, and "Yahweh ehweh" is heard. This makes sense. "I am that I am." "I am the great I am." "I am It!" "I am the essential principle." Not the principle of light alone. It is already sound and light. It is the activity of the skies and earthly nature. It is the main and primary manifestation. It is connected with the old gods as well.

Yahweh tells Moses: "Say this to the people of Israel, *I am* has sent me to you... Yahweh, the God of your fathers... has sent me to you: this is my name forever and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. "[9]

Then Yahweh tells Moses that his plea before the Pharaoh is to lead the Israelites thither to worship him. Unless Moses convinces the Hebrews that they should worship Yahweh [10] and that this will be the way that they will be able to break through to freedom, and unless he is ready to give the Pharaoh a good reason for their leaving Egypt, after so many years of sacrificing within Egypt, his plan will not work. He must therefore tie in Elohim, whom both Hebrews and Egyptians acknowledge, with Yahweh. So Yahweh is a very new god of special manifestations and a concrete task to perform: getting Moses through the specific obstacles on both sides to an Exodus.

Hence, Moses was the inventor of Yahweh in every meaningful sense of an invention, no invention ever being unprecedented and quite new. Merely to imagine that it would be possible to propose a new god to the world was audacious and brilliant. Yahweh is explicitly new, yet another name, as Yahweh says, for the old god of the Hebrews. His name dwells most precisely on the mercy seat of the Ark, and then in the place in the temple chosen by him. With negligible exceptions he speaks only to and through Moses.

Moses invents Israel as well, in the sense that he takes a nickname given to Jacob after Jacob has wrestled with God or the Angel of God, and attaches it to the descendents of Jacob and the initiates into the new Yahwist Israelite group led by Moses himself. The term is translated variously as "the god-fighter " "God fights,"[11] "the god who battles," or "god rules." [12] Israelites were then "the people of the fighting god." Yahweh is of course a bellicose god, so the name is apt, and both "Israel" and "Yahweh" become battle cries of the newly founded nation.

The idea that the Jews never spoke the name YHWH seems to me preposterous. The name was inutterable simply because its authentic voice came only from the Ark of the Covenant. When the time came that the Ark was rarely functional, the name became secret. The name of "Amen" had the same history; presumably the Egyptian pyramids, too, were no longer displaying or sounding the god's name; whereupon it was said that Amon hid himself - not of course from all prayers and enunciations to which the response is "Amen."

Does not the idea that YHWH has the electric name of god when he spoke through the noise of the ark contradict the very Third Commandment that says: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain?" Of this, Ziegler says, "with the idea of YHWH as an electrical discharge, there are at least three possible reasons for the commandment. First, there might have been a danger of injury to those using the power indiscriminately. Second, its use might have allowed the enemies of Israel to obtain this secret, Third, a frequent use of the power might discourage the worship of it." [13] Or at least, so Moses thought at the time. Actually the ark ceased to speak as YHWH when the electric age ended - around 600 B.C. - and the substitute notion arose that the commandment referred to the human voice not uttering the word YHWH, because it was the name of God [14].

Moses was concerned with law and order, and therefore with blasphemy. The Douay (R.C.) Bible adds abruptly to the Third Commandment: "For the Lord will not leave unpunished him who takes his name in vain." [15] The Jerusalem Bible (also R.C.) renders the verse as banning utterance of the name of Yahweh to misuse it (that is, maliciously or for unholy purposes).

Ziegler argues that "we are warned against effecting the sign or signature of the powerful YHWH. More specifically here, the Third Commandment forbids us without good reason to discharge an electric arc with its accompanying flash of light and noise. It is believed here that this discharge is the name of God,

YHWH."[16] Later on the sound becomes a word and then a secret word, for the sound has gone.

Cassuto gives this version of the Commandment: "You shall not take up the name of the Lord your God for unreality, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name for unreality."[17] I think that Cassuto's version gives us the clue for expatiating fully the commandment.

The word is the thing. We face here the crux of the ancient philosophical debate between the "realists" and "nominalists," Platonists and Aristotelians. (Primitive, untrained thinkers, and religious devotees are generally realists; the word is a sacred entity and not to be used as a mere tool nor certainly for deliberate blasphemy.) The thing, by reverse (and incorrect) logic, is the word, and especially the sounded name, for the most ancient sacred associations of things and sounds came before the written word.

The electrical discharge is the voice (as well as the vision) of Yahweh, and, in the Ark, the name of Yahweh. Blasphemy is any assertion that the sound of Yahweh is unreal and does not exist, and by inference that the name is an inconsequential incident; and by extension blasphemy is also any assertion that the name can be used for purposes other than harkening to the emanations from the sole source of the authentic God on the Ark. For common people, the sin of blasphemy is ordinarily a denial of the reality of the word, or ridicule of it.

Bearing in mind this anthropological and psychological process, one can understand how the cult of the secret name of god developed and how the common sin and crime of blasphemy evolved.

Does not the design of the Ark contradict the second commandment: it says "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them.." This is altogether strange since the Lord also commands that Moses

make the Tabernacle and the Ark "after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain." And the Ark even carries two cherubim. The Ark itself was duplicated at a later time by a private person and carried off by the tribe of Dan. The answer is, of course, "I am a jealous god," who reserves the right to spot and destroy possible competitors, such as the Golden Calf

The cherubim were almost surely recognizable likenesses of living things, although Cassuto apologized that since they were composites of more than one being, they were not to be banned. He surmises that "on the kapporeth [the lid or mercy seat] there was not sufficient room for two images of quadrupeds, and it appears that the cherubim on it were erect figures, like the cherubim of Ezekiel's visions and those of Solomon's Temple [18]. R.W. Moss also believed them to be winged human figures [19]. The mention of quadruped is logical, inasmuch as many winged bulls and other animals are to be found of the same general period throughout the Near East, The word "cherubim" itself seems related to an Assyrian word for the winged bull.

Yahweh was a ground force sometimes exhibiting himself, but ruled the heavens invisibly. By keeping Yahweh as a heavenly god, under a new name, and invisible, Moses could avoid choosing among the specific historical heavenly gods. Moreover, Yahweh must not be identified with a heavenly body, for a good reason; the heavenly body could not be controlled or possessed uniquely by the Jews, that is, by Moses,

As time passed and the name of YHWH disappeared along with his image in electrical form and his burning of the altar-offerings, the Jews might have been expected to bring back images, especially of YHWH. But here we may call into play Freud's concept of instinctual renunciation which he applies to the self-denial of holy image-making [20]. This refusal of the strong urge to reproduce the forms of the deity was probably built up in the mosaic period and later on maintained by the compulsive repetition of the highly ritualistic religion, with discipline maintained by the priesthood. Referring to Max Weber's analysis of rabbinical Judaism, we may speculate that any image of

Yahweh would have to represent some other culture's image and therefore violate the "pariah" tendencies of the Jews.

Yahweh and Moses made the Jews a lonely people, isolated, not sharing other gods, as other nations did whenever they so desired for purposes of international amity and communication of sentiments. This was a source of pain to many Jews, as it was a source of pride to others. Many more Jews chose other gods than other people chose Yahweh. No wonder, then, that the Jews as a group never could fulfill the promises of Yahweh that they would multiply in vast numbers. Moses' deep aversiveness to humanity determined in the beginning of Israel that this should be so.

THE CHARACTER OF YAHWEH

Yahweh says and Yahweh does. What he says consists of describing himself, expressing his emotions, relating what he has done, instructing as to what must be done, and foretelling what he will do. In describing the hallucinatory voices of schizophrenic patients, Jaynes stresses that they speak "often in short sentences." [21] They command, yell, curse, and consult. They are sometimes rythmical. The abrupt commands of Yahweh, his great noises, curses, and marvelously clear consultative advice enrich the verses of the Books of Moses. The lack of explanation is typical of both hallucinatory voices and of Yahweh's words. One must wonder whether the hallucinatory patients have learned through mosaism to speak like Yahweh or Moses is the prototype of hallucinators.

All that Yahweh says is in an absolutely authoritative mood. This includes those expressions which comment upon behavior that is against his will or interests; one learns of the crime when Yahweh refers to it and considers what punishment to meet out, without trial, of course. This last kind of behavior is presumably an exercise of "free will" on the part of Israelite believers or non-believers or on the part of gentile non-believers. They have the uniquely human ability to obey or disobey him. It is a totalitarian system in that no human act is done outside of his

jurisdiction or without religious meaning. A secular sphere does not exist for him.

What Yahweh does, supplementing what he says, is to cause all things to happen, even expressions of disobedience coming out of "free will", in the sense that if he wished to do so, he could make people will what he wanted them to will. He is thus all-powerful, even against free will. Sometimes, as with Pharaoh, Yahweh plays a mean game with people, forcing them to be bad so that he can punish them more. "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders..., he will not listen to you." [22]

He even asserts a power to be bad, to do evil. He is not bound by notions of good or evil. "Who makes peace and creates evil, I Yahweh do all this." [23] Speaking through the prophet, Ezekiel, Yahweh proclaims of Israel: "I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born, that I might horrify them: I did it that they might know that I am Yahweh." [24] Nor is he bound by promises and laws or a principle of consistency. Thus he is unlike Zeus, as Eliade Points out. [25] He is in this sense, like Moses, charismatic, above the rules.

Although he causes all things to happen, only selective actions of Yahweh are described. Yahweh acts in categories set up almost always by his worshippers, rarely by non-believers or opportunists outside of Israel. He rules the heavenly host, destroys nations, feeds Israel, punishes friend and foe, and so on; he wills all natural forces and especially great or unusual natural forces.

Particular actions are of the same kind, but deal with special cases that come to his attention, such as punishing a named person or giving a sign at a certain time and place or appearing on the mercy seat of the Ark, or sending down manna or causing all East wind to blow. As with his speech, all that he does is likewise in an authoritative mood.

Can one then slip in a substitute word for Yahweh such as "nature" and read the Exodus and wanderings as natural history? If one uses the word "nature" or "a natural force," can one then also eliminate all anthropomorphic or metaphorical references? Such would be, for example, reading only the first three words from "Smoke went up from his nostrils..."etc[26] Perhaps, yet one must not dismiss metaphor. In a certain broad sense all language originated metaphorically, and further, one can often find a fact through the metaphor used to describe it. If Yahweh (Nature) melts mountains like wax, it may be that sudden eruptive thermal melting is occurring, producing the viscous appearance and softness of wax. Or, whenever Yahweh "appears," is it to be taken as metaphor? A god who is everywhere, omnipresent, cannot "appear" in one place; he was already there; or, logically, since nothing is beyond him, he can appear, even in seeming contradiction to himself.

No, Yahweh is not Nature animated. And he is not metaphor (unless hallucination is metaphor, which in a way it is but in a way that is irrelevant here). The activities of nature - especially the powerful, disastrous and brutal forces - are contained within the sum total of activities - moral, social, political, and military - of a hallucinated, all-powerful man.

But then, in the end, all words and deeds are but weak tools to describe one to whom the absolutes of presence, knowledge, power, and activity are assigned. One either makes of blind faith a virtue or brings to bear the tools of psychiatry. A logical exposition of Yahweh's mental labyrinth is impossible. It is the ghost of Moses' mentation.

A religion cannot come to be without voices sacredly and definitively authorized to speak accurately on behalf of the god; therefore, it has to be presumed that Moses, who claims and is accorded such credentials, is speaking the truth about Yahweh. Yet Moses himself is but a delegate of limited instructions, and often repairs to Yahweh for further orders or clarification. But Yahweh, the absolute one, knows that, at best, Moses is only a superior human; that is, Moses is still a weak reed to lean upon for establishing godly rule among a portion of the human race.

And, as for the Jews as a body of people, Yahweh has little confidence or trust in them, and the grounds on which he has chosen them as his "peculiar treasure" are indefinite, to say the least. The choice seems to have been practically a random act of grace on his part.

An outside observer can scarcely be faulted, then, if he feels himself racing giddily in a circular trap, with his every attempt to question a fact or a cause being referred back to an absolute quality which respects neither fact nor cause. He can only cease his anxious circlings, he is assured, if he accepts to believe, or if he is coerced into non-believing acceptance. Accepts what? Authority, of course, and please do not begin circling around again in search of the justification of authority. That is merely another circle around Yahweh.

Are the words and actions of Yahweh such and only such as would emerge front the delusionary projections of Moses? Generally, yes, and nothing important comes other than through the screen of Moses or through the operations of nature. Are all the events that occupy the perceiving apparatuses of the speaker(s) of the Pentateuch - Moses and all the preceding rememberers and all those who have worked upon the materials after Moses - possible or probable when appraised by the rules for testing the occurrence of events that are laid down by social and natural scientists? Again the answer is yes. The "unscientific miracles" that are left to explain are few and casual, not worth explaining, one might say. I am not here denying the great mysteries of existence, I merely assert that these are in no wise explained by the Pentateuch-Torah: Moses and mosaists are not theologians, much less philosophers.

