The Ideology of the Sabbath: A Study in Comparative Religion

Clifford W.P Hansen
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Abstract
it is the purpose of this study to interpret the ideas associated with the Sabbath in the Old Testament in the light of relevant aspects of the culture of the ancient Near East, thus to clarify and relate the several motivations behind the emphasis with which the Sabbath was finally presented in the Hebrew Bible. As informative as it might be, later Jewish Sabbath ideology is specifically excluded from this study.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

First Advisor
Theodor H. Gaster

Second Advisor
Frank Zimmerman

Subject Categories
Comparative Methodologies and Theories | History of Religion | Jewish Studies | Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion

Comments
Library at the Katz Center - Archives Room Manuscript. BS1199.S18 H35 1966.
THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SABBATH: A STUDY IN
COMPARATIVE RELIGION

by

Clifford W. P. Hansen

A Dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The Dropsie College
for Hebrew and Cognate Learning
Philadelphia
1966
APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled
THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SABBATH: A STUDY IN
COMPARATIVE RELIGION

by

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Candidate for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

has been read and approved by

[Signatures]

Date: April 4, 1967
To
the memory of

CARL LOUIS MANELLO
1907 - 1951
Rabbi in Israel

He opened the gate
PREFACE

To amply credit all persons whose influence has entered into this study is impossible. For appreciation of the cultures of the biblical world, I am especially indebted to my teachers: Dr. Theodor H. Gaster, Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon, Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky, Dr. Joseph Reider, and Dr. Solomon L. Skoss. The latter two are now deceased, but their learning and their devotion to the art of teaching have been of great inspiration to me, and the privilege of having been their pupil is one I shall always cherish.

The underlying and unifying theme of this study is the experience of time in its two aspects—the punctual and the durative, the actual and the ideal—in ancient Near-Eastern culture. For this concept I am indebted to Dr. Gaster. I would especially thank him, too, for his personal interest and time so generously given while this study was in progress. It is impossible to adequately annotate the numerous helpful suggestions received from him, both in his class lectures and in many hours of private interviews; but it is no exaggeration to say that without him this study would never have been produced.

I have profited also from valuable counsel received from Dr. Frank Zimmermann. The interest, encouragement and suggestions of a friend,
Dr. Marvin Petruck, formerly a fellow student, are also appreciated.

Abraham E. Millgram begins his book, *Sabbath, the Day of Delight*, with an aphorism attributed to Ahad Ha-'Am: "More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, it is the Sabbath that has kept Israel." If this study contributes something toward a deeper understanding of the strange power of this ancient Hebrew holy day, its purpose will have been realized.
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<td>AJT</td>
<td>American Journal of Theology</td>
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<td>Ar Or</td>
<td>Archiv Orientální</td>
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<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
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SWAT  Sabbath und Woche im Alten Testament, by J. Meinhold
UL  Ugaritic Literature, by Cyrus H. Gordon
VKAW  Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie von Wetenschoppen
ZA  Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete
ZAW  Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDMG  Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
INTRODUCTION

There is no dearth of interesting, informative, and scholarly studies on the Hebrew Sabbath. Most of these studies, however, have been concerned chiefly with the origin and historical development of the institution and with the etymology of the word \( \text{\textit{naw}} \).\(^1\) As important as these problems are, the number and divergence of the theories seriously proposed as solutions thereto would seem to indicate that at the present time we do not have sufficient information to justify definite conclusions in these areas of inquiry.\(^2\) Such questions are outside the scope of this study.

There is another problem pertaining to the Sabbath which appears to have been neglected by modern scholars. That problem becomes most evident in the light of the final content and form of the Old Testament rather than in a literary and historical analysis of its text. I speak of

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the problem of ideological motivation for the Sabbath on the part of those by whose minds and hands the Old Testament, as a corpus, was created. ³ That there was, on the part of these redactors, a distinctive ideology associated with the Sabbath, and a strong intentional emphasis upon Sabbath observance, is indicated in a number of ways:

(1) The Sabbath is the only institution of the cultus of Israel enjoined in the decalogue of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. ⁴

(2) The Sabbath commandment is one, and it is the first, ⁵ of the only two commandments in this decalogue which are expressed positively instead of negatively. It is also "the longest and most elaborate" com-

³ It is of interest to note that Norman H. Snaith found it necessary in his study, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament ("Schocken Books"; New York, 1964), to assume the same perspective. See pp. 11 ff., where (p. 13): "Even the good order of J, E, D, and P may corrupt the scholarly world. We have been so very energetic in isolating each from other, and even within each, in separating stratum from stratum, that we have tended to forget that there might be method even in the madness which so thoroughly dovetailed them in together. . . . In a similar way, our preoccupation with origins and development has blurred our eyes from seeing whither the development was making." (See also: DIOT, p. 89 n. 1.)

⁴ Strictly speaking, we have here two recensions of the decalogue, but, while the difference between them is mostly in the Sabbath commandment, the difference in no way relates to the point here made; hence the use of the singular "decalogue."

Cf., on the point made, Martin Buber, Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant ("Harper Torchbooks: The Cloister Library"; New York and Evanston, 1958), p. 129: "Why is the prescription of circumcision not to be found? Why is Sabbath observance required, but not that of the New Moon festival? Why the Sabbath but not the Passover?"

⁵ This latter fact is probably due to the relationship of its subject matter to the preceding commandments, but is cited in this context by Solomon Goldman, The Ten Commandments, Edited and with an Introduction by Maurice Samuel ("Phoenix Books"; Chicago and London, 1963), p. 160.
mandment in this decalogue, taking "nearly a third of its space." 6

(3) The Sabbath is given emphasis by being cited first in the list of sacred seasons (הנוראים) commanded to be observed in Leviticus 23. 7

(4) In the Pentateuch, the Sabbath is commanded to be observed in each of the constituent sources recognized by modern critical scholars. 8

(5) Especially during the period of the exile and restoration, men who assumed major responsibility for the spiritual leadership of Israel—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, "III Isaiah," 9 and Nehemiah—placed a strong emphasis upon Sabbath observance, 10 an emphasis that clearly distinguished such observance from other cultic practices. 11

6 Ibid.


9 Whether an individual or a "school" is immaterial to the point here made.


11 Cf. John Bright, Jeremiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes ("The Anchor Bible"; Garden City, 1965), p. 120: "This rather one-sided
(6) No other institution of biblical Israel served as a focus for, and inspired, so many significations as did the Sabbath.

(7) So profound was the identification of Israel's spiritual life with the observance of the Sabbath—at least on the part of certain religious leaders—that when the Old Testament canon was fixed a narrative emphasis upon the Sabbath is strange coming from Jeremiah, who elsewhere so often and so sharply rebukes the notion that Yahweh's favor can be gained, and the nation's well-being secured, through diligent prosecution of the cult. It is, therefore, entirely likely that we have in this passage an instance of the further development—possibly the misunderstanding—of Jeremiah's thought in the circles of those who perpetuated his words. Nevertheless, contrary to the opinion of some, the passage is not, either in style or content, necessarily very late. Moreover (cf. Randolph), there is every likelihood that it does develop actual words of Jeremiah on the subject. Jeremiah must certainly have held the Sabbath in respect and, though the least legalistic of men, must have regarded the breaking of it as serious... Sabbath was, after all, an integral part of the covenant law (the Decalogue!), over the breach of which Jeremiah repeatedly showed the profoundest concern (e.g., 7:8-10).

Such scholarly embarrassment over the Sabbath emphasis found in what are considered the nobler portions of the Old Testament is not uncommon. Among other examples that could be cited is that of Charles Cutler Torrey, The Second Isaiah: a New Interpretation (New York, 1928). While attempting to prove the unity of Isaiah 34, 35, 40-66, Torrey insisted that the Sabbath passages of chapters 56 and 58 were interpolations, with the comment (p. 121): "Second Isaiah calls for repentance and faith, the supplementing editor thinks of the Gentiles only as proselytes to Judaism, and promises especial favor with God as the reward of a strict observance of the Jewish Sabbath."

It is not within the scope of this study to enter into questions of source criticism. It is believed that this study will suggest that whether or not such Sabbath passages are in fact from the hand of the original major author of the work in question, there was a purpose behind their inclusion in these texts, and that, from the point of view of the ideology being developed around the Sabbath, these passages are not so discordant as they have sometimes been judged to be.

These significations constitute the basis of this study.
having as a primary emphasis the association of the Sabbath with the
original creative activity of God was placed at its beginning. The
entire saga of Israel was developed out of this narrative; this narrar-
tive was evidently designed to give expression to fundamental aspects
of Israel’s faith; the Sabbath was the only religious institution of
Israel honored by inclusion therein.

(8) The Sabbath is the only institution in biblical Israel which
is specifically said to be “blessed” by God. Aside from God’s bless-
ing the work, fields, food, etc., of persons whom He favors, the
Sabbath is the only inanimate thing said to be so blessed.

(9) Sabbath observance is especially enjoined upon Gentiles in
III Isaiah’s vision of a universal acceptance of Israel’s God.

These emphases indicate that prior to the close of the Old Test-
ament canon the Sabbath was a subject of considerable reflection in

13 In other words, the Sabbath was the only institution of Israel
"to be given a mythological basis."—Evans (ed. Richardson), p. 205.
Cf. Johs. Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture, III-IV (London and
Copenhagen, 1940), p. 291. Also of some significance is the fact that
"the ‘myth’ of the Sabbath finds no reflection in the temple worship
(Num. 28:9 f.), but only in the people’s rest."—Yehezkel Kaufmann,
305 f.

14 Heb. root: יָּבִא. Sabbath blessed: Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11. In
the creation narrative, God blesses the birds and fishes (Gen. 1:22),
and man (v. 28). Elsewhere in the O. T., God’s acts of blessing are
confined to man, his activities, possessions, etc. See also below,
pp. 149, 183, 189.

15 Commenting on this passage, Isa. 56:6, Samuel M. Segal, The
Sabbath Book (New York, 1942), pp. 176 f., says: “The Sabbath is the
Israel. The subsequent success of the Sabbath as a religious institution—both in the history of the Jewish people and in the world-wide scope of the history of mankind—demonstrates the singular appropriateness of the associations with the Sabbath which this reflection produced. It is this evident reflection upon the significance of the Sabbath which this study seeks to penetrate. It is believed that the comparative method of study, utilizing especially the wider cultural environment of Israel, provides the best means to that end.

It is the purpose of this study to interpret the ideas associated with the Sabbath in the Old Testament in the light of relevant aspects of the culture of the ancient Near East, thus to clarify and relate the several motivations behind the emphasis with which the Sabbath was finally presented in the Hebrew Bible. As informative as it might be, later Jewish Sabbath ideology is specifically excluded from this study.

only Jewish institution which is applied as a test for proselytes in their conversion to Judaism." Some would hold this to be an extreme position scarcely tenable in the light of Isa. 52:1 and Zech. 14:16. On this latter passage, however, see below, pp. 182 f. n. 638.
I. DAYS OF RESTRICTION AND MOTIVATIONS FOR THEIR OBSERVANCE

Days of Restriction in Primitive Societies

Extent of such observances

Hutton Webster showed, some fifty years ago, that the social institution of periodic days of abstinence was a world-wide phenomenon. The evidence seemed to him to suggest that the almost universal prevalence of this practice was due not to diffusion from a common source but to spontaneous independent expressions of beliefs which "belong to the general stock of primitive ideas."  

Original motivation

Though many different specific motivations are claimed for the observance of days of restriction, it appears that in most cases the original motives may be found either in practical considerations related

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16 Hutton Webster, Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality (New York, 1916), hereinafter cited as RD. This book is well documented and additional sources may therein be found for almost every citation thereto in this chapter. For what is virtually an abstract of this work, see Webster, "Sabbath (Primitive)," ERE, X (1919), pp. 885 ff. Cf. Webster, "Holidays," ESS, VII (1930), pp. 412 ff.

17 RD, p. 84.
to primitive market institutions \(^{18}\) or in various fears and superstitions. Most "sabbatarian regulations," Webster claims, have arisen from the latter. \(^{19}\) Frequently these two basic motivations become conjoined and tabus are attached to market days either for religious ends or to stimulate an increase in the volume of trade. \(^{20}\)

Market holidays

Attendance at the market obviously requires the abandonment of one's usual occupation for the day, and, at the same time, provides "opportunities for social intercourse, sports, and amusements of all sorts." \(^{21}\) It is easy to see how market days have thus developed naturally into holidays \(^{22}\)--whether of a secular or religious nature (a distinction not clearly recognized in primitive cultures). By its very nature, the market tends to elicit a spirit of cooperation--a fact

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\(^{19}\) RD, p. 1.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., pp. 102 ff., 105 f., 109 ff., 118 ff., 122. Cf. Nilsson, p. 334: "The connexion between the market and religion is universal and appears particularly clearly in . . . Arabia." (There is some evidence suggesting that a strict observance of periodic rest days may survive a market institution in which they are likely to have arisen. RD, pp. 103 f.)

\(^{21}\) RD, p. 118.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 119 ff., in which, among other days, the ancient Roman nundinae are discussed. Cf. Webster, \(\text{ERE}, \text{X}, \text{pp. 888 ff.}, \) and Nilsson, pp. 332 ff.
illustrated by the tabu upon hostilities which has sometimes been attached to market days, thus giving to those days the character of a truce.  

Market holidays are of importance in connection with the Hebrew Sabbath especially because they are known to have generated artificial regularly-recurring periods of time, comparable to our week, running continuously through months and years. Indeed, the market institution has been credited with giving rise to the concept of the week, and Nilsson has suggested, as a reasonable hypothesis, that market days in ancient Canaan—though not there, as yet, attested—probably constituted a major factor in the development of the Sabbath and its week.  

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24 The length of the period varies from three to ten days, depending upon local custom. — Ibid., p. 117.

25 Ibid., p. 118. In the Congo, a word for "week" is the same as that for "market". — "Week," EB (1963), XXIII, p. 479. In other instances, weekdays have been named from the markets that took place on them. — RD, pp. 107, 109, 111, 118.

26 See Ronan (cited above in n. 18).

Tabu days at transitional epochs

Of a somewhat different character are those tabu days of primitive societies connected with critical and transitional events--times of crisis, real or imagined--in the life of the community. 28

Of such, Webster writes: 29

In general any time of special significance, inaugurating a new era or marking the transition from one state to another, any period of storm and stress, any epoch when untoward events have occurred or are expected to occur, may be invested with taboos designed to meet the emergency in the communal life and to ward off the threatened danger or disaster. Periods of abstinence are imposed because of such unusual, and therefore critical, events as conflagration, an epidemic sickness, or an earthquake; after a death; at the changes of the moon; at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year; during a time devoted to the banning of ghosts and demons; and in connection with such important undertakings as the commencement of a war, seed-planting, and harvest, and the celebration of a solemn religious or magical ceremony.