Those who accept such scientific answers do not generally find themselves less in control of themselves and of the world about them, and less happy, than those who have accepted the authoritative complex of Yahwism or have resigned themselves to the coercion to accept the same. That this should be generally believed, even among psychologists after the manner of William James, does not make it so. It is ordinary to feel, when anxious, that "the grass grows greener on the other side of my fence." I

would not deny, however, that one day a religion might be invented that would deliver a delusional system that would make humankind happier than even a dependence upon truth and consequences.

SIN VS SCIENCE

If Moses is a scientist, a great inventor, why does he not hallucinate a god who is recognizably a scientist? Yahweh writes; he organizes lists or rules; he keeps books; and little else that is technical; he is the product, not the fountainhead of the science of Moses. Yahweh, though, is an unlimited, ungoverned power. Being a great scientist is certainly sometimes a strong fantasy and even can be hallucinated, but the urge to know is subordinate to the urge of power. The urge to power was exceedingly strong in Moses, for reasons and in ways already put forward. Further, hallucinations generally fulfill a role that is absent in the person, not one that is satisfied.

Everybody had always said that Moses was a supremely intelligent person. But that was not enough. They also withheld from him, partly because his demands were so excessive, the power that he wanted. Only god could give him that, so Moses, the archetypical mad scientist, invented a god.

This invented god is full of instructions but is a perfectly bad model for a teacher. He rarely connects things causally. He rarely explains. He simply asserts and commands. That is quite satisfactory for Moses who has no love for his pupils, and, more and more, wishes them simply to memorize and obey.

Moses' Yahweh begins as a set of creative miracles coming out of Moses' science and his cooperation with and exploitation of nature. Then, owing to the rush of catastrophe, what begins as a fairytale ends in a monstrous takeover by wild natural forces. Yahweh becomes catastrophic. Yahweh symbolizes the most terrible memories.

Moses is changing his own character, though in directions pointed out by his earlier character. Yahweh is accompanying

this change with changes in his character. Every attempt is made by Moses, the Bible, the people, to assemble and reorder their minds in the process and aftermath of the natural catastrophe of Exodus. Moses' mind and to a quintessential degree that of Yahweh moves towards severity, punishment, and order. As much as must be forgotten and reassembled, that much is to be converted into sin, blame, and chastisement.

The invention of a punishing god is to help people to remember lessons of unity and ethnicity. "Early Israel was the dominion of Yahweh, consisting of all those diverse lineages, clans, individuals, and other social segments that, under the covenant, had accepted the rule of Yahweh and simultaneously had rejected the domination of the various local kings and their tutelary deities - the baalem." [27]

To recall the slogan: "Yahweh brought you up from Egypt," is to recall slavery and catastrophe. And it is also to recall simultaneously Moses. So the edifice of history and religion is the private property and power of Moses. In the famous formula of Harold Lasswell: the power-driven man displaces his private motives upon public objects, and rationalizes the displacement in terms of the public interest [28].

Moses needs a god of power - nothing very much else. Once Moses has his god, and that god has become identified with a catastrophe, then the god has to be the center of a cult of power centered around the expiation of disaster. For Moses, and therefore Yahweh, there is no other route, and for the people who became Israel there was no escape, no turning back to the call of Egypt, no popular vote on what type of character Yahweh should be, no fairytale religion except in the underground of their popular legends, no evasion of his rule. The continuous disastrous circumstances of nature and society, beginning in Egypt and ending generations later, reinforced the authority of the god that the people had taken, for better or for worse, as their spouse (as the prophet Hosea would call the relationship). Not even by turning whore (again using Hosea's image) could Israel escape the claims of its husband, and indeed suffered the mosaic penalty for adultery, death.

It is not hard to prove the primary obsessions of the Books of Moses. One can examine, even if summarily, the amount of declaiming about sin, guilt and compulsion that occurs in their pages. Should the reader at this point complain that everybody knows this to be true, I would grant that most may know it but few have the nerve and stomach to bear it in mind. As their part of the general trend of scholars and ministers to make the Bible unthreatening, by erasing the natural catastrophes, and by "humanizing" Moses, they also downgrade or dismiss its obvious impact and look in it for sweet and rare words like love. Buber's elaborate Index to his life of Moses contains no references to sin, guilt, blame, or punishment. Nor does the equally detailed Index of Daiches.

The major concordances of the Bible list references and passages to all except minor words. If we look into a concordance to see how often certain significant words are used in the Books of Moses, we shall find them in context. Should we count the references to sin, guilt, punishment, coercion and enemies, and then their contraries of love and friendship, we might test our impression that aggression in its various forms overbalances affection in the Books of Moses. And, as Table 11 shows, so it does. Overwhelmingly. In the two concordances, based upon two different translations, differences occur. But both versions agree emphatically at all important points.

The five books of Moses carry from eight to twenty times as many accusatory, demanding, punitive and hostile references as they do affectionate and friendly ones. If *Genesis* is removed from the calculation on grounds that it was mostly inherited by Moses from the earlier Hebrew religion and incorporated partly to bolster his claim to base Yahwism upon the "god of the fathers," then the extreme misanthropism of mosaism becomes all the more evident [29]. Love and friendship are absolutely wanting in Moses himself, if this statistical indicator possesses any validity.

To search out additional evidence, we can fashion another kind of sample, this time the first verse that appears on every upper left hand corner of every page of the *Oxford Bible*. Of the

Pentateuch, there are 262 pages and therefore a sample of 262 verses. Statistically the sample approaches randomness and adequacy, so that what is represented in the 262 verses is probably close to what is contained in the whole. We judge in each case whether the statement does or does not directly involve sin, blame, or compulsion. Table III reveals the findings.

Sin is guiltiness and is defined as an ascribed quality of deserving punishment, implicitly or explicitly stated, and attached to an action. Blame is the assignment of guilt or sin or evil to a person or object involved in an action. Compulsion is a holy penalty established in the verse or referred explicitly to its being provided elsewhere for this described action.

TABLE II

Affection and Aggression in the Books of Moses

| <i>Explicit words of Books of Moses</i> | <u>Strong's</u> <u>5 Books</u> <u>of Moses</u> | <u>Concordance</u> <u>Genesis</u> <u>only</u> | <u>Presbyterian</u> <u>5 Books</u> <u>of Moses</u> | <u>Concordance</u> <u>Genesis</u> <u>only</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Love, Loved, Loves | | | | |
| Lovest, Loving | 41 | 15 | 52 | 14 |
| Guilt, Guilty | 16 | 1 | 66 | 2 |
| Must | 17 | 4 | 24 | 11 |
| Lest | CA | 17 | 22 | 1 |
| Anger, Angry | 43 | 7 | 66 | 12 |
| Obey, Obedient, Obedience | 21 | 3 | 12 | 5 |
| Sin, Sinned, Sins, Sinning, Sinners, Sinful, Sinneth | 204 | 8 | 179 | 6 |
| Enemy, Enemies | 58 | 3 | 64 | 6 |
| Friend, Friends | 5 | 3 | 12 | 5 |

Sources: James Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1963) based on the Authorized Version; and the *Living Bible Concordance*, J.A. Speer, ed., Poolesville, Md.: Presbyterian Church, 1973, based on K.N. Taylor's (Paraphrased) Bible, 1972.

Half of the Books of Moses, we would conclude, is devoted to alleging sin, casting blame, or inflicting and threatening punishment. Very few of the balance of actions are concerned with love, neighborliness, mutual help, sowing and reaping, or the like. The rest is mainly comings and goings. The catastrophes of *Genesis* such as the Deluge and others less definitely treated are long gone into thousands of years of tradition. Moses copied *Genesis*; he lived and wrote the essentials of *Exodus*, and the other books are in a way commentaries upon *Exodus* or extensions of it. Hence they reflect his character.

We can observe that little place is left in mosaism for an honest mistake or an error in judgement, There are no means of discriminating between pragmatic and sacred action. This is truly primitive or, better, traumatized; practically everything is within the grasp of religion. It reveals, too, how profoundly Moses had changed from a scientific genius; to all intents and purposes, apart from his bag of techniques, Moses had become a wholly obsessed, hallucinatory, punitive theocrat.

TABLE III

Sin, Blame, and compulsion

| <i>Book</i> | Actions involving Sin, Blame, or Compulsion | <i>All other verses</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Genesis | 18 = 27% | 48 |
| Exodus | 32 = 58% | 23 |
| Leviticus | 30 = 79% | 8 |
| Numbers | 19 = 35% | 35 |
| Deuteronomy | 26 = 53% | 23 |
| Total | 125 = 48% | 137 |

Those who profess a Christian, Moslem or Judaic mosaism, or who are subjected to mosaic education in the contemporary world number some 1.3 billions, a third of the world's people. The history of Europe and the Near East has been deeply

affected by mosaic conduct and ideas for 1900 years - since the Christians let them out of the bag, so to say.

There should not be so many mosaists in history if the momentum of mosaism came only from Moses. That is, people have had within themselves, as a product of their genesis and ancient history, a capacity for grasping and becoming Mosaists and Yahwists. They can become something else - and obviously most people who have ever lived were something else - but not something so different that they are freed *in utero* or in culture from the possibility of lending themselves, as leaders or followers, to mosaism. The human is catastrophically constructed and prone to a kind of schizotypal behavior.

What universally appealing features can make mosaists of normal humans? First there is the world out of control: the heavy anxiety in the face of disturbed nature and nations creates the need for psychological, if not actual, control and security. In ancient history, and still today, nations imitate nature. There is a constant interplay of metaphor between the two: rulers and winds are strong; saviors and suns bring illumination; and so on into hundreds of parallels. When we have "Gott mit uns" we feel a control over both our human problems and our natural problems.

Mosaism very clearly places gods on earth among us. It establishes a worldly god who is interested in the smallest details of our existence, so as to control us; but we are controlling him (little does he know) by occupying him with our problems. A jealous god, like a jealous lover, is a prisoner of his chosen one. This limitation of, or demand upon, the divinity is most useful for the organization of primitive political power and of political power primitively. If people look elsewhere than within the fabric of their conscience for their god, the rulers cannot so neatly use him.

Further, the insistence upon a single god, monotheism, pyramids the possibilities of employing the one god for the purpose of absolute social control. There has been a great god in most cultures and the erosion of his powers is fought in order that

power may be more concentrated in the hands of rulers. Monotheism simplifies the monopoly of authority and totalitarian rule.

Inasmuch as societies have not discovered how to exploit the mines of human energy without coercion and oppression, they may find in mosaism an ample and simple ideology of sin, blame, and coercion. Unconsciously, sincerely, and manipulatively, the power to speak in the name of a single, absolute, demanding and unbound god is a very great power; it leaks into politics, family relations, work groups, and every other sphere of life, with plenty of power to spare: it is theoretically unlimited.

When, to this power, is attached the logic of sin, blame, compulsion, and punishment, the power is greater and more effective. Thus occurs the formula: Yahweh has an interest in all your actions; all your actions are good or bad; that is, either demanded by or prohibited by him. If you fail to be good, you can expect punishment now or later, and punishment then is never a surprise, for the storing up of evil is great in you. If you do good and suffer, this is for a past misdeed, even as Moses was kept from the Promised Land by an obscure fault.

Even the most heinous deeds are in the name of Yahweh or are committed as a punishment by him. Sacrifice to Yahweh of the first-born of children and cattle was originally proclaimed as the price of his guiding the Israelites out of Egypt. It is avoided or discontinued by Moses by the expedient of dedicating the Levites as substitutes for the sacrifice, the cost being obedience to the Levites. The duty of such sacrifices remains as a holy theoretical obligation. Exceptional killings of offspring occur in the royal families of Judah and Israel, and elsewhere.

The gruesome passages on infanticide and cannibalism in Deuteronomy (28:53-75) are put into the future tense. However, it is not reasonable to believe that the prophets, in accord with what scholars say often, told history in foretelling events, whereas the Deuteronomist had no historical sense when foretelling events. Both recited history. The terrible memories of

sieges and famines erupt in the present tense. We stress here that the people are assured that they were condemned to commit these acts because of their disobedience to Yahweh.

Again, as we said earlier, the concept of absolute, peak obedience to Yahweh makes all other crimes pale into insignificance, and all evil actions are capable of losing their criminal quality. Moses could commit his frightful actions because they were in the name of Yahweh. When any and all crime can be justified if attributed to a god, then secular authority will not lag far behind. Rarely is an action mentioned that is good, either pragmatically and socially or religiously; much less is it praised. A dreadful negativism pervades the Pentateuch or Torah.

All of this is helpful in controlling a population without their consent. At any instant, the criminal or charitable or pragmatic (useful) nature of an action may be altered; the psychological bind in which a person finds himself is obvious, as is the inherent connection with schizophrenic training, where Moses is the trainer.