Tabued periods so motivated may last for but a day or they may be extended for months--even for years. They may recur at yearly, seasonal, monthly, or more frequent intervals; or the time of their celebration may be determined spasmodically in an arbitrary manner or by unanticipated natural phenomena.

28 Surveyed in RD, chap. i, "Tabooed Days at Critical Epochs"; chap. ii, "Tabooed Days after a Death and on Related Occasions"; chap. iii, "Holy Days"; chap. v, "Lunar Superstitions and Festivals."

29 Ibid., p. 60.
The ways in which these seasons are observed are extremely varied. Among restrictions that have been specified for such periods are the following: the extinguishing of fires and lights; the prohibition of bathing, of sexual relations, of the consumption of certain foods or drinks, of the wearing of ornaments and fine dress, of travel, of trade, of various kinds of labor, and of recreation; confinement indoors; physical restraints upon animals; the prevention of noise; and the exclusion of strangers from the village. Specific prohibitions are sometimes applied only to certain classes of society such as rulers, priests, those engaged in certain specified occupations or to only one of the sexes. Commonly prescribed are various rites of purification and of religious exercises such as prayer, sacrifice, processions, and festivals with ceremonies of all kinds. The wearing of special dress and body decorations is not uncommon, nor is the singing, shouting, the beating of drums, and the blowing of trumpets. In short, abstention, quiescence, and propitiation are among the most common features of such seasons, while, on the other hand, festivity and celebration frequently also develop. 30

It should be noted that in the category of days associated with critical epochs are included those of the great seasonal festivals of

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30 The summary in this and the preceding paragraph is based upon R.D., chaps. i, ii, iii, where examples are cited for each practice mentioned as well as for many more not specifically mentioned. Cf. Webster, ERE, X, pp. 885 ff.
religion. In the development of these festivals there is some tendency toward the merging of various rites first performed at irregular intervals—especially those having to do with the commemoration of the dead, the celebration of the gods, and the expulsion of demons—with agricultural and seasonal celebrations, "thus meeting a demand for order and precision." In this way a variety of motivations often becomes associated with a single festival and the festival grows in importance. Many such holy days are dedicated to particular deities "who at such times are believed to be present among their worshippers," and who are not infrequently credited with having appointed the festivals. A good illustration of such developments in religious festivity is found in the writings of Plato:

And the Gods, pitying the toils which our race is born to undergo, have appointed holy festivals, wherein men alternate rest with labour; and have given them the Muses and Apollo, the leader of the Muses, and Dionysus, to be companions in their revels, that these may be saved from degeneration, and men partake in spiritual nourishment in company with the Gods.

31 RD, pp. 75, 85. (Comments Webster, p. 85: "We may assume with some confidence that the priestly attitude in such matters has not been entirely disinterested. The holy day, observed with worship, sacrifice, and offerings, must contribute directly to the well-being and prestige of the sacerdotal order."

32 Cf. the various motivations conjoined in the annual festivals of ancient Israel; where, however, the emphasis upon historical event was unique. On the development of these festivals, see Gaster, Festivals.

33 RD, p. 87.

Plato's words are of particular relevance to this study because they illustrate, outside of Israel, a tendency in ancient times to invent theoretical justifications for days of restriction. Furthermore, though the ideas are not well differentiated and developed, Plato's comment suggests both religious and social motivation for festive observances. Man participates in the festivals because they are of divine appointment; on the other hand, this divine appointment is motivated by a concern, on the part of the gods, for the welfare of man.

35 Cf. RD, p. 91: "for the philosophic thinker the process of rationalization had begun."

Also from ancient Greece, though much later, is this from Strabo, indicating the universality of the practice of associating restricted days with festivals and considerable reflection upon the custom: "Now this is common both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to perform their sacred rites in connection with the relaxation of a festival, these rites being performed sometimes with religious frenzy, sometimes without it; sometimes with music, sometimes not; and sometimes in secret, sometimes openly. And it is in accordance with the dictates of nature that this should be so, for, in the first place, the relaxation draws the mind away from human occupations and turns the real mind towards that which is divine; and, secondly, the religious frenzy seems to afford a kind of divine inspiration and to be very like that of the soothsayer; and, thirdly, the secrecy with which the sacred rites are concealed induces reverence for the divine, since it imitates the nature of the divine, which is to avoid being perceived by our human senses; and fourthly, music, which includes dancing as well as rhythm and melody, at the same time, by the delight it affords and by its artistic beauty, brings us in touch with the divine, and this for the following reasons; for although it has been well said that human beings then act most like the gods when they are doing good to others, yet one might better say, when they are happy; and such happiness consists of rejoicing, celebrating festivals, pursuing philosophy, and engaging in music."--Strabo Geography x. 3. 9, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, The Geography of Strabo ("The Loeb Classical Library"; London and New York, 1928), Vol. 211, pp. 93, 95.
Webster writes of this two-fold aspect of the developed holy day in these words:

Most festivals are celebrated as holidays, when men give up secular occupations and devote themselves to religious exercises and relaxation. . . . For the peasant and the artisan they provide welcome relief from physical exertion, and for all ranks of society their pageants and processions, their games, feasts, and merry-makings give an outlet to the play instincts of mankind.

Webster insists, however, that, despite the positive elements of worship, celebration, and recreation which come to attend such festivals, the tabus associated with all these days, including that upon labor, go back, ultimately, to primitive superstitions, and are motivated by fear.

However crude primitive "sabbaths' associated with times of communal crisis and transition may have been, from their beginning they served useful ends. In their tabus fear was institutionalized; and, in the observance of the specified regulations, confidence, caution, reverence, and group solidarity were generated. In the words of Webster:

We cannot always fathom the savage logic which has generated the numberless regulations observed at such critical seasons; but they would seem to be particular expressions of an ancient doctrine--'In quietness shall be your strength.'

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36 RD, pp. 85 f.
37 Ibid., pp. 1, 86 ff., 307 f., and Webster, in ERE, X, p. 888; in ESS, VII, pp. 412 f.
38 RD, pp. 59 ff.
39 Ibid., p. 59.
Unlucky days

Also grounded in fear and superstition, and not altogether distinguishable from tabued days connected with times of crisis, are the numerous unlucky days common both in primitive societies and in the most sophisticated of ancient civilizations. Lucky days, too, are known, but these do not seem so readily to generate special attention; and, furthermore, lucky days being precisely days in which human activities are expected to prosper, their lucky aspect generates activity—not restriction.

Unlucky days are commonly days which, because of their name or number, are considered repetitions of days on which unfavorable events have occurred in the past. It is thought that certain actions done on such days are likely to have a similarly unfortunate outcome. Frequently unlucky days are, for one reason or another, associated with natural phenomena—especially with the movement and changing appearance of the heavenly bodies.

Aside from the fact that unlucky days are commonly known by just such a term, what perhaps more than anything else tends to distinguish this class of restricted days from other classes is the tendency to dissociate to a greater degree the ostensible reasons for these days

40 For a general survey, see RD, chap. ix, "Unlucky Days," (pp. 272 ff.) Respect for unlucky days is common enough, today, in our culture: e.g., in the superstitions associated with "Friday, the thirteenth," For other examples, see Ibid., p. 284.
from the normal experiences of life. The motivations for tabued days at critical epochs, for instance, tend to be closely associated with recurring experiences more or less common to human life. The motivations for unlucky days appear to be far less related to man's normal experience; the evil powers associated with unlucky days seem more removed from man's reach—are commonly associated with the stars or moon or with distant gods which are not so easily influenced, even by propitiation and sympathetic magic, as are more earthly powers. There is, therefore, it appears, a somewhat more fateful aspect to unlucky days than tends to be associated with transitional epochs associated more closely with the earthly scene.

The precise time is of great importance to unlucky days. Sometimes only a part of a day is designated as unlucky, and sometimes a day may be unlucky for one thing while propitious for another. In an Egyptian calendar from the Twelfth Dynasty, for example, eighteen days of each month are 'defined as 'good,' nine as 'bad,' and three . . . as 'half-good' and 'half-bad.'

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41 Even when the tradition of an unlucky day associates it with a historical event, it is most likely an unrepeatable event; whereas the common transitional periods of planting and harvest recur regularly. The movements of heavenly bodies are recurring phenomena, but at a distance.

42 RD, pp. 287, et al.

43 Ibid., p. 285.

44 Ibid., p. 295, where Egyptian sources and translations are cited.
An excellent illustration of the character of unlucky days in the ancient world is found in the Egyptian calendar fragment known as Papyrus Sallier IV (from the Nineteenth Dynasty but quite evidently based upon earlier documents). This calendar divides the hours between the rising and the setting of the sun into three periods, each of which is ruled by its particular influence. Some days were good throughout the three periods, some were wholly bad, others were critical—dubium sed in malum vergens—while others again presented combinations of these three characteristics. Typical prohibitions of this calendar are the following:

22 Thoth: eat no fish and light no oil lamp. 23 Thoth: put no incense on the fire; kill no animals, domestic or wild; eat neither a goose nor a goat. A child born on this day will amount to nothing. 26 Thoth: do nothing on this day. 4 Paophi: do not go out of the house. 5 Paophi: do not go out of the house; do not have intercourse with a woman. 22 Paophi: do not wash and do not approach a stream. 19 Athyr: light no fire. 6 Mechir: do no work. 13 Pharmuthi: do not go anywhere. In the calendar as a whole the most


46 RD, p. 296.

47 Ibid., pp. 296 ff., citing Wreszinski.
frequent injunctions relate to quitting the house, travelling, sailing, and undertaking any kind of work. Next in number are the prohibitions of loud talking, singing, and sexual intercourse. There are also prohibitions of drinking, bathing, and killing or eating certain animals, besides others directed against the use of fire and lights.

In this calendar, to the admonitions for particular days the scribe frequently added "a summary of the motives which justified his recommendations . . . in almost every case a legendary episode of the gods." 48

Illustrative extracts are: 49

5th Paophi: . . . The majesty of the god Ment was content on this day.

6th Paophi: Auspicious, auspicious, auspicious. Day of rejoicing for Ra in heaven. The gods are in peace before the god Ra; the Ennead of the gods completes the ceremonies before [RS].

17th Athyr: Inauspicious, inauspicious, inauspicious. Arrival of the superior and inferior Great Ones in Abydos, of Those who shed many tears. Great lamentations of Isis and Nephthys for their brother Unnefer (Osiris, who, according to Plutarch, was murdered on the 17th Athyr) in Sais, a lament which may be heard even to Abydos.

13th Mekhir: Inauspicious, inauspicious, inauspicious. In no wise go forth on this day. It is the day on which the eye of Sekhet was terrible and the fields were filled with devastation. Go not forth at sunset on this day.

"The regulation for the twenty-sixth of Thoth--'do absolutely nothing'--is explained by a reference to the terrific combat between Horus and

49 Wiedemann, pp. 263 f.
50 Prohibitions cited above, p. 17.
his uncle Set, which occurred on this ill-omened day."\textsuperscript{51} In these explanations, we see again an elementary attempt toward the creation of an ideology for restricted days. \textsuperscript{52}

Of the widespread extent of the notion of lucky and unlucky days in the ancient world, Maspero writes:\textsuperscript{53}

The Egyptians were not the only people affected by these kinds of superstitions; the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Elamites, all the Semitic races of the old world suffered equally under them, and classical nations, the Greeks and Romans, yielded in nothing to the Orientals.

In ancient Greece, as in Egypt, there were attempts at rationalizing such observances, as we learn from Hesiod. Hesiod, however, emphasized the lucky days more than the unlucky ones, writing of them:\textsuperscript{54}

These days are a great blessing to men on earth; but the rest are changeable, luckless, and bring nothing. Everyone praises a different day but few know their nature. . . . That man is happy and lucky in them who knows all these things and does his work without offending the deathless gods.

\textsuperscript{51}RD, p. 297, citing F. J. Chabas, Le calendrier des jours fastes et néfastes de l'année égyptienne (Chalon-s.-S., 1870), p. 28; and Wreszinski, pp. 91 f.  
\textsuperscript{52}Cf. RD, p. 297: "evidence that the priests had begun to rationalize the taboos". Cf. above, pp. 12 f.  
\textsuperscript{53}Maspero, p. 135.  
Certain unlucky days in Mesopotamia are treated below, pp. 26 ff. The ancient Roman calendar, indicating the quality of days, is discussed in W. Warde Fowler, The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans (London and New York, 1899).  
As was done in Egypt, Hesiod attributed the character of days to mythological events in the lives of the gods: 55

Avoid fifth days: they are unkindly and terrible. On a fifth, they say, the Erinyes assisted at the birth of Horkus (Oath) whom Eris (Strife) bare to trouble the forsworn.

Days of restriction associated with the moon

Many unlucky and tabued days of ancient times arose, apparently, from observations of the lunar cycle. Though worship and tabus have also been widely associated with the sun, planets and stars, somehow --perhaps because of the dramatic changes in the appearance of the moon--the new moon, the full moon, eclipses, and the dark nights at the end of the month have especially excited the imagination of primitive peoples, aroused feelings of awe, given rise to superstitions, and elicited worship. 56 Moon worship was an especially prominent feature of ancient Near Eastern religion generally and of Semitic peoples in particular. 57 In ancient times the moon cycles also provided the most

55 Ibid., 802 ff. (p. 63).
This finding of reasons for the observance of unlucky days in mythological events further illustrates the tendency already observed (above, pp. 15 f.) to somewhat dissociate the adverse forces in control of unlucky days from the normal life of man.


common measure of time. \(^{58}\) Many tabus and prohibitions relating to unlucky days have resulted from beliefs concerning the influence of the moon on living things and especially upon human life and activity. \(^{59}\) Days (or nights) set apart with specific reference to the moon tend to become more than merely unlucky days. They frequently partake of the nature of transitional periods in communal life and are characterized by such various restrictions, festivities, and sacred rites as are common to transitional observances.

Eclipses, both solar and lunar, are especially awesome and such times have frequently been considered unfavorable for work and have been accompanied by fasting and other forms of abstinence. \(^{60}\) Likewise have the dark nights between the moon's lunations been considered especially unpropitious. \(^{61}\) Probably the most frequent lunar-associated festivals and sacred days have been those of the new moon and full moon. Such festivals are found to have been observed in very ancient times and have frequently been accompanied by abstinence, quiescence, and pro-

\(^{58}\) RD, pp. 173 ff.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., pp. 124 ff.