The connection with ritual becomes manifest here as well. One reaction to contradictory and inexplicable behavior of authorities is catatonism. The person dares not move in any direction. To reestablish control over this numbed mind, highly explicit and numerous behaviors are prescribed; life processes become ritualized.

Moses inaugurated an obsessive ritualism, that was to be perpetuated over the generations by the succession of priests. The signal quality of obsession, which can begin with the obsession of sin, is that it provides a compulsiveness to behavior. That is, once put on the treadmill of obsessive-compulsive conduct, the person cannot get off of it. If a population behaves so, the rulers know at any given moment where the people are and what they are doing. They will not become friendly with foreign people, as at Beth-Peor; they will not be running up to the high places and behaving licentiously,

as the Yahwist prophets later complain. They will be working painstakingly, guiltily, and reserving the Sabbath for Yahweh.

There is this to be said on the positive side of mosaism, but only from a psychological and not from an ethical or religious viewpoint. By keeping people eternally in pain and guilt, with a sense of being continually observed by the kind of mean father that Moses conjured, there would be produced not only many mad-persons but also some unusual number of geniuses. For creative, driving genius is a kind of malady of deviance that can win freedom from mosaism but cannot win freedom from the watchfulness, self-consciousness, restless movement, and obsessiveness that had been inculcated by mosaic training.

Unfortunately for mankind, more humanistic and pragmatic forms of pedagogy, as in classical China and Greece, Augustan Rome, Medieval Islam, Renaissance Italy, and the centers of nineteenth-twentieth century science - including always the formidable humanistic Judaic contribution - have had only small constituencies, and are always in danger, whether from some extended form of mosaism or another religiously founded authority-formula.

IMMORTALITY

In Yahwism, life after death is a matter for legends and rabbinical speculation. Moses is given a guided tour of all the wonders of heaven says one story, while he is supposed to be on Mt. Sinai elaborating designs for the Israelite camp and carving the tablets of the Decalogue. But the Bible, more correct as to Moses' mentality, has Yahweh visiting face-to-face, "mouth-to-mouth," with Moses on solid ground.

Yahweh does not grant immortality nor even comment upon it. Death is everywhere in the Books of Moses, and death is final. There is no intimation that Moses believes in heaven as an abode for the souls of the departed or as a place for terrestrial visitors, nor for that matter does Moses believe in a hell or a sheol, where the dead may receive punishment or purgation.

This lapsus on Moses' part is strange. First, one might think that so ambitious a man would find a place where he might continue his mission after death. Whether he would have received the inspiration from Egyptian, Hebrew, or Mesopotamian sources, he might have felt the need to project himself into a prolonged relationship to Yahweh. Further, it might have consoled his people "in the land... of the shadow of death"[30] to provide a place for at least the better among them in heaven, and it might have helped him to control the people were he able to assure them, as did later Christian mosaists, of burning in hell-fires for their wrong-doing to Yahweh-Moses while they were alive.

Various explanations occur to us. Moses was in need of immediate obedience, not in allowing a lifetime of choices to qualify for heaven or hell. "Obey, or be burnt now!" is rather obviously his theme, whether addressed to individuals or to all of Israel. On the annual Day of Atonement, one goat is burnt before Yahweh and another, the scape-goat, is heaped with the sins of all the people and loosed into the wilderness to find his way to Azazel, the evil demon. Atonement is earthly, too. Moses would have felt threatened with the loss of control of the people, if each had come to think of himself according to Plato's vision as destined to occupy one of the myriad of stars.

Moses is intent upon conquering an earthly Promised Land where Israel may dwell in material comfort and seek to please Yahweh. "The God he discovered was eventually a protecting lawgiver who enunciated comments to the people in their own interests, not in the interests of their eternal salvation, for such a concept was quite foreign to Moses' way of thinking, but in the interests of their earthly welfare [31].

This nationalistic goal would be rendered vague and even unessential, if a heavenly goal and immortality were projected as well. Perhaps he believed in an eternal nation, with endless religious and blood descent, whose people would fulfill their need for immortality in the transmission of Yahweh along the lines of their descent as the Chosen People, "the Peculiar Treasure" of Yahweh.

There is another side to this matter of the Chosen People. Yahweh commands the destruction of all peoples who stand in the way of his "children." The limits of their territory, it may be argued, are those of the Jordan Valley and Canaan; but the directive is without limits, according to another argument. Since even related tribes come under the annihilating directive, thanks to the monopoly the Israelites allow themselves in the use of the Ineffable Name, one would have to conceive of a special heaven for Israelites only. This invites theological problems, and we know that, as Neher points out, Moses was adverse to such. Later on, Christian and Muslim sects would produce the theologians to invent exclusive heavens for their true believers.

Moses himself would probably not care for such a heaven, no matter how thinly populated by select yahwists such as Aaron, Joshua and himself, some of the people of Israel, of whom he has little good to say, might by some independent judgement of Yahweh, find their way there. He would not like his decision-making powers to lapse, and, if they were tendered to him *ad infinitum*, heaven would soon be cleared, and hell full.

These musings may not be in vain, because ultimately they lead us to a hard theory. Moses, we have stressed, possesses a catastrophist mentality and an earthly mission; he has no interest in preserving the souls of the people of Israel. If one were to judge by the many times that he prophesies for them, and threatens them with, total destruction for their failures in respect to himself and Yahweh, one might guess that he fully expected the world, or at least the world of the Jews, to go up in flames and destruction at any time. And certainly, he would believe that, upon his own demise, and deprived of his leadership, the chances of their prompt destruction would be greatly increased.

Can we go one step farther and say that Moses harbored the wish, not very deep below the surface of his consciousness, that the Chosen People be destroyed? Yahweh occasionally toys with the idea. In the Revolt of the Golden Calf, Yahweh says of Israel: "Let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation." [32] But when Moses remarked that he would lose face

with the Egyptians, and that he should remember his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel [Jacob], Yahweh repented and forebore to kill them all.

Again, quoted by Ezekiel [33], because they profaned the sabbaths and walked not in his laws, Yahweh says: "I promise to pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, in order to exterminate them." He withholds his hand: "But I acted for the sake of my own name that [it] might not be profaned before the eyes of the nations, before whose eyes I had brought them forth." Again, too, a vulgar regard for public opinion.

This catastrophic wish and its related belief disposes of the problem of immortality. Like many a sick and dying person, and like many otherwise normal persons, Moses wanted to take the world with him. Or, if he refused to entertain such a notion, he would expect and prophesy such an event. Then there would be no problem of immortality; the solution would be total. Neither Moses nor Yahweh, when they argue the question of extirpating the Israelites, wonders how to go about judging their merits and assigning them a place in the afterlife.

I would conclude, until otherwise instructed, that Moses carried like a great lump with him an obsessive idea: when Moses dies, Israel must die with him. Reinforcing his obsession was the unconscious appreciation that Yahweh also must die with Moses.

Moses did not grow kinder with age; the obsession would have become more and more difficult to suppress and conceal; it might ultimately have contributed to the cause of his death - by a flying stone, by shock, by accident, by abandonment, by physical removal from office, by execution. Then, despite his unconscious wishes, Yahweh, mosaism, and Israel did survive. As the psychological imprints of Moses, they survived.

The brand of Moses and Yahweh upon the character and history of the Jews carries this sadism into a corresponding masochism of self-destruction. No matter how successful in mundane terms, no matter how let to live in peace, they were haunted by the fear

that they would be destroyed as a people. It is of course part of the tragic game that they should be encouraged by their religion and leaders to believe that this destruction is the desire and intent of the outside world, for they could not permit themselves to recognize that it was Moses and Yahweh who wanted them to die as a people. Yet, with unerring technique, they set themselves up time after time for destruction, expecting, in the end, to tell themselves: "You see now it is as it is written in the Law. We shall be destroyed for our sins." And they permitted their destroyers to say: "By your own profession, it would not happen, if it were not that you are wicked."

One after another national disaster is attributed to Yahweh - whether the instrument is some now-dead nation, whether the Egyptians, or the Neo-Babylonians; it happens because they have misbehaved towards Yahweh; the score of millennia amounts to an impressive collective masochism. Hardly is one disaster ended, than the prophets of new disaster arise, recalling to them all the previous disasters back to Exodus. Although it cannot be said that people behave as they say or believe, nevertheless, in the absence of a competing ideology - and the Jews have never permitted one in their midst - it cannot be argued that the dominating ideology has been without effect.

MONOTHEISM

Myth presents us with a cluster of ideas about Judaic--Christian-Islamic religion which are in significant respects untrue and harmful. The function of the myth (as is typical) is to make its believers feel well and superior to others. So it is with the myth that Yahwism is monotheism; further, that Yahweh is invisible; further, that monotheism is good for people and naturally reasonable.

Yahweh is very much anthropomorphized, in fact. He is portrayed as a magnificent man. He is, like Moses, exclusive and will not show himself to anyone in his true figure. Once he promised Moses to exhibit himself to the Elders on Mount Sinai, but they were treated only to a smooth rock and bright light. "No prophet had anything to tell of a figure resembling the human

until Ezekiel..."[34] He does reveal his presence by the light of the Ark and the column of smoke. He sits on the "mercy seat." He directs campaigns, promulgates laws, decrees punishment and in every way, save sexuality, which he treats almost entirely by restrictions, he is human. I have found it difficult to distinguish between Moses and Yahweh once Yahweh is assumed to be Moses' other self and his presence is otherwise manifested in forces of nature and in the good and evil fortunes of people. Then, too, he has the normal emotions of hate, love, anger, boastfulness, jealousy, mercy, but not fear, because fear is the reciprocal of power, and power is the essence of Yahweh.

Yahweh does not claim that he is the only god. Nor does Moses claim that Yahweh is the only god. He is content to quote Yahweh to the effect that Yahweh is the same god as the god of the Hebrews. At the Burning Bush we hear "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." [35] And again, after Moses' first meeting with Pharaoh, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty (El Shaddai), and by my name of Yahweh I did not make myself known to them." [36] Buber says that Moses saw the god of his wife's tribe but recognized him as the god of the fathers [37]. This is interesting but goes unexplained: how do you recognize a god as your own?

It is perplexing. Surely the Hebrews of Egypt knew their god, Elohim El Shaddai, God-Most-High, well enough to tell whether he would permit himself another name. Gressmann, among others, declares Elohim and Yahweh to be two distinct gods. "Yahwism, in mosaic times, suppressed the older religion of El." [38] "The legends treat the patriarchs as thoroughgoing pacifists. Their god is a god of peace-loving men," writes Max Weber [39]. Moshe Greenberg tells us so:

The God of the patriarchs shows nothing of YHWH's 'jealousy'; no religious tension or contrast with their neighbours appears, and idolatry is scarcely an issue. The patriarchal covenant differed from the Mosaic Sinaitic Covenant in that it was modeled upon a royal grant to favourites and contained no obligations, the fulfillment of which was to be the condition of their happiness [40].

Perhaps the Hebrews had become Egyptianized and religiously indifferent, as legends indicate. Messianism is not specifically conceptualized in Exodus; but sociologically Moses would have to be understood by the Hebrews and related populations as a messiah coming with a representation of the old god on a specific mission of deliverance.

And always there were the looming catastrophe, the perceived comet and the plagues to validate a return to religion and messianism. With Moses there came another kind of god. With Jesus there came still another, closer to Saturn-Elohim than to Yahweh. The disciples and crowd of Jesus formed one more of the several splinter movements that took their devotees from Judaism. The Israelites had no sooner struck the deserts when they began building variant gods: idols of Egypt came out of the luggage; a new cometary Baal emerged in the Golden Calf.

Following the proclamation of the Covenant, Yahweh claims the whole earth; Israel is but his "peculiar treasure." [41] In Amos' prophecies, Yahweh asserts that he led other nations to safety at the same time as he retrieved the Hebrews from Egypt. He says that he punishes them all alike, including the people of Israel [42].

These seem but minor claims when contrasted with the striking verses that, along with much other evidence, put Yahweh in his place. They are the words of Moses, in a farewell address to Israel, as recomposed by a writer during monarchic times, six or seven centuries later:

When the Most High [*Eyon*] gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, according to the number of the sons of God. For the Lord's [Yahweh's] portion is his people, Jacob [43] his allotted heritage.

The Lord [Yahweh] alone did lead him and there was no foreign god with him [44].

Clearly Yahweh here is one of the sons of god, to each of whom a nation of the Earth's people was distinguished and allotted.

Yahweh receives Israel, and is free of interference from any foreign god.

"The sons of god" are "the divine beings who belong to the heavenly court," and when god speaks of them he uses the term "us" and "our." [45] It is a very old relationship, encountered in the first chapter of *Genesis*, The resemblance here to the Olympian family of gods under Zeus the Father is notable; the Greek gods take up the sides of different nations as in the *Iliad*; have favorite countries as Athene with Athens; and so onto other conformities.

A god is usually an idea of a people about a being that controls their destiny. The people establish a religion to control their god by being in step with him. The more out of control their destiny, the more they look for and seek to control a god. The god takes on traits that are appropriate to their problems: if fire is threatening to their world, a fire-god occurs; if sheep are critically important, god will tend their flocks. The worse the problem, the greater the status of the god attending to it.

Stabilizing the universe is a most common trait of the most powerful gods. Therefore we reason that the unstable universe has been the most important problem when the greatest of gods came upon the scene. The moral dogmas of humans are avocational pronouncements of the great gods; try as may the philosophers and theologians of another, later age, they cannot get rid of the essence of divinity, the bringing and removing of catastrophe. Yahweh saved the Hebrews from catastrophe: specifically, he brought them out of Egypt and through the years of wandering; but these events are formal history, the idiosyncratic chronology moving on top of the informal history of the catastrophe.

Elohim (God-in-Heaven) would appear to have preceded Yahweh in the Hebrew theogony. He is frequently mentioned. He is securely identified by a number of writers as the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Saturn of the Romans, and the Kronos of the Greeks. Other god-names in Genesis are El Shaddai, El Eyon (God Most High), El Olam (Eternal-God), El Bethel (God of

Bethel), and El Ro'i (God of Vision) [46]. The word "Elohim" denotes a plural entity in Hebrew. Isaac Asimov, in his commentaries on the Bible, discussing this point, concludes that an original polytheism existed; we would agree.

Cyrus Gordon in all analysis of Psalm 82 shows that Elohim is regarded as the "President of the gods." [47] The gods let rulers be wicked. Whereupon "all the foundations of the earth totter." Elohim then says:

*Ye are gods
And all of you are deities.
But ye shall die like mankind,
And fall like any of the princes
Arise, O God [Elohim], rule the earth;
For Thou shalt take over all the nations!*

Gordon finds a parallel to the Psalm in the Ugaritic epic of Krt. We would again see in Elohim the great god Saturn whose recall of the world's people to his Golden Age is longed for. The character of Yahweh, like Indra, as well as Zeus, is bound up with catastrophe and war. Max Weber writes [48]:

Yahweh, like Indra, is fit to be god of war because, like Indra, he was originally a god of the great catastrophes of nature. His appearance is accompanied by phenomena such as earthquakes [49], volcanic phenomena [50], subterraneous [51], and heavenly fire, the desert wind from the South and South East [52], and thunderstorms. As in the case of Indra, flashes of lightning are his arrows [53] as late as the prophets.

Yahweh includes insect and snake plagues, and epidemics in his repertoire.

The connection of the qualities of Yahweh as a god of frightful natural catastrophes, not of the external order of nature, preserved down to the time after the Exile, [that is, for a thousand years] was, beside the general relationship of those processes with war, based historically on the fact that God had made use of his power first in battle...

We have seen in this book that what Weber says of Yahweh as god of catastrophe and battle is exactly correct. But we have also seen that Weber is quite deceived by a Biblical reductionism of the Exodus environment so that he reverses the order. Yahweh, in fact, historically, made use of his power first to create catastrophes, then to bring wars. His pugnacity, Moses' pugnacity, and the bellicosity of the Israelites, Hyksos and many other nations followed, both in time and as effect, the natural disasters whose turbulence destroyed the social order.

Gressmann, like Weber, committed "the four sins of modern biblicism": confused chronology; reductionism; primitivism; and uniformitarianism. He too observed that catastrophe was connected with Yahweh. "The catastrophe of the Sea of Reeds," he declares, "laid the basis for the Yahwist religion." [54] He treats this event as a local disaster caused by a volcano and tidal wave at the gulf of Aqaba, far from Egypt; the plagues are to him relatively meaningless. Therefore he is in no position to make the correct statement, which is that cometary Yahweh brought the ecological catastrophes of Yahweh, which incited Yahwist aggressiveness among people, and all of this laid the basis for Yahwism.

But, if Yahweh is just coming upon the scene, and Elohim is Saturn, how could Yahweh not be known to the Hebrews before Moses, since Yahweh is like Zeus and Jove, and Horus-Amon? And these gods have been heavily worshipped for perhaps 2500 years. There is a gap. A god of the Hebrews is missing.

Perhaps, unlike other peoples, they clung to Elohim from the first creation of the world in *Genesis* and through the flood and thereafter, disregarding candidates for a Jove-type god until Yahweh was introduced. Then Elohim would be given an additional name and, with this new name, certain new qualities,

The early Hebrews moved long distances, had many skills, were not bellicose, and lived among many nations. Their religion shared many legends and features with other peoples. Perhaps their monotheism had its origins in an innocuous name that was not objected to by their neighbors, not a source of contention.

That is, Monotheism may be a pantheistic device. We tend to think of it as we see it in Moses, as a parochial, exclusive, anti-polytheistic device. It may not be so.

But if Moses were the Messiah, coming upon a people in distress with a new version of god, there would seem to be good reason why a universalistic uncompetitive god should suddenly acquire the traits of a nationalistic jealous god - keeping monotheism constant.

Still this would presume that Elohim, and also El Shaddai, were plugging the gap. However Elohim-Osiris-Saturn, while still a great god in Egypt, had long given way there to Horus-Amon and Thoth. "From the sixth dynasty on, Horus alone appears as the true patron of monarchy" until the end of the Middle Kingdom.[55] Then Seth, who can be identified as the perennial antagonist of Osiris, Horus, and Isis (Venus), becomes the principal divine monarch of the Hyksos until their overthrow by a combined Israelite- Egyptian army.

But Thoth is not to be neglected. He is the Egyptian Hermes or Mercury, who bear a caduceus like Moses' Brazen Serpent. Just as Hermes served under Zeus in Greece, Thoth might have served under Horus in Egypt. His cult in Egypt was huge. His character is singular. In Egypt, Rome, Greece, Phoenicia, India and Mexico, he is powerful and gives judgement on the law; clever; rebellious; electrical; inventor of writing, expert scribe and linguist; magical; a wizard; a healer; mundane; instructor; guide of wanderers and roads; equivocal; he hides himself; but never so great as the greatest on high, never El Shaddai (God Almighty), never Jupiter. But when Horus resigned his *earthly* power, Thoth succeeded to his throne [56]. The cult of the ram followed the cult of the bull in Egypt [57] that is, Thoth followed Horus.

It is conceivable that Abram when he changed his name to Abraham, was adding the Egyptian god Ra to the name of his Hebrew capital city of Ramah. Ram is Thoth and its totem animal is the ram. In this case, one might investigate whether the

god of the fathers may not always have been a Saturn or a Jove, but a Mercury.

Moses would have been familiar with Thoth - the sophisticated man's god - in Egypt. Perhaps when he began to hallucinate Yahweh, the traits of Yahweh became a combination of those of Jove and Mercury, Horus-Amon and Thoth. The mundane Thoth is perhaps the strongest model. What he found the Hebrews enjoying was a composite of Elohim and Amon-Thoth, perhaps so indefinite as to be the source of legendary complaints that the Hebrews had lost their religion in Egypt.

Thoth, believed the Egyptians, created the world by the force of his word [58]. And the Gospel according to John says, "In the beginning was the Word." Whose word, Thoth's? We have noted how strong for the word were Yahweh, and Moses: "Write it down in your Book!" And how Moses has been inextricably identified with Thoth-Hermes by scientists of the occult over the ages. Biblical exegetes insist that "Logos," the original word in John, means more than Word; it means Life, Intelligence, Light, and metaphorically, Christ the Savior, present in the Word and in God from the beginning of creation. So did Thoth represent his Word, too, as life, intelligence and light striking upon mankind.

We must observe closely and speculate cautiously: Moses as a "rational" cultist was Thoth-Hermes; Yahweh was Zeus-Horus-Amon. That is, when it came to projecting a god, Moses' personal need was for a stern, heavy father-figure, connected with lightning and meteors [59], admittedly more powerful than Thoth. Moses does not introject Zeus as well as he does Hermes, Horus as well as he does Thoth. This may explain why Yahweh is such a crude and simple power-directed god, so unidimensional. He provides the strength and will, the compulsion, and the brute force. Thoth-Moses provides the brain.

The reasons why Moses chose monotheism are fairly plain. Not only was there this syncretistic monotheism to work with among the Hebrews, but Moses had only the technology for one god. If

the god were to be wandering with, talking to, and working with a tribe, he should better be unaccompanied by potential competitors.

Moses did not have the ability to talk to more than one god at a time. He was a rigid person, and changed roles only with great difficulty. He could not be the executive secretary of a council of gods. He had in mind the concentration of power in his own hands: as on earth, so in heaven. A single god seemed logical, and could manage everything alone, with occasional messengers or angels. By the same line of reasoning, we may understand why there is no devil in Yahwism; Yahweh is his own devil--demon when necessary. Moses did not need to split his ambivalence into personalities. The destructive behavior of Yahweh gave Moses all the satanism that he needed.

To be possessed by two or more gods at the same time is not at all impossible; indeed, such is the case with most people and most of history: monotheism is claimed only for some few religions. The human mind compartmentalizes readily. Saturn, Mars, Jupiter and other gods occupied the Roman mind, and no one will say that the Romans were confused or impractical, at least not by historical standards.

Nor does personal development - although many imagine such - shunt all that is god's onto one's superego or conscience. Just as a boy will take several men as his models, believing, whether true or not, that these men possess abilities and traits that he must emulate, so he may take on several hypothesized gods as his inspiration for learning different skills and achieving different goals in life.

So it was that Thoth-Hermes could fill the developing Moses with desires, techniques, and traits, and then bow down within Moses to let pass the new god of the conscience, the aggressive and absolute Yahweh, who is exclusively to occupy the grand ballroom of world dominion in Moses' mind.

In this basic sense, Moses was a double religious personality, and thus, quite specifically, polytheistic. He was Thoth-Hermes

in his ego and unconsciously, while he was Yahweh-Zeus in his superego and consciously. This, if nothing else, can explain why monotheism may never have existed in mosaism except as a formal, scholastic, linguistic construction, *ex post facto*.

This construction of monotheism, once it burst its priestly bonds, encouraged everyone from philosophers to mechanics to shave off strips of reality from the religious sphere. They might invest their conscience in Yahweh while inventing a realistic, objective, scientific world, as did Isaac Newton and a host of other workers. Or they might reinvest their conscience in Jesus, while dealing pragmatically with the scientific world. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), one of the founders of electrical science and experimental method, was an early Unitarian leader. John Wesley (1701-1791), founder of Methodism, wrote on "Electricity made Plain and Useful, by a Lover of Mankind and Common-sense."

Such is the "monotheism" that the present world inherits and passes on. It is descended from the monotheism of Moses. It consists of concurrent and successive images of a single god, who is usually accompanied by a host of celestial figures. It is certainly not the logically sharp and eternally consistent monotheism, such as the human mind has conceived and maintained.

Monotheism belongs actually in the category of legal fictions, together with concepts such as "sovereignty." All the world may be persuaded of one god, with no single person agreeing within himself on the matter, and with no two persons agreeing between them. Nevertheless, the persuasion of monotheism will have substantial effects upon mind and conduct.

Notes (Chapter 8: The Electrical God)

1. III G 431.
2. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
3. *The Palaetiology of Homo Sapiens Schizotypicalis*, Princeton: Quiddity Press, 1976. See, now, *Homo Schizo volumes I and II*, Princeton, N.J.: Metron Publns., 1983.
4. William J. Broad, "Syria Said to Suppress Archaeological Data." 205 *Science* (31 August 1979), 878-1, 880.
5. *Gen.* 49:18; Buber, 50.
6. Winnett, 20-4.
7. Ziegler, 98.
8. III G 94.
9. *Ex.* 4:14-15.
10. II G 318-9.
11. Auerbach, 189.
12. Buber, 113-4.
13. Ziegler, 14.
14. *Ibid.*, 72. See A. de Grazia, *Chaos and Creation*, Princeton, N.J.: Metron Publns, 1981, where a setting of the skies is said to begin at this time.
15. See also *Lev.* 19:12 against swearing falsely and profaning the name. *Lev.* 24:15 sets the death penalty by community stoning for cursing the Lord or blaspheming his name. Weber writes (p. 447, fn.23), "The abuse of the name of Yahweh finds its Correspondence in the sanction of blinding." Why? So that

they may not ever see Yahweh upon the Ark speaking his name?
Cf. Gaster, nos. 187, 72; Erman, SBAW (1911) pp. 1098 ff.

16. Ziegler, 13.

17. Cassuto, 243-4.

18. *Ibid.*, 334.

19. III *Ency. Relig. and Ethics*, 510.

20. *Moses and Monotheism*, 144.