Many such beliefs are still common in our own culture as evidenced by the popularity of astrology and by farmers' planting and harvesting customs in many areas.

\(^{60}\) RD, pp. 134 ff.

pitiatory prayers and sacrifices to the gods. 62

In ancient India, for example, the Aryans observed new moon and full moon every month with sacrifices and other rites. Though labor was not expressly prohibited, "the ceremony usually occupied the greater part of two consecutive days," while the regulations required abstention from certain foods and from sexual intercourse; prohibited travel, the sale of goods, the cutting of hair or nails, and much conversation; and required the worshipper to sleep on the ground. Obviously such restrictions converted these days into a kind of "sabbath." 63

Though we lack such full details for Egypt, Webster states that "the evidence . . . fully warrants the conclusion that from the earliest period the Egyptians included celebrations at new moon and full moon among the most important of their religious ceremonies." 64

Commonly found in primitive societies is the division of the lunar month into three periods--frequently decades or periods approximating decades. 65 Nilsson sees the recognition of three lunar phases as more primitive than the four-phase division common to us. 66 Ten-day weeks

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62 RD, pp. 144 ff.
63 Ibid., pp. 149 ff.
64 Evidence summarized in RD, pp. 166 ff. The quotation is from p. 168.
66 See references to Nilsson above, n. 65.
related to the lunar cycle were employed in antiquity by both the Egyptians and the Greeks.  

67 At least in Egypt, "from the time of the Third Dynasty, the first day of each decade was marked by sacrifices."  

68 In Babylonia, "three principal stars [governed] each month."  

69 From the standpoint of the relationship of the seven-day week to the Hebrew Sabbath, coming closer to the Sabbath institution are those days of tabu and religious exercises corresponding in frequency to the four quarter phases of the moon. This, too, is a widespread phenomenon, but it does not necessarily imply that the resultant periods between these special days were considered as measures of time in the sense of civil weeks.  

70 Ancient examples of such celebrations are the Jain posaha fast  

71 ___72__

67 RD, pp. 191 f., where sources cited.

68 Ibid.


70 RD, pp. 143, 151 ff., 166 ff., 187, 199 ff., et passim.

71 Ibid., pp. 166, 200.

72 Specified for the eighth and fourteenth days of the two monthly fortnights. Abstention "from food, bodily attentions, sexual intercourse, and daily work" were required. Ibid., pp. 154 f.
and the Buddhist uposatha, 73 which, in the words of Webster, "could have owed nothing to Jewish or Christian influence." 74 There is evidence also for the ancient religious celebration of four lunar days each month both in Iran 75 and in Egypt, 76 but we lack evidence for the manner in which these days were celebrated. 77

73 "The uposatha falls on the day of the new moon, on the day of the full moon, and on the two days which are eighth from the new and full moon." Characterized by fasting and restriction of secular activities. --Ibid., pp. 155 ff.

Both uposatha and the Jain posaha are rooted in the ancient Vedic observance of new moon and full moon referred to above, p. 22. Cf. RD, pp. 154, 199 f. Buddhist uposatha, in turn, stands behind the somewhat similar Sinhalese poya days of Ceylon, the Burmese ubone days, the Siamese wan phra, the Tibetan du-zang, and the Chinese kin-ming sichai. --Ibid., pp. 158 ff.

74 Webster, ERE, X, p. 885, and RD, p. 158.


77 RD, pp. 166, 168 f.

Four regularly-recurring tabu periods--each dedicated to one of "the four great gods of the native pantheon"--are also found in the old Hawaiian lunar month. --Ibid., pp. 10, 14 f., 88, et passim. Cf. ERE, X, 886. The first three of these four Hawaiian tabu periods were separated by intervals of ten days while the fourth came only three days after the third, suggesting an original month of three decades. --RD, pp. 15, 188.
Days of Restriction in Mesopotamia

Of all such tendencies toward an approximation of sacred days with the Hebrew Sabbath, those found in ancient Mesopotamia have long been considered the most relevant. In character, Mesopotamian restricted days are not essentially different from many of those crisis and unlucky days already surveyed; but aside from whatever elements Mesopotamian and Hebrew rest days had or did not have in common, the data here is of special importance, (1) because Israel's biblical tradition traces her national origins back to the Mesopotamian valley, 78 (2) because Israel's history provided ample opportunities for an interchange of cultural influences, 79 and (3) because several lines of evidence—not the least of which is the peculiar affinity in Mesopotamia for the number seven—lend support to a widespread conclusion of modern scholars that here is to be found the ultimate origin of the Hebrew Sabbath. 80

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78 Gen. 11:27 ff. See also, on this and the following point, Morris Jastrow, "Relations Between Hebrews and Babylonians," in Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions (New York, 1914), pp. 1 ff.

79 James Henry Breasted, in The Dawn of Conscience (New York, 1933), p. 338, specifically attributes to "practical contacts like those of business" the reception into Palestine of "such institutions as the Babylonian Sabbath."

The "dangerous days"\(^{81}\)

In a tenth century B.C. Assyrian religious calendar, nine days of the lunar month --the 1st, 7th, 9th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 28th, 29th, and 30th--are said to be "unsuited for doing anything desirable," and are especially differentiated from the other days of the month by prohibitions against physicians and seers exercising their normal functions.

On some of these tabu days various other restrictions apply to one or more other categories of persons. \(^{83}\)

Typical of the specifications for these days are the following: \(^{84}\)

Day 1. God Enlil; sinister; difficult for the sick; a physician may not lay his hand upon the sick, a prophet may utter no word; it is not suited to do anything desirable. The king and lord may speak boldly. Lucky. Fish and lovage may not be eaten. The king shall clean his garment. King must make offering to Enlil, Ninlil, Shamash, and Nusku. KAR. 178, 1, 1-14; 176, 1, 2-7.

\(^{81}\) Called ululgallu or \u0160umu limmu days, i.e. 'evil days', 'dangerous days', but generally [also] marked magir, 'lucky'. --Langdon, Menologies, p. 95 n. 2. See below, p. 27 n. 88. On these days, see Langdon, Menologies, passim; Benno Landsberger, Der kultische Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrier (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 99 ff., et passim; Bohn, pp. 39 ff.; Hehn, pp. 106 ff.; Johannes Meinhold, Sabbat und Woche im Alten Testament (Göttingen, 1905), pp. 15 ff.; Webster, RD, pp. 223 ff.

\(^{82}\) The extant tablets are evidently copied from texts going back at least to the fourteenth century B.C. --Langdon, Menologies, p. 48 n. 1. The regulations are given for Nisan. In later calendars they are applied to other months as well. --Ibid., pp. 48, 73.

\(^{83}\) These were not the only unlucky days with tabus, but they were especially sinister, although some of their prohibitions applied to other days as well. See: Ibid., pp. 48, 73 ff.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., pp. 73, 79.
Day 21. Day of the reckoning of Shamash. Unlucky, sinister. Difficult for the sick. Physicians may not practise and a seer may not speak. Unsuit for doing anything desirable. Let the king speak many charitable words (abound in good deeds). Because of Bau one may not sweep his house, nor wash his feet. The king makes offering to Shamash and Bau. All work of the weavers must cease, and may it not prosper. KAR. 176 Rev. 1, 19-27; 178, 2, 64-75.