21. Jaynes, 89ff.

22. *Ex.* 7:3-4. See also here in chapter I, where it is shown that this "hardening" theme is owing to the comet's implacability.

23. *Is.* 45:7; *Cf.* Buber, 58.

24. *Ezek.* 20:26. See *Ex.* 13:1-2; 34:19-20; 23-29; *Lev.* 27:26-7; *Num.* 3:13; 8-17-8; 18-15. *Cf.* *Gen.* 22:1-19; I *Kg.* 16:34; II *Kg.* 16:3; *Mic.* 6:7.

25. M. Eliade, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions* (1964, 1974), 88.

26. 2 *Sam.* 22:9.

27. George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition*, Baltimore: John Hopkins U. Press, 1973.

28. *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1930).

29. This sharp statistical distinction between the religion of *Genesis* and the other *Books of Moses* supports the argument made elsewhere in this book, that Moses invented Yahweh and that Yahweh is unconnected with Elohim in actuality.

30. *Jer.* 2:6.
31. Daiches, 154.
32. *Ex.* 32:9-10.
33. *Ez.* 20:13-14 (New World transl.)
34. Buber, p.117; *Ezek.* 1:26.
35. *Ex.* 3:6.
36. *Ex.* 6:2.
37. Buber, 44.
38. *Mose and seine Zeit.* p.433.
39. Max Weber, 49, citing *Gen.* 13:8f.
40. "Judaism," 10 *EB* (1980) 304. Also Cassuto (27) and Sellin are unusual in stressing that Moses was a Messiah and Savior.
41. Buber, 105.
42. *Amos* 9:7-10.
43. Jacob is Israel.
44. *Deut.* 32:8-12; *Oxford Bible*, fn 256-7 says "sons of god" means "the divine beings who belong to the heavenly court."
45. *Cf. Gen.* 1:26; *Ps.* 29:1; *1 Kg.* 22:19; *Job.* 1:6; *Is.* 6:8.
46. Andrew Jukes, *The Names of God*, London: Kregel, 1888.
47. Contained as pp.129-31 in G.A. Tuttle, ed., *Bible and Near Eastern Studies*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans.
48. Weber, 128-130.

49. *Ibid.* I *Sam.* 14:15; *Is.* 2:21f, 46:6.
50. *Ibid.* *Gen.* 19:24; *Ex.* 19:11f; *Psalm* 46:6.
51. *Ibid.* *Is.* 30:27.
52. *Ibid.* *Zech.* -:14.
53. *Ibid.* *Psalm* 18:14.
54. *Mose and seine Zeit*, 443.
55. J. Van Seters, *The Hyksos* (1966), 99 quoted by Bimson, I *SISR* 4 (1977) 9.
56. *Larousse Encycl. of Mythology*, "Thoth."
57. Tomkins, 169.
58. Mircea Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 22.
59. See G.A. Wainwright, "The Relationship of Amun to Zeus and His Connection with Meteorites," XVI *J. Egypt. Archaeo.* (1930), 35-8.

CONCLUSION

In what could be called his last sane moment, before he had ever talked to Yahweh, Moses was leading his flock and saw a bush that was alight and not reduced to ashes, and said to himself: "I will turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." [1] This kind of "why" stood behind my undertaking this book and has, I hope, conveyed my reader rewardingly through its pages.

The work is now finished, with its details fitted into its major parts and there assembled into the whole. Some 3500 years ago, the area subject to the Bible came under an extra-terrestrial force, apparently a great comet, which, amidst the destruction that it wrought, set into motion the human characters whom we have come to know well: Moses, the Pharaoh, Aaron, and especially the Israelites, who were shaped into a chosen people.

The experiences of this people contained the material of a great and true story of disaster and survival. The story centers upon a scientific genius - Moses - and a new god - Yahweh. Yahweh is recognized as a great comet, as an electrical presence on earth, as the hallucinations of Moses, and as all cognate mental and social behavior in the times and places of Exodus, the Wanderings, and the invasion of Canaan. Of Yahweh, Vriezen has stated correctly: "If this God has to be typified in one word, that word must be: Power; or, still better, perhaps: Force. Everything about and around Yahweh feels the effect of this. He as it were electrifies his environment." [2] His electrifying force is more than psychological and metaphorical; "The Great I Am" is electrical in fact. The ideology of mosaism, a set of formulas for tying the aims of Moses to the purposes of Yahweh, proved to be adaptable from one restricted area and culture, the Judaic, to several grand civilizations - Byzantine, West European, Islamic, and American.

The Ark of the Covenant, "the Vehicle of Yahweh," symbolized, as well as played a critical part in, the whole story. Its electrical functions represented the achievements of the Egyptian theocratic establishment from which Moses, one of its luminaries

and scientific managers, was expelled. The Ark was the centerpiece around which the aggregate of survivors of the flight from Egypt were organized into a new nation. The Ark gave voice to the new god, Yahweh, distinguishing him from related old gods, and lent credibility to his being one god, the great god, the most active god, a god who moved and rested with his followers, an invisible god, a god of explicit advice, a god who was independent of any sky body once he was defined by Moses,

Numerous miracles of the Bible have been shown to be based upon historical happenings: the escape from the enemy, the finding of food and drink, the punishment of sinners by god's fire, and so on to all significant miracles. They are demonstrable by ordinary rules of anthropology relating to a group interacting with nature to produce recognizable cultural behavior. Much of the non-miraculous but apparently nonsensical - the clothing, the taboos, the prayers, the rites, the devices, the social behavior, the attitudes of people - can be linked to the miracles, the setting, the motives and purposes of the leaders and people. All of this invites a renewed attention to old problems under a new light. We may be in a better position to learn from the Bible and to know what is not to be learned from it. The experiences of Moses and Israel may be better guides through history than they have been in the past.

Yet even such generalities seem bland and anti-climactic following the outburst of arguments and propositions in the individual chapters. But rather than summarize all of these too, which are clearly signalled where they occur in the book, I should like to enter a plea on behalf of their implications. It is that Biblical scholars may join with specialists of other cultures throughout the world in reviewing materials of this electrical period of Exodus. It is, furthermore, that natural scientists, especially geologists and meteorologists, may lend their skills as historians of nature to the researchers in human history. I have no doubt that my book is to be corrected in many ways; I would, however, be gratified if the process of correction be managed so that all benefit in their own field of interest, rather than that I be loaded with the sins of all and sent into the desert to Azazel.



Figure 20: The Moses of Klaus Sluter. (Click on the picture for an enlarged view. *Caution: Image files are large.*)
(Sculpture at chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon A.D 1404)

Notes (Conclusion)

1. *Ex. 3:3.*
2. *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), citing N. Soderblom, P. Volz and J. Pedersen.

APPENDIX

TECHNIQUES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF LEGENDARY HISTORY

The *Book of Exodus* reminds one of the *Iliad* and other great epic poems. But *Iliad* and *Odyssey* chanted of much later events [1]. I am ready to believe, with Cassuto, that "one of the principal sources - possibly *the* principal source - was... an ancient epic poem, an epos dating back to earliest times, that told at length the story of the Egyptian bondage, of the liberation and of the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness." [2] It has numerous lyric passages still, also word and sound play, and formulas and fixed numbers to help remember its verses.

V. Cassuto points out various sacred literary harmonies through the text: the play upon threes, sevens, and seventies, for example; the repetition of words for emphasis; the use of expressions of salvation and deliverance in the 3rd episode of Moses in Midian, and so forth [3].

THE LIMITS OF DISTORTION

There was a major difference, however, between the *Exodus* and other epic accounts. The *Exodus* began in writing, under the authorship and direction of Moses, then was carried by epic tradition in oral form, and then was revived in written form in the tenth century at which time there was no Homer to reassemble it. So it came together afterwards piece by piece for five hundred years, as sacred history and in writing. In inception and conception, the *Exodus* was modern; it was to be a sacred written history.

Luckily for students of ancient events, the *Exodus* was from its beginnings a sacred happening so that no despot, no matter how powerful, could afterwards rewrite it with impunity. Apart from the theological miracles that the Books of Moses describe (which we translate into historical and scientific miracles), the

book in itself represents a set of historical miracles. First there was Moses who believed in historiography. Then there was Moses' Yahweh whose imprimatur on the mosaic word made tampering sacrilegious. Afterwards, there was spawned by the new nation a priesthood, Aaronites, Levites, and popular priests and prophets that oscillated between centralized and decentralized federationism. These men were compelled to recite historical truths even when the truth hurt their interests; they could never erase it; they could only accent their own position in the process of history, swearing continuously that they were only repeating what had been historically said. The divisiveness of the Jews let this process go on for many centuries.

Then, in exile in Babylon and fortunately deprived of their own secular leadership, the priests crystallized their Torah, and upon their return to Jerusalem, decided once and for all that they possessed the sacred truthful history that must hereafter only be discussed, never changed. Thenceforth, no matter where they might be, those who claimed descent from the Exodus preserved with very little change the writings, while the Christians, who might have rewritten them, were from their own beginnings somehow persuaded that the Books of Moses were reconcilable with the teachings of Jesus and therefore sacred and untouchable. Thus happened the miracle of the Torah, that unique book.

As a result, we have found much history in the Books of Moses, and we shall find much more. But perhaps the moment has arrived to explain how this adventure in historical discovery is engineered. What logic and techniques am I trying to employ? I shall explain my procedures now, hoping that the reader has reached "the point of no return."

First of all, we need some agreement on the composition of the Pentateuch. Who wrote or pronounced what in Exodus? Who says that they did so? When did they say so? And we begin by asserting that Moses himself kept the log of Exodus; he wrote, too, of his talks with Yahweh; he recorded as well the laws that he promulgated. We have already learned of his passion for the written word, which is integral to his character, and became part

of the Jewish national character. The log is reported in the Book of Numbers: "Moses recorded their starting points in writing whenever they broke camp on Yahweh's orders." [4] We recall, too, that Yahweh refers to Moses' book and tells him what to write in it as well as helping him write the Decalogue.

Probably most scholars will agree that writing was indeed occurring in the wilderness. The major problems occurred subsequently. The writings were entirely lost. The period between the events, which in great part, no doubt, were not even originally recorded by Moses, but in vital parts were, and the canonization of the experience and its discussion consists of some eight or nine hundred years. "The final redaction and canonization of the Torah book... most likely took place during the Babylonian Exile (6th-5th century B.C.E.)." [5]

Hence the attempt to establish the authenticity of Biblical passages has depended largely upon linguistic analysis, and, to a lesser degree, upon internal consistency, comparative history and archaeology - all supervised by logical and anthropological speculation. Linguistic analysis allows an expert to criticize and perhaps rearrange passages in accord with what is known of the progress of the Hebrew language and of the style used by different individuals whose accounts have come down to the present.

Linguistic analysis is inadequate often not only because of the uncertainty of its data and of its premises, but also because it cannot discover the career of oral traditions. We know from general anthropology and ancient literature that an exact rendition of a large body of verse and prose (such as Homer's *Iliad* and other epic works) can be transmitted over generations and centuries. The same exactitude can be expected of a sacred written work which is committed to collective memory, then lost in written form. Even though the style and other minor changes may be introduced when the oral version of the original written version is written down, the substance of the account may be exact. In both cases, in the period of oral transmission, trained speakers can memorize and reproduce exactly thousands of lines heard from the lips of a teacher.

All along the line, a sacred duty to repeat the original faithfully encounters social interests to whose advantage certain changes might be made. In the case of the Bible, much effort must go into locating such interests, whether by internal analysis or by matching the known later political and natural environments with the suspected changes in the text over time.

We have to take it for granted that those who had the last word to say on the Old Testament said it the way they wanted it. Nobody knows the name of these gentlemen, but they were a group of Jewish scholar-priests living 800 years after Moses. We can assume that they were a corporate group and, therefore, the "very last word" would have been that of a "research director," namely a qualified priest with political and social engagements and contacts, more attuned to the mission of the Old Testament as he saw it than to the literal nuances of the text.

We know, too, that the period in which the last important editing was done was without general physical upheavals. Hence, the editing would lack the first-hand experience with catastrophe that marks the age of Moses and the age of the prophets and would not be conversant with strong references of the words, as compared to alternative weak references. Lacking direct comprehension, they would be tending toward using the name of Yahweh ever more promiscuously as a shorthand substitution for natural explanations or references. They would be uniformitarian ("conditions were the same then as now") and metaphorical ("what a fine analogy is implied in this language about angels.") *Pari passu*, the translations that are generally used now exhibit both tendencies of the text editors to a marked degree.

The editing, moreover, occurred in a parochial and depressed period of Jewish history, the period of the Babylonian exile from which only some fraction was freed by the Persians and wanted to return to the Jerusalem area. The priest-scholars would be intent upon preserving their small ethnic and linguistic group, and would be without hope of expanding their realms, as contrasted, for example, with Jesus and Paul, working with the protection of and with the model of the seemingly universal Roman Empire before their eyes.