Often these words are added: "'his heart will be happy' (if he does all these things) or in the negative 'his heart will not be happy' (if he fails to do these things)." 85

In the seventh-century B.C. reformed calendar of Ashurbanipal, these nine sinister days of the month were reduced to five: the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th. 86 Typical of the specifications for the observance of these days in the reformed calendar are these for the 7th:

Ritual by night to Marduk and Zarpanit. Lucky and sinister. King as shepherd of the peoples may eat no cooked flesh and baked bread. He may not change his garments nor put on clean garments, may not make sacrifices, ride in a chariot, nor speak as a lord. Seer shall not prophesy and physicians not practise. Unsuit for doing anything desirable. Offerings to Marduk and Ishtar. He shall make sacrifices. K. 2514, 17-22. 88

85 Ibid., p. 83.
86 Ibid., pp. 73, 83 f. See also: Landsberger, pp. 99 ff., 119 ff.
87 Ibid., p. 75.
88 Two apparent contradictions appear here as elsewhere. The day is said to be both lucky and sinister. This would seem to indicate that such days possess the potential for grave misfortune, but that if the rules are kept their prospect can be good. On this, see Langdon, Menologies, p. 95 n. 2, p. 144 n. 6, and p. 147. For the inclusion both of a prohibition against sacrifice and of instructions to make sac-
While it was just as surely in the old calendar, the new calendar
makes more evident the principle of seven-day periods--each ending
with a tabu day. Since the new moon marked the beginning of each month
and hence the beginning also of a new series of four seven-day periods
roughly equivalent to the four quarters of the moon's lunation, it is
difficult to resist the conclusion that four of these monthly "dangerous
days"--the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th--were ultimately derived from the
lunar cycle and therefore were likely to have received their tabu character
largely from that association. In addition to evidence already cited for
a widespread tendency elsewhere toward four-period divisions of months,
there is, indeed, some ancient textual evidence for a lunar significance
being attached to these days. At least one ancient text indicates the
7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days as belonging to Sin, the moon god; while

---Ibid., p. 75 n. 4. Cf. Egyptian calendars of unlucky days, above, pp.
17 ff. See also: Jastrow, AJT, II (1898), p. 320.

89 For discussions of seven-day periods, see: Hehn, pp. 4 ff., 40
ff., 106 ff.; Meinhold, pp. 13 ff.; Hildegard and Julius Lewy, "The
Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar," HUCA, XVII

90 Cf. Albright, JBL, LXIV, No. 2, p. 289: "We may safely adhere
to the standard derivation of the seven-day period from the fourfold division
of the lunar month."


92 Rawlinson (Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia), iii, 64, 18b;
Jensen, in Zeitschrift fur deutsche Wortforschung, 1901, i, 152; Zimmerm,
irregular association with moon in Langdon, Menologies, pp. 73 ff.
the Babylonian epic of creation, *Enuma elish*, emphasizes Marduk's establishment of the lunar cycle and particularly mentions the seventh day:

*The Moon he caused to shine,*
*the night (to him) entrusting.*

*He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days:*

'Monthly, without cease, form designs with a crown.
At the month's very start, rising over the land,
Thou shalt have luminous horns to signify six days,
On the seventh day reaching a [half] -crown.
At full moon stand in opposition in mid-month.

On the other hand, while the seventh day is mentioned, the word translated "full moon" in this passage is 𒃏, which, in the ancient texts, regularly refers to the fifteenth of the month; and there is no mention in this passage of the moon's third-quarter phase. Furthermore, the strength of the number seven in these calendars and the well-known strange infatuation of the ancient Near East with this number suggests that here is to be found a more primary factor in the development of these "dangerous days."

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94 Cf. Ibid., n. 84, and see: Langdon, pp. 90, 96; cf. Landsberger, pp. 131 ff. For a discussion of 𒃏, see below, pp. 38 ff., with bibliography, p. 38, n. 126.

95 Meinhold (pp. 13 ff.), Snaith (*JNYF*, p. 111), and others, hold that the seven-day week arose independently of the moon's lunation. Cf. Lewy, *HUCA*, XVII (1942-43), pp. 1 ff.
A closer examination of the facts tends to support this conclusion. In the first place, if the character of the "seventh days" was derived from association with the moon, why were these days retained in the reformed calendar as "dangerous days" while the new-moon day and the dark days at the end of the month were dropped from this category? In the second place, it has long been recognized that the 19th was probably included among the "dangerous days" because it was the forty-ninth (7 x 7) day following the 1st of the preceding month. If, then, all five of the "dangerous days" retaining their portentous character in the reformed calendar are "seventh days," this fact would appear to have been a major factor, at least, in giving to them their distinctive character.

Furthermore, if one looks closely, it appears that of the four additional "dangerous days" in the older calendar two may be accounted for as also being "seventh days." Hildegard and Julius Lewy have

96 On these dark days, see: Langdon, p. 84, and Snaith, JNYF, pp. 107 f.


98 Cf. Meinhold, pp. 13 ff., and Snaith, JNYF, p. 111. Significant here is also the fact that the 19th--the "day of wrath" of the goddess Gula" (Langdon, pp. 78, 86)--being the 7 x 7 day, appears to have been even more charged with sinister forces than the other four "dangerous days." On this, see: Langdon, pp. 86 ff.; Snaith, JNYF, pp. 108 f.; and Landsberger, pp. 136 f.

99 HUCA, XVII (1942-43), pp. 1 ff.
shown rather conclusively that these seven-day periods go back to a very ancient calendar created around the number seven, with seven-day weeks and fifty-day \((7 \times 7 + 1)\) periods. Seven such pentecontads, plus one or two intercalary periods totaling fifteen or sixteen days altogether, constituted a year of 365 or 366 days. For some reason this calendar was abandoned in Mesopotamia for civil usage in favor of a luni-solar calendar prior to the twenty-third century B.C., but survived there, to some extent, in cultic usage. Quite apparently it is an influence of the pentecontad calendar, assimilated into the luni-solar months of the later civil calendars, which is seen in the selection of the "dangerous days." While the relationship of the 19th to some such principle has, as already pointed out, long been known, what seems not to have been recognized is that the older pentecontad calendar can also account for special attention being given to the 9th and the 29th in the tenth-century cultic calendar.

Assume, for example, that a given 19th is the end of the first seven-week period in a given year. The 20th, then, would mark the end of the pentecontad and the 21st would begin the second pentecontad of that year. For this second pentecontad, the forty-ninth day would be the 9th of the second succeeding month, with the 10th marking the end of the second pentecontad of the year, and with the 11th beginning the third pentecontad. The third seven-week period would, in turn,

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 4.\]

\[\text{We are, of course, assuming that the computations were based}\]
end on the 29th of the succeeding month, with the 30th marking the end of the pentecontad. At this point, the entire cycle of three pentecontads would precisely repeat itself\textsuperscript{102} with reference to the month, with the seven-week periods ending again on the 19th, the 9th, and the 29th days of thirty-day months. Thus these three days--the 9th, 19th, and 29th--could easily become fixed special days sharing with the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th, the distinction of being "seventh days", in spite of the somewhat different basis of that distinction.\textsuperscript{103} Because of the peculiar importance attached to the myth of Gula, the 19th was retained as a "dangerous day" in the reformed calendar while the 9th and 29th were not. So far as the original inclusion of the 30th and 1st with the "dangerous days" is concerned, their association with the darkness of the period and with the new moon would seem to be the most plausible explanation.\textsuperscript{104} That an association of the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th with

upon the ideal month of thirty days (as has always been done in relating the 19th to this principle). Cf. Morris Jastrow, Jr., Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria (New York and London, 1911), p. 115: "The most common sign with which the name of the moon is written is the number 'thirty'--taken evidently from the average period of her course." To this Jastrow adds the footnote: "In astrological compositions and reports all months are assumed to have 30 days. It is only in the late astronomical texts that, through the more accurate regulation of the calendar, months of 29 and 30 days are distinguished."

\textsuperscript{102} Intercalated periods would not, of course, affect this result.

\textsuperscript{103} It may be of relevance that the 9th as well as the 19th was a day of Gula, though of the two days, the 19th was most sinister. --Cf. Langdon, pp. 8, 76, 83, 86 ff., and Snaith, JNYF, pp. 108 ff. The 29th was also especially sinister. --Langdon, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{104} See Langdon, p. 84, and Snaith, JNYF, pp. 107.
the moon's phases should also arise would seem to be natural. But the most important distinction of these days, along with the 9th, 19th, and 29th, appears to be their association with connotations of the number seven and with the ancient calendar built around that number.

The Lewys have shown that the number seven, in turn, was closely associated with very ancient and powerful wind (and storm) gods which, along with agricultural processes and festivals, appear to have constituted a major factor in the creation of the pentecontad calendar. Of relevance here is the fact "that in Akkadian the same word umum expresses the notions 'day' and 'wind'. Similarly in Sumerian both of the signs used for 'day', viz., UD and UG, occur also in the sense of 'wind', 'storm'." Furthermore, the father of seven major wind gods, it appears, is En-mesarra, whose first-born child is said to be "Zi-sum-mu Gu-la Bilit Nippur ki nadinat napisti dAnim 'Zisummu (is) Gula, (is) the divine Lady of Nippur, (is) the giver of life for Anu'." We also have

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105 See Langdon, p. 86; and Snaith, JNYF, p. 111. Cf. also below, pp. 32 ff.

106 HUCA, XVII (1942-43), esp. pp. 5 ff.

107 Ibid., p. 5. The Lewys cite, for UD: Delitzsch, Sumerisches Glossar (Leipzig, 1914), p. 44, s.v. ud I and II; Deimel, Sumerisches Lexikon, no. 381, 11; and for UG: Thureau-Dangin, ZA, XV (1900), pp. 48 f.; Delitzsch, p. 41, s.f. ug I; Deimel, no. 444, 5.

"In Hebrew, too, the word דיי 'day' was occasionally used for 'wind', as is shown by the expression דיי דרים 'until the day blows' in Cant. 2:17 and 4:6."--Lewy, p. 5.


Originally the wind gods were considered to be asexual, but later they were represented as either male or female. Lewy, p. 38. (Cf. above, p. 30 n. 98, and p. 32 n. 103.)
textual evidence that the 19th was a day of sadness because "Anu bound
the divine heptad, the sons of Enmešarra." 109  "Another form of the
legend . . . seems to imply that Enmešarra had been killed in a fight
with the god Ninurta who carried his body away in his war chariot." 110
Apparently Enmešarra was, in a certain tradition, the deity par excellence, and ruled the world prior to Anu and Enlil 111 as "Lord of the
earth," "Lord . . . of the land of no return," 112 "Great Lord without
whom Ningirsu cannot set to rights the field and the canal, cannot create
an ear (of grain)," 113 "he who holds the circumference of the earth," 114
and "great tie of the nether-world." 115 "All these similarities," say the
Lewys, "suggest that originally Enmešarra was [like Enlil] also a
storm-god whose realm extended over both heaven and earth and that


111 Lewy, p. 26, citing text K. 48 (rev. 8), published by Craig, Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts II (Leipzig, 1897), pp. 12 ff., and partly transliterated and translated by Jensen, KB VI, 2, pp. 50 ff.

112 Lewy, p. 27, citing text K. 48 (rev. 1-2), pub. by Craig (see above, n. 111).

113 Ibid., (rev. 4-5).

114 Ibid., (rev. 7).

115 Ibid., (rev. 3).

116 Lewy, pp. 27 f.
his seven sons represent the seven winds."

The evident conflict between the ancient cultic calendar built around the number seven and the so-called civil luni-solar calendar appears, therefore, to reflect a conflict between one cult devoted to a mythological tradition attached to "the seventh" or "dangerous" days and their gods, and another cult oriented more strongly to the heavenly lights and the gods associated therewith.

Several studies have been made in an effort to determine, if possible, to what extent business activities were interrupted on the "dangerous days." Writing in The Expository Times, XVII (1906), pp. 566 f., C. H. W. Johns reported the following results:

117 The "seventh days" could be considered dangerous from either (perhaps both) of two points of view: (1) because, being days belonging especially to the old gods, the old gods might, on these occasions, be able to exert some vengeance, or (2) representing the old gods which had been conquered, these days might be days on which the conquering gods might wish, or might be able, to work some special mischief. (Cf. above, pp. 33 f.)

118 Cf. Lewy, p. 21: "In Babylonia the seven-day calendar was almost completely superseded by that based on the observation of the moon, it is apparent that the seven wind-gods were dethroned in favor of the cult of the sun, moon, and stars. Several indications in our sources prove the correctness of this conclusion. There is in the first place a legend . . . which tells how the moon-god Sin was kidnapped by the seven winds and delivered only when Marduk intervened in his behalf."

As long ago as 1901, in my Assyrian Deeds and Documents, vol. ii. p. 40 f., I pointed out that in Assyria, in the 8th and 7th century B.C. (720-606), the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th do not show any marked abstention from secular business. The 19th, however, does. Out of 356 dated documents, 40 are dated on the 1st, 12 on the 7th, 11 on the 14th, 16 on the 21st, 11 on the 28th, and only 2 on the 19th. One of these two is doubtful; the latter is either the dedication of a slave girl to a temple or her sale for marriage, probably the latter. Hence we may say that in Assyrian times no secular business was done on the 19th. With respect to the other supposed Sabbaths the tablets rarely show whether the business done was for the temple, and we may give the point away ... . In the period of the First Dynasty of Babylon, the Hammurabi period, ... out of a total of 356 dated tablets, the first day gives 39; the 7th, only 5; the 14th, 5; the 21st and 28th, each 8. The 19th has only 2. Of these, one appears to have been lost, so that it is no longer possible to check the date; the other deals with wages, or rations, apparently for priests. At this period there is a marked abstention on the Sabbaths, and especially on the 19th, for Babylonia.

This evidence suggests to us that at least some people besides the king, the seers, and the physicians, took seriously the warning: "unsuited for doing anything desirable." 120

The fact that the major restrictions for "the dangerous days" applied only to kings, seers, and physicians, has been interpreted as being a distinction based upon principles of aristocratic privilege. 121 This interpretation is unwarranted. There is nothing in the instructions for the "dangerous days" to suggest that observance of these days was ever regarded as a privilege. 122 Rather, the "dangerous days" appear to have

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120 See above, pp. 26 f.


122 See above, pp. 26 f., and Langdon, Menologies, pp. 73 ff.
been times of peril for the community which the "king as shepherd of the peoples" and other acknowledged possessors and mediators of the secret will and plans and powers of the gods were to deal with on behalf of the community and thus discharge certain responsibilities for the protection of the community which their position of trust implied.