The unwritten directive that would guide their minds and hands would then be:

- 1) The "Chosen people" are a "select and exclusive people," and should preserve their religious heritage against any infiltration, expansion, or assimilation.
- 2) Establish the continuity of Yahweh with Elohim, i.e., between the gods of Genesis and Exodus.
- 3) Eliminate realistic and natural explanations of events in favor of the indefinite, all-explaining "hand of god."
- 4) Provide a maximum of ritual so that the priests must be involved in all personal actions: "Whatever is not forbidden, must be prescribed."
- 5) Let it be clear that all that Moses did he did under strict orders from above, and further that he was the last man to be under such direct divine guidance.
- 6) Stress the undeserving character of the people; build up their guilt; establish, as the only route for the expiation of this guilt, renewed obedience to the Torah (the Law) and to the Priests and Levites who administer it.
- 7) Evade the secular, the political, and the contemporary environment of Judaism.

Then, of course, the last word to the people of Israel would carry a meaning like: "now you have your inalterable sacred text. It is your first and last resort on all life's issues. And you have the priests to answer any questions. Lucky, undeserving people under Yahweh that you are!"

I would argue that something like this revisionary process actually occurred and needs to be watched for in educating history from the Torah. Nevertheless, one must not take the naive cynical view that anybody who handled Biblical material in the course of a thousand years could shape it to his whims and

fancies. On the contrary, the great scandal of the Bible is its uncompromising confrontation of real human behavior which in modern "scientific" society is confessed to psychiatrists or kept secret at all costs.

The Revolt of the Golden Calf offers a case in point. Frederick Winnett flatly declares that the story of the Golden Calf (incident, affair, revolt, revolution - one names it out of prejudice often, just as modern scholars quarrel over whether the Korean or Vietnam conflict was a "war") was a product of the southern penmen of Judah after the Northern Kingdom had been destroyed in 722 B.C. and its inhabitants lost to Judaism [6]. The Northern Kingdom, reports the Bible, had two major places where images of golden calves were worshipped. Hence, southern blame-mongers had inserted the Golden Calf of the Holy Mountain into the story of Exodus to prove just how blasphemous and deserving of destruction were the idol-worshipping northerners. This intervention would have occurred shortly after 715 B.C.

However, as we have already evidenced earlier, we here take the Golden Calf revolt seriously, and fit it neatly into our total theory of Moses' character, of Yahweh, and of how the people really felt about religion.

Are we now to erase our theory and loosen one of the stones of our edifice? I think that the answer must be negative, for several reasons. The weakest of these reasons is that practically all biblical scholars accept and discuss the Golden Calf revolt in its place in Exodus. This is an appeal to authority; but it is the authority of linguistic analysis in which we ourselves are weak and impressionable.

The next reason, concerning which we feel stronger, treats of the minds of the vindictive writers of the Southern Kingdom. These men, scholars themselves, are caught in a bind. Just as rulers nowadays almost invariably reject rational advice to assassinate their political enemies, the priestly writers cannot violate the rules of the Bible, including that what goes into it must be sacred and true, and, further, must not violate a widespread

appreciation of what the book *ought* to contain. Tampering with Moses was like playing with dynamite.

A third reason is a question: Are we certain that Jeroboam did indeed cause two golden calves or bulls to be erected at two principle sites of his Northern Kingdom of Israel? Or is *this* one the concocted story? Or were these images only rumored to be "golden calves," and were something else; or were they metaphors for the very word "images"? They might be arks, even the ark seized by Dan.

A fourth reason for maintaining the credibility of the Golden Calf Revolt is that, after the return from the exile in Babylon, a priestly group had occasion to make revisions in the Hezekiah recension that, says Winnett, had produced the story. They had good reason to remove the story if it were not true, because the Southern Kingdom itself had also been destroyed shortly after the Northern Kingdom and therefore the redactors may have felt less triumphant and scornful and more subdued. They let the story stand.

A fifth reason is that the Torah did not then and does not now include accounts of all that happened during the Exodus. The oral tradition was rich and exact. It is likely that the scholars who wrote down the story found as their basis something closely matching the act of elevating the image of the Golden Calf to worship among numerous stories of Moses' struggle to maintain an imageless Yahweh. With malice aforethought, they wrote up this story and inserted it at a most logical place, if it were not indeed the proper place. What more likely occasion for this act to occur than after a prolonged absence of Moses on the Mountain? Winnett advances this possibility when he writes that "the story was present... in the form of the [mosaic] tradition that reached D [the redactor], and, of all the incidents related in the tradition, that of Aaron's making an image of Yahweh in the form of a bull seems to have made the greatest impression on his mind." [7]

At this point, it may be proper to argue a scenario: the great revolt at Sinai (Horeb) happened; among the gods raised up was

the golden young bull; Moses put down the revolt harshly; the people never could quite believe Yahweh was fully competent when invisible or that the whole outside world of bull-worshippers was wrong; the bull theme reappeared many times, usually tied loyally to Yahweh, and in the days of Jeroboam, images, including the bull, were well-received, just as Zeus, not a bull, could be represented as such on occasion, as when he kidnapped Europa.

Without question, the written Books of Moses expanded with time, as in this case, and usually, where a major affair is concerned, an oral historical tradition and a structure of truth are present. So it goes with the Moral Decalogue, the plagues, the confusing infancy of Moses, and other important elements; the written increments, uncovered by linguistic analysis, are founded upon ancient and authentic oral accounts and lost fragments. I think that more barriers to understanding the Bible have been erected by poor sociological and philosophical theorizing than by the more commonly criticized exegetes.

UNBELIEVING SCHOLARS

Theodor Gaster's book of *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* is a compendium of analogous actions performed by characters in a number of different cultures. His typical procedure is to take an act or practice from a passage in the Bible and to show that similar behavior is discoverable in several other tribal or folk cultures here and there in the world. Explanations are rarely afforded. As an example, he writes of the taboo on touching the Ark of the Lord [8]. As we have already told it, the unlucky Uzzah tries to steady the Ark when an ox drawing it on a wagon stumbles; he is struck dead. Gaster gives two parallels. One is from Troy, where Ilus tried to rescue the Palladium of Athene from the flames and was blinded. In the second, Metellus rescues the same type of object from the temple of Vesta and is also blinded. Both have their sight restored. Gaster then ends the discussion.

This procedure is purely descriptive and primitivist anthropology, even less sophisticated than that of Frazer on

whose nineteenth century work Gaster's is founded. Human behavior must of course be analogous everywhere. People talk, eat, produce, have sexual relations, fight with weapons, and symbolize their actions, in basically similar ways everywhere. The resemblances of the three actions that he cites seem to be superficial. His implication here, as throughout his book, is that these are not events; they have no causes nor consequences; they are simply cartoon sketches coming off the brushes of long-gone legend creators. But our book is dedicated in part to showing that each and every legendary episode has a lesser or greater accumulation of characteristic symbolization centered around a core of historical reality; it is like the trillions of manganese lumps on the deep ocean bottoms that have accumulated around cores of shark teeth and other bones and stones; they are all alike but have a unique happening as a seed.

By way of contrast to Gaster, U. Cassuto's *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (1951, 1959) uncovers a string of three stories of wells, with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses as the heroes, each obtaining a bride thereby [9]. In this case, however, the fact that wells were universally employed for meetings and rendezvous is made significant by a close parallelism of Jacob's story with that of Moses. The two plots, involving other shepherds and the damsels Rachel and Zipporah, suggest a deliberate embellishment to tie Moses to his ancestor Jacob. Nonetheless Cassuto explicitly denies that his book aims at establishing historicity.

In 1957, Greta Hort published two articles on "The Plague of Egypt,"[10] there tying together skillfully much scientific knowledge pointing towards the actuality and sequence of the plagues. Briefly she argues that an unprecedented rainfall in Ethiopia eroded the red soil basin of Lake Tana and the banks of the Blue Nile and sent red floodwaters causing down the some 2000 miles of river, carrying with them a red micro-animal *Euglena sanguinea* as well. This polluted flood killed the fish of the Lower Nile and drove the frogs ashore, where insects infected them with an anthrax. Infestations of mosquitoes and flies followed. Independently a fierce hailstorm from the North blew up the Nile Valley. Fire is not mentioned. Weather

conditions were propitious afterwards for a massive locust invasion. The dried-out land gave up its coating of red powdered dust to the first *khamzin* or sandstorm of the year, bringing days of darkness. She advances plausible reasons why the Hebrews should have been spared, in their partial isolation, some of the plagues.

The plague upon the first-born is reduced to a ruination of the first fruits of the harvest that were ordinarily consumed in spring. The Israelites left then partly out of fear of being robbed of their harvests by the less fortunate Egyptians. Pharaoh was hard-hearted about letting them go; although prayer expeditions to the desert were not unknown, he would not chance the Hebrews leaving, because their god might answer their prayers and discountenance his god, and because sedition might be served with such moving about of people.

I cannot do justice to Hort's ingenious scenario here. By way of negative criticism, I would allude to the enormous distance the red dust and flagellates would need to descend. Also, the lack of repetition of the plagues in earlier or later times makes the Exodus still unique. Critical connections are missing between the other plagues and the hailstorms and locusts. The first-born killing is laid aside. The magic wand contest is evaded. So is the climactic movement of waters in the passage out of Egypt. Nor are the negotiations or the human movements incorporated precisely into her scenario.

The actuality of biblical events is, of course, a provocative issue in scientific quarters. A few years later, Dorothy Vitaliano, in *Legends of the Earth* [11] stresses again a geological approach in attempting to restrain popular faith in ancient and folk accounts of unusual natural events. Vitaliano confronts causation directly, like Hort and unlike Gaster. She offers to explain the plagues as natural events, giving as much credence to the Bible as she can admit.

But she is operating with a weak instrument, the uniformitarian law that the same natural conditions of today have prevailed over millions of years. Consequently, there is not enough energy

in the ordinary, terrestrial, natural forces she employs to deliver the quick succession of shattering blows to the Egyptian Empire. Nor are the forces integrated by a single, sufficient cause. Her a priori refusal to consider an extra-terrestrial force cuts short the explanation at an unsatisfactory point. The major concession that she makes to the literalness of the Bible is the connection (which earlier I have adversely criticized) between the explosion of Thera-Santorini and the tidal waters sweeping in upon the Egyptian army [12].

A much greater freeing of the intellect is required before the Exodus events can be understood. It is notable that upon the conclusion of her heavily researched studies, Hort qualifies the results by reference to research by Professor Bodenheimer "on the connection between solar activity and pests" and the hope for an ultimate explanation by "cosmic and terrestrial" connections [13].

The combination of uniformitarianism and disbelief in legend leads, as with Buber and Daiches and Gaster, to a general distortion of the Bible by reductionism. The result is a sugar-coating of reality by a questionable commonsense. Shrinking from the realities of Exodus, not one but most editors and scholars have painted its human and natural background, the wanderings, and the struggles, as a quaint nineteenth century romance. Martin Buber was one of the best of biblical scholars and a hero of resistance to the Nazis; but little of the madness that he experienced under Nazism ruffles his calm book on the life of Moses.

He is a rationalist - wrongly regarded as an existentialist - who ever so subtly deflates the rhetoric and propositions of the Bible, following a principle of maximal reductionism; at the same time, he is trying to keep his people, the Jews, bound together in a community, with the Bible as its glue. Perhaps the double task is impossible, or perhaps he is more an expert than a theorist; for his book is littered with disconnected, uncontrolled, and fallacious surmises.

At one moment he may be Machiavellian. Thus he thinks that Moses had no clear mission in Egypt but, when rejected by the Hebrews, got himself accredited as the representative of the Hebrew god at the Pharaoh's court [14]. Machiavelli himself might have approved this notion; he regarded Moses as a model prince, perhaps even better than Caesar Borgia: Moses formed a nation and led it forth to survival.

Then again Buber stretches time with an uncontrolled imagination; Moses is a kind of spook who haunted Pharaoh's court for years while the plagues went on at large intervals [15]. Buber analyzes the passover feast as an old shepherd festival of spring [16]. (Why each family should stay in its own home during a fiesta is rather strange.)

His scenario of Moses talking with Yahweh is a fine example of reductionism, himself, quite unbelieving, yet letting his reader believe:

In our vision, we see this man Moses at times, following some new and wearing experience with his people, entering the leader's tent, sitting down on the ground and for a long time weighing in his soul whatever may have befallen; until at length the new comprehension rises to the surface and the new word oppresses his throat; till it finally darts across into the muscles of his hand, permitting a new utterance of the Zealous God to come into being on the scroll [17].

This is practically all that passes for psychiatry in the book. Is Moses, or is he not, talking with Yahweh?

Of all that is said and done in the Crossing of the Sea, Buber concludes: "It is irrelevant whether 'much' or 'little', unusual things or usual, tremendous or trifling events happened; what is vital is only that what happened was experienced, while it happened, as the act of God." [18] Here is your second greatest episode in Jewish history! (If the handing down of the Decalogue is the greatest.) "Miracle, he says, is "nothing but an abiding astonishment." But he cannot escape the urge to trivialize events: "It may be assumed that the frontier guards set out in pursuit of the fugitives." [19]

As for the greatest episode, at Mt. Sinai, "every attempt to penetrate to some factual process which is concealed behind the awe-inspiring picture is quite - in vain." [20]

The principle of uniformitarianism leaks out now and then: "We must maintain the conclusion that, for times about which we have nothing more than reports impregnated with material of an obviously legendary character, it is necessary to assume the same fundamental forms of historical behavior as we know in periods which have found more sober chroniclers." This, regarding the Passover! Things were then as they are now, legend-analysis is futile! (Notwithstanding that in the aftermath of catastrophe, legend, rather than purely factual history, is more likely to be written and to survive.)

Gripped by philosophical confusion, he speaks of natural forces at the crossing from Egypt: "Here there is no Nature in the Greek, the Chinese or the modern Occidental sense. What is shown us of Nature is stamped by History." [21] And the history is stamped by wonder, he says, which produces cosmic exaggerations. "The defeated Egyptian 'dragon' grows into a symbol as vast as the world in the drama of rescue which serves as prelude to the revelation..." From what unconscious source did Buber conjure up the Egyptian 'dragon'? It can be none other than Typhon, the great monster whom Zeus struck down with thunderbolts at the time of Exodus, and the name of the first Hyksos king of Egypt whose forces were invading the country at the moment of Exodus.

If this be sheer conjecture about Buber's mind, let it pass as such. But let me nevertheless conjecture about a similar effect in the mind of David Daiches, for he, like Buber, dismisses any psychological approach to Moses. In the Epilogue to his learned and beautiful "coffee-table" book on the life of Moses, Daiches writes "For generations schoolboys have asked each other: 'Where was Moses when the light went out?' and replied, 'Under the bed, looking for the matches.' Thus he moved easily from the sublime to the ridiculous, a fate shared by many great names." [22]

Perhaps Freud, master of the theory of wit, a biographer of Moses to whom Buber gave only one demeaning sentence and Daiches gave two, quoting Buber approvingly, would have noted this remark. Also, that the remark is in the last paragraph of the book.

Why should schoolboys "for generations" (I remember well the joke) associate Moses with the light going out and why was he "under the bed looking for the matches"? Moses was the great leader of the times when darkness befell the world. Under the grim pall (pallet?) was it not he who was finding matches to make light?

I play this game only to show that it is serious. Humor is an escape from fear. When legendary characters or historical characters or identifiable substitutes for them are involved, not alone Freud, but also anthropologists generally nowadays suspect that a clue to something that happened in history is contained in the joke. That Daiches should choose these words to be among his last of the book, which tackles an awesome subject, is nothing more, I suppose, than a little giggle of unconscious self-depreciation. It confesses that he has not solved the problem of Moses and has hardly dared to address it.

THE PRAGMATICS OF LEGEND

Many scholars specialize in analyzing legends, but I do not know of a manual of their techniques. Whoever has not worked with legends is prone to believe that their analysis is a waste of time, baseless, or even fakery, like persons often believe who have not worked with the analysis of dreams, handwriting, or propaganda, or with the authentication of documents and paintings. On the other hand, some of those who have done so believe that rules of analysis are impossible to formulate and an informed intuition is the only resort. Nevertheless, I feel an obligation to announce what rules I try to follow, and to accept the critical consequences. Actually the rules are simple enough and can be practiced generally with fair success.

We can take as a first rule what was to some degree done earlier in this chapter: *Locate and dissolve the editorial screen imposed later upon a legend by well-wishing, malicious, power-seeking, or unbelieving translators, reporters, or scholars.* An extra brief example is the word "Noga" translated "great light" from Isaiah, without regard for the fact that the word has another meaning "the planet Venus." Now I think that the reader will wish to analyze my own book here in this way.

Read god-names as words performing specific functions. The fire referred to in the Pentateuch is of several varieties, and it is possible, although I have not studied the matter, that in a significantly high proportion of cases, the possessive "Yahweh" is appended to instances of fire other than ordinary combustion. The same may be true of natural phenomena other than fire, as for example, it was "Yahweh's wind," not simply a heavy wind, that brought down a massive flight of quail. It is ordinarily believed, in instances such as these, that the taking of the Lord's name is either to indicate that all things are caused by Yahweh, or else that any benefaction (or punishing act) is the work of Yahweh. That is, the grammar is to be read as, for instance, we might say that interference with radio reception is caused by the Van Allen belts, meaning a special kind of belt, not that Van Allen caused the belts.

In the *Books of Moses*, the name Yahweh, when it occurs, can have six additional functions besides this first, which is a shorthand substitute for the cause of a variety of natural events or a confession of ignorance of such causes. "Yahweh" is a battle-cry; the Israelites attack or rally with the calling of a name, as in the old American song "Rally around the flag, boys!"

Yahweh is a collective, abstract fiction of authority, objectified in the minds of community members, giving binding force and security to their transactions. Yahweh is who is obeyed when obedience is demanded.

Yahweh is a label or designation of what is collectively sacred. A secular (slightly sacred) example is the label "Property of the U.S. Government." It joins hundreds and thousands of things,

actions, persons in a commonalty. Yahweh is an attribution to a delusionary universal being of responsibility, accountability, or blame by people who wish to evade or avoid or are ignorant of such. "My son died by the will of Yahweh."

Perhaps the most important function of the word is the dynamic for activating Moses and hence Israel. Yahweh is the inner necessity of Moses to objectify and reify his conscience and to spread his inner dialogue upon the official public record. "Yahweh says 'Do this' lest you die." Finally Yahweh is the inner necessity of other Israelites to objectify and reify their consciences in a privatized dialogue or collective sanctioned discourse, as limited by authority, sacred labels, and Moses' priority. They are discouraged save on rare occasions to place any hallucinations or delusions upon the public record or to discuss them in public.

Different Israelites, as I have explained elsewhere, would have various Yahwehs. No two Yahwehs are the same. Yahweh is a somewhat different component in each Israelite's mind, character, and behavior. No doubt many of the people neither perceived Yahweh nor believed in other people's perceptions, such as Moses'.

A corollary of this general rule about god-names is: If you accept an authoritative voice speaking for god, or talk with him yourself, then there is no point in your analyzing a legend; it is done for you, you are in a different kind of ball game.

A third rule is to *treat every legend as a confused and bothersome collective memory containing some truth and therapy for those telling it*. Yahweh's wind blew a great flight of quail down around the Hebrews when they were starving for meat. Thus he answered their need upon hearing of it from Moses. But then, because they had complained of him, he caused many to die of eating the meat. We expect and know of the destruction of the biosphere occurring in catastrophe. Violent atmospheric turbulence with heavy radioactivity would both bring the feast and poison the feasters. A legend says that the wind that downed the quail was terrible enough to destroy the

whole world. Tornados, it is now demonstrable, have plucked chickens [23]. The bird was probably *coturnix coturnix*, the common quail of Europe, Asia and Africa and the only migratory gallinaceous bird.

If long ages have said so, respect a legend's claim to history. Persistent discussions of infanticide or cannibalism under extreme conditions merit belief. More broadly the intense conviction that the Exodus happened is some proof of it. But what of the intense conviction of Yahweh? The belief that Yahweh happened is true in relation to all the qualities that make him an historical god, and make many other divinities also "historical gods." He is a unique god, and says so himself, therefore historical, with a highly touted, historical mission as well.

Do not be arrogant about how scientific our age is, and about how much is known today that used to be unknown. One thinks of perfumes, mummification, herbal medicine, etc. The evidence of this book shows that, partly because of hyper-electrical activity in nature, Moses' generation knew more about electrostatics than did the modern world until perhaps 1850. I speak not alone of natural history but in some cases of pure science and applied science. Where not lapsing into oblivion, a great deal of material, and the literary evidence of it, has been destroyed. It is hard to believe that the many thorough and even brilliant scholars who have dug and delved into the Old Testament setting could otherwise have believed that the wandering and desolated peoples were ignorant primitives. But they have been seduced into following the excursions of anthropologists into primitive cultures. Robert Temple has recently shown how advanced is some astronomical knowledge of the Dogon tribe of Mali; they have known since time immemorial of the invisible dwarf white star, Sirius B, and it is important to them. Obviously they have held onto sound remnants of a lost scientific corpus [24].

Harken, also, to new scientific knowledge that may require old analyses of legends to be revised. Radioactivity was unknown or quite misunderstood until recently. The possibility of

explosive meteoric "chemical factories" was ignored until recently and hence the manufacture of great quantities of manna in the atmosphere by natural means was not considered. Another area of recent scientific progress has been psychiatry. Even a century ago there did not exist the systematic, empirically tested categories of mental aberrations such as we here apply to Moses. Or, in the field of geography, it has been established that three large rivers once flowed west to east across the whole width of Arabia, and that there was a great lake, now dead, in Northern Arabia, and that, too, immense areas of blasting and burning are discoverable [25].

Bear in mind that, *within broad limits of individuality and broad limits of culture, human nature and behavior do not change.* People hallucinate today and hallucinated then, under similar conditions. By torture, starvation, a volcanic eruption, and fear, a great many people are compelled to hallucinate. "Angels" may be hallucinations but sometimes only in the limited sense of reifying incredible natural operations and events occurring in the atmosphere.

Neither believe nor disbelieve an event on the first reading of it. This rule applies to very many cases in the present work. The problem arises mostly, or course, in relation to disbelief, regarding the quail, the manna, the rod of Moses, etc. I first disbelieved the story of over three million souls joining the *Exodus*. Continually nagging the passages, I finally theorized that many people could have left Goshen, for various reasons, and only a small fraction accomplished the Exodus.

Judge a possible truth both by itself and by its context. The story of Miriam's rebellion against Moses and her punishment by leprosy is rendered believable in the context of many cases of leprosy that do not conform to medical definition today. Knowing what the Inner Sanctum contained and the Meaning of the ominous cloud allows one to deem the story credible.

Transform the words of a legend to behavior. Words too are a form of behavior. Visualize them as real operations. Just out of Egypt, Moses holds up his rod all the long dark day in battle

with the Amalekites, but needs to be propped upon a stone and helped by Aaron and Hur. Why doesn't Yahweh hold it up or give Moses the strength? The "self-reliance" imposed upon Moses lends an air of factuality; further inquiry leads me to regard the story as true. The darkness makes light a heavy morale factor.

Translate the legend into a story-form and a language that you read in the newspapers or watch in films or use in your ordinary work and days. I could not understand Pharaoh's actions until I displaced him into the setting of a contemporary head of state, interposed all I had come to know about the goings-on in, say, the U.S. Presidency, and then carried them back again to the Middle Bronze Age in Egypt.

Accept the possibility that *two legends may be talking about the same event in a different way.* Did Moses really spend two forty day-night periods on Mount Sinai, or was there so much material coming out of one episode that it was made into two? Nothing vital is at stake in either case. The first prolonged period has to stand, in order to make the Golden Calf Revolt and other matters plausible. The second does not. It may have been a brief return following the suppression of the revolt for prayer, supplication, and redemption of the wicked people, whereupon the halo and the message. It would also let people test themselves in Moses' absence and redeem themselves by passing the "faith and patience test." Another case, already discussed, is that of the Greek Phaeton and Typhon legends, both evidently dealing with the cometary events of the Exodus.

Ask what elements are missing from the legend that should be there, and why so? By any ordinary standards, twelve springs of water are insufficient to draw water for 20,000, much less two million people. But so the Bible says, a few days out of Egypt, at Elim, this happened [26]. Until 1930, Tehran, Iran, with 200,000 people gathered all of its water supply from twelve wells above the town which discharged 800 liters (212 gallons) per second [27]. What is available now at Elim is not binding upon our judgement. The behavior of giant bodies of water in catastrophes is an encyclopaedia of the amazing; the Mississippi River

reversed itself for several hours in the New Madrid (U.S.A., Missouri) earthquakes of 1811-2 [28]. A single verse on the volume of flow of the springs would have helped, but then who would accept the Bible generally and doubt this fact?

Grant the legend a generous quota of exaggerations, time lapses, and contradictions. I have addressed the problem of the numbers in the Exodus in this spirit. The problem of the great ages of Moses and others by modern standards continues to baffle one. One possibility is some electrical and/or atmospheric effect upon life duration. Another possibility is the calculation of ages by a different calendar, perhaps one of 260 days such as obtained in earliest times among the Mayans and other Meso-Americans and persisted as a sacred calendar after they knew and practiced a contemporary calendar. Then at 120 years of age, Moses would have lived 31,200 days. Measured on the year base of 365 days, he would be 85 years old. I prefer this solution.

There is much rhetorical exaggeration in the Bible, which is in part a panegyric for the Jews. Still I doubt whether the promise of Yahweh to multiply his chosen people to the number of stars and sands of the seashore exceeds in optimism the promises contained in the typical annual State of the Union Address of the President to the American people. Nor does it exceed the optimism with which the President views the heights achieved in the American standard of living, inviting now a comparison, too, with Moses' haranguing the Jews on their fine diet of quail (poisoned) and manna bread (wormy). Nor should one forego comparison between an American speaker describing the history of the U.S.A. on the Fourth of July and Moses in Deuteronomy, reciting the history of Israel since the Exodus.

Another rule is to *seek particular truths in a legend which is false as a whole, and seek truth as a whole in a legend which contains false particulars.* Thus, by rule number two of this list, we do not see a real Yahweh addressing Moses in the episode of the Burning bush. But the electrical environment and effects, and the reactions of Moses' character are such as to make the event believable and significant.

In converse, the Plagues of Egypt are convincing as a whole set of interconnected events that should not be dismissed because of perplexities in connection with the death of the Egyptian first-born, and because of repeated statements that the Hebrews in Goshen were exempted from them. Wishful thinking usually exaggerates the pains of one's antagonists and would create out of a quantitative difference between the sufferings of Goshen and Memphis a qualitative difference,

An explanation of all events should be attempted, within the limits of time and space available. It is not only irritating, but also and more importantly unscientific, to interpret only those events for which plausible explanations are available, while avoiding others more obscure and contradictory. One should not explain manna without conjecture upon the strange dew that fell with it. Further, a Bible critic cannot be both an historian and a faithful believer. He cannot pick and choose, preserving his reputation as now one and then again the other.

One may not say, as has Daiches, that normal natural conditions prevailed at Sinai during the handing down of the Ten Commandments, and that perhaps "the Kenites, who were desert smiths and would therefore carry fire about with them and whom the biblical story associates closely with Moses, were able to produce smoke and fire which came to be looked on and remembered as some kind of divine sign." [29] For then, after this incredible reductionism, he blandly finishes his book on Moses without twanging the nerves of even a moderate believer by tucking in a few 'words where he "concludes" that it would be "too crude" to say that Moses thought that he might get people to obey him by getting them to believe in Yahweh [30]." Too crude , but he will let it slip off his tongue anyhow. The most significant actions are denied to Yahweh, but he will not address the question of whether Yahweh exists only through Moses or even whether Moses manipulates Yahweh.

Sigmund Freud's paraphernalia of psychiatry is simply abandoned when he writes about Moses as a person. Velikovsky evades arguments that may antagonize, whether nationalistically or religiously, Jews or fundamentalist Christians. Eliade, while

including all other religions within his generalizations of historical cyclism, finds that Christianity is donated a particular linear course of history, leaving us with the uneasy question whether he is postulating an indefinitely long, perhaps eternal, course for Christianity; at any rate, it is made an exception to various generalizations by this method.

It is helpful to *check out the common psychological mechanisms in legends* to see how they are operative: wishful thinking (Freud's omnipotence of thought and James' will to believe); the fear of loss of control of the self and the world; hierocentrism, ethnocentrism, and self-centrism; reification of nature and objects; and the projection of feelings of guilt, blame and punishment onto the legendary characters and actions. Whose wish for what control over what fear is evident in what animated beings, and in the plot of their behavior?

Nor are the rules of *historiographical criticism* to be overlooked. One needs to look for signs of repeated confirmations of an event, of the implied presences of eyewitnesses, and even of expert witnesses, and of chronological sequences making logical sense. The Bible is heavily historical in its approach to events; the chains of interconnections among events are many and strong. Unlike practically all legendary material, it carries details of chronology.

With the later help of Christians and Moslems, the Jews were able to assert the authenticity of the Old Testament and benefit from a general approbation of its contents. The pagan world was not so benevolent, lacking the same spiritual investment, whereupon it occurs to us to check whether pagan sources provide some contrary renditions of our subject and supply an alternative theory. We find in the negative.

The opinions of the pagan writers of the Hellenistic and early Christian periods about Moses and the Jews are generally stereotyped. Almost none are in depth, whether friendly or unfriendly. On the basis of John Gager's research [31], the pagan stereotype can be depicted in an understandable form:

Moses was an Egyptian, possibly a Heliopolitan scientist, said Apion; Moses led "numerous reasonable men" out of Egypt (Strabo). Moses and Yahweh, his god, brought plagues upon Egypt. The plagues "disfigured bodies", said Tacitus (radiation diseases?) The Jews were carriers of the plagues. They were expelled because they were lepers and forever resented their treatment. They were iconoclasts and destroyed all gods wherever they went; they were atheists, in this sense. The Jews were aloof, aversive to contacts with other peoples, suspicious and misanthropic. "Having been appointed leader of the exiles, he [Moses] secretly took the holy objects of the Egyptians. In trying to recover these objects with force, the Egyptians were forced by storms to return home" (Pompeius Trogus, 1st century A.D.).

It is remarkable that this caricature, assembled from numerous fragments, can be applied to the scenario of the book here. Every element in it, no matter how distorted, can be associated with corresponding realities of Moses and the Exodus. Like an elaborate rumor, it has a certain probative value, in that its parts can be traced to reality, while it contains no fundamental contradictions of it. However, without full historical understanding, the stereotype leads directly down the road to anti-semitism.

It is useful also *to apply certain rules about rumormongering* to legendary materials directly. This is to disassemble artificial conglomerations and reveal the underlying reality. In solving for the original event, one recognizes a heavy *simplification* occurring initially over time: single causes eject multiple causality; a leader replaces a group of leaders; one reason is given for a complex of reasons. The simplifying process lends an air of stupidity to legends; however, it is a way of buying temporal endurance at the cost of realism.

There is also an invariable *stereotyping*, such as we have found in historiography as well. Again the Bible as legend veers towards history because of its frequent insistence upon the uniqueness of events and personalities. Aaron is, like Moses, authentic psychologically and yet not stereotyped. Even Miriam

is not, though less is said of her. Joshua, of whom almost no characterization is given, can be put together into a convincing personage.

Events, too. When it is said of the plague of frogs that the animals came onto the beds and into the ovens, this actually happens in local situations. And when there comes the "very heavy hail such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation,"[32] the superlative is precise amid a context of precision, and is validated by this, and within the natural realm of events, and within the context of the total set of disasters. We know what pride the ancient Egyptians possessed in their knowledge of their own history; Plato tells of how Solon of Athens was lectured by the Egyptian seers on this point. The usage is stereotyped; the validity of the fact conveyed is not.

One watches, too, on all sides for the inevitable *distortions* that accompany the memory of events, bearing in mind, when observing the distortions, the inevitable hints of their cause which they contain. The repeated references to the Egyptian people as complaisant in lending and giving their valuables to the departing Hebrews hardly succeed in covering up the spontaneous and systematic looting that occurred in the disorganized and chaotic situation. The need to preserve for racist Yahweh a pure race of his chosen people is a continual source of distortion in the verses dealing with the character and conduct of the Hebrews in Egypt and their mingling and merging with tribes during the wanderings and in the Promised Land.

There is, too, as with rumor-mongering generally, a *vulgarization* in the account of events. What Moses does is reduced typically to the level of understanding and gullibility of the common man (though much of this may be the work of the priests and editors.) Legend lives by speaking to the common denominator of people; they must hear it, like it, be moved by it, and demand that it be passed on for generations without end. History reduced to miracles is the best insurance that it will live, somehow, for a long time. The Torah strives mightily to preserve history in the face of the competitive temptations and advantages of legend.

Finally, I should like to mention the pitfalls of a simplistic anthropological approach to the Old Testament, a matter that has arisen already on occasion in the chapters of this book. German scholars, following James Fraser, were especially impressed by the possibilities of reducing the peculiarities of the Biblical text to the commonality of comparative primitive cultural anthropology.

The bedouin primitivist school of Old Testament interpretation is well expressed in America by Julian Morgenstern who in 1929 wrote of the origins of the ark and continued in 1945 with studies of the ark, ephod, and tent [33]. Briefly summarized, he finds numerous Arab and pre-Arab mobile boxed and tented litters, carrying god images and sacred stones (or bethyls), usually on camels. These performed ark-like functions of pointing out routes, rallying tribesmen in battle, and transporting and exhibiting the deity. He concludes that the Ark of the Covenant was of this ilk and not much more - even less, since it would not, at least later on, have carried the image of Yahweh. Further, he claims that to the Ephraimites' tribe belonged the first ark, which then diffused among the confederation.

Against this line of arguments two major thrusts can be directed. One, represented by Roland de Vaux, is historical. The Ark and the Tent, says this authority, were present and together from the very beginning of the wanderings [34]. Lacking here the justification and space for an extended comparative analysis of the two propositions, of which I favor that of de Vaux, I can move to a second mode of rebuttal, which is logical and provides at the least a stalemate.

In the history of artifacts and institutions, there frequently occurs that these possibilities exist: that the historical actuality, form, and function of the central concept evolves, stagnates, or devolves. Thus "an ark" at any point of time, say between 2000 B.C. and 2000 A.D., may exist, but its form and functions may be significantly different. One might find among the bedouins of North Africa, following World War II, artillery shell cases of 105 mm. caliber. Judging by their form and function, carrying nuts or valuables on camels, they are of the species of mobile

storage jars. In a brief prior period they carried high explosives and were associated with a complex propelling machine and military organization. They have devolved, or evolved, depending on the "ideal" function assigned them. This is an extreme example of what occurs with all artifacts and institutions over time.

Another example is to be found in the Ark of the Torah, the standard chest that contains the Law in Jewish temples. Its design was traced by Joseph Jacobs. Its original was clearly a Roman desk constructed to hold scrolls [35].

Whatever arks and ephods and tenting may have been before and since the Ark of the Covenant and Tabernacle, and even elsewhere at the same time, the problem of the particular Ark of Moses remains. Logically not only can it be all that we said it is (and for our purposes the Biblical description is as justifiable as any other design), but also it is to be expected that the Ark, like all inventions, was built upon prior artifacts and institutions and was part of the inheritance of subsequent peoples who changed its form and function, keeping its "spiritual" functions, say, and depressing its physical construction, and forgetting (partly because of changed meteorological and social circumstances) its illuminating divine occupancy.

If thus, historically and logically, we can substantiate our position respecting the actuality and functions of the ark, we may proceed to a third point, a counter-allegation. This is directed against bedouin primitivist thinking in general, which is a learned and potent kind of reductionism of the Bible. Once the catastrophic setting of Exodus is dismissed as exaggeration and falsehood, and most that we know of Moses is regarded as merely a fanciful hero's tale, then the door is opened wide to a new history of the Jews as an escaped slave remnant finding haven among an undisturbed nomadic tribe, and, in gratitude or by necessity, adopting their local volcano-god. But once the natural conditions of Exodus and the character of Moses and his cohorts are established, there can be assigned to bedouin primitivism only the limited role that I have already granted it in this book.

Notes (Appendix)

1. I examine the Homeric origins in a 1968 manuscript on the *Disastrous Love Affair of Moon and Mars*, yet unpublished, but Velikovsky, in part II of *W. in C.* presents the original case.
2. Cassuto, 2.
3. *Ibid.*, 27-8, *et passim*.
4. *Num.* 33:1-49.
5. "Biblical Literature," 2 *EB* 882.
6. Winnett, *op. cit.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
8. 1969, p. 476.
9. Tr. Israel Abrahams (1959), Hebrew U., Jerusalem, 26-7.
10. 69 *Zeitschrift fur Alttestament. Wiss.* (1957), 84-103 and 70 *ZAW* (1958), 48-59.
11. *Op. cit.*
12. This approach is also used by A.G. Galanopoulos and E. Bacon, *Atlantis*, Bobbs-Merril Co.: Indianapolis, 1969, 192-9.
13. Hort, p. 59.
14. 66.
15. 67-8.
16. 69-73.
17. 144-5.

18. 77.
19. 74.
20. 111.
21. 79.
22. 256.
23. J.G. Galway and J.T. Schaefer, "Fowl Play," 32 *Weatherwise* (1979) 116-8.
24. *The Sirius Mystery*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1976.
25. Von Fange, 131.
26. *Ex.* 15:27.
27. 17 *EB* 519.
28. James Perrick, Jr., *The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812*, (1976)
29. Daiches, 90.
30. *Ibid.*, 237.
31. *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.
32. *Ex.* 10:24.
33. *The Ark, the Ephod, and the "Tent of Meeting,"* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union CP, 1945.
34. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, New York: Doubleday, 1967, ch. 8, 136-51.

35. "Earliest Representation of the Ark of the Law," 14 *JQR* (1902), 737-9.

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End of God's Fire
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HOME