This brief review of data concerning the "dangerous days" of Mesopotamia has shown: (1) that from extremely remote times there was in the ancient Near East a strong cultic attachment to seven-day periods of time and to "seventh days"—an attachment which survived many centuries of conflict with a luni-solar calendar; and (2) that the observance of these days in historical times, whatever the extent of that observance may have been, was motivated by fear stemming from mythological traditions associated with these days from an ancient cult calendar no longer used in ordinary civilian life.

123 See above, p. 27.


125 According to the Lewys (see esp. pp. 77 f.), the pentecontad calendar was originated in the West, probably by the Amorites, and was used in Palestine and Syria as well as in Mesopotamia.
There were also, in ancient Mesopotamia, certain days known as ściapattum\textsuperscript{126} (variant, apparently: śabattum\textsuperscript{127}) which are of immediate immediate

relevance to this study especially because of the singular similarity of this designation to the Hebrew word נָעִים. Our information about נָעִים is somewhat confusing, but it has been ascertained that this word referred (1) to periods of intercalary days inserted occasionally between certain pentecontads of the calendar system discovered by the Lewys, (2) to other periods of fifteen days (the two halves of the month), and (3) to the 15th day of the month --a fact indicating that it was associated also with the full moon. The word נָעִים was synonymous with gamaru ("to be complete") and with katu ("end"). Ishtar was said to be the "mother of the נָעִים day" which, in turn, was called "father of the month." The day was also specified as an um nu-uh.


130See above, p. 29, on Enuma elish; Landsberger, pp. 93 f., 98, 131 ff. (Landsberger's evidence and emphasis upon a full-moon feast has been substantially weakened by the subsequent Lewy calendar study. See HUCA, XVII (1942-43), pp. 77); Cf. Budde, ZAW, XLVIII (1930), p. 141; Meek, JBL, XXXIII (1914), pp. 202 f.

131Landsberger, pp. 133 f.; Langdon, Menologies, p. 91; Meek, JBL, XXXIII (1914), p. 203.

132Langdon, Menologies, p. 90, citing CT, 12, 22, 38180, Rev. 8-9.

133Langdon, Menologies, p. 90.
lib-bi ('day of the resting of the heart')—an expression referring to
the appeasement of the god(s) and not to human rest. 134 In the cal-
endar texts, the 15th is usually designated as a "lucky day"; in a
few instances it is called "unlucky" or "half the day lucky." 135 Known
texts show few tabus on this day. 136 More frequently the menologies
make such recommendations as "one may take a wife," and "king may
wash his garments." 137 In the older calendars, there is considerable
variation in the specifications for this day from month to month; the
reformed calendar "standardizes this day on the basis of Nisan in the
ten"h-century calendar," and "it now becomes throughout the year the
day of the goddess Nin-e-an-na, a title of Ishtar whose sacred number
was 15." 138 It seems clear that while some special significance was
attached to this day it was not considered to be of the same dire charac-
ter as the "dangerous days." 139 Of the nature—even of the existence—
of a šapattu full-moon festival, we are quite uninformed, as is acknow-
ledged by one of the foremost protagonists of such a festival as a major

134Jensen, ZA, IV, pp. 274 ff.; Landsberger, p. 132; Jastrow,
AJT, II (1898), pp. 316 f.; Langdon, Menologies, p. 90; S. R. Driver,


136Ibid.

137Ibid.


139Langdon, Menologies, pp. 73 ff., 92 ff.; cf. Snaith, JNYF, pp.
pp. 113 f.
factor for our discerning "The Original Character of the Hebrew Sabbath": 140

Now it must be frankly admitted that up to the present time we have not found any direct reference to pacification ceremonies at the time of the full-moon, but the significance attached in astrological texts to the period of opposition justifies us in assuming that such ceremonies actually existed.

On the other hand, the Lewy calendar study shows that business was suspended during intercalary šapattum periods, 141 and that religious festivals were associated with these periods. 142

On the basis of these facts, it would seem that the character and motivation both of the day, šapattum, and of the intercalary period, šapattum, appear to be such as are typical of transitional periods commonly observed in primitive and archaic community life, and partake of propitiatory and festive elements common to such periods. 143

140 The quoted title in my text is that of Jastrow's article in AJT, II (1898), pp. 312 ff., in which he takes the position just stated. The quotation following is Jastrow, in HBT (1914), p. 149. On his reference to "the period of opposition," see above, p. 29, the quotation from Enuma elish. For Jastrow's own evaluation and clarification of his earlier claims, see: "On נֶפֶל בַּשָּׁמַיִם נַעֲשֶׂה ('The Day After the Sabbath')," AJSL, XXX (Jan., 1914), p. 99 n. 4.

141 Lewy, HUCA, XVII (1942-43), pp. 49 ff.

142 Ibid., pp. 66, 71, 105, 110 ff.

143 See above, pp. 10 ff.
A Note on the Ugaritic Texts

It is of interest to observe that the extant Ugaritic texts make no mention of days similar to the "dangerous days" of Mesopotamia, and use no word that may be related to šapattu/šabattu.

There is mention, however, of a seven-day festival immediately preceding the new moon in a specific month the identity of which is not known. 144 Mid-month festivals are also mentioned. 145

As with other ancient near-eastern literature, 146 seven-day periods of time are widely attested in the Ugaritic texts. 147 In most instances, however, the seventh day event appears to mark a climax or the completion of a process in a narrative, and the text does not directly betray any cultic regard for the day as charged with supernatural power.


145 See: Ch. Virolleaud, in Ugaritica V (Paris, 1966), on Text 12, Rev. lines 3, 5; and on Text 13, Rev. lines 1, 3.

146 See: Hehn, Siebenzahl, pp. 40 ff.

Days of Restriction and the Primitive Experience of Time

Aside from the underlying motivations of fear which have already been shown to be apparent in primitive communal times of restriction, these seasons also tell us something about the primitive experience of time. They tell us, in the first place, that the problems of man's relationship to time were, for primitive peoples, matters of central concern. They tell us also that primitive man's apprehension of the experience of time was quite different from ours. They tell us something about the nature of that apprehension of time; and they tell us something about how primitive man sought to cope with and to solve the problems of his experience of time.

The importance to archaic man of the problems with which his experience of time confronted him is clearly evidenced by the centrality of seasonal festivals in his communal life, and by his careful attention

148 I use the word here and elsewhere to include not only simple peoples but also the cultured societies of early historical times.


150 See above, pp. 10 ff., and below, pp. 52 ff.
to the development and observance of cultic calendars. One chief difference between his view of time and ours seems to be this: whereas we abstract from our experience a notion of homogeneous time enveloping all events and relating events to one another in a significant sequence, archaic man appears not to have made such an abstraction; and, consequently, did not apprehend that unity of environment and experience, and that significance of sequential order, which are basic to our modes of thought. The ancients appear to have experienced time in terms of its content and qualities (actual or imagined) rather than as an embracing dimension of existence filled with content. Theirs was a direct involvement with events without the benefit of that detachment which subsequent reflection and abstraction have given to us. They possessed also some kind of awareness of lastingness in events of particular importance or value to their lives. Thus the ancients appear to have apprehended their experience of existence in two modes, concisely described by Gaster:

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151 See, e.g., above, pp. 16 ff., 26 ff.


Cf. the distinct difference in meaning, though with some overlapping, of the two chief Greek words for time, καιρός and χρόνος. καιρός, when used with reference to time, especially indicates specific critical, opportune, and periodic times, or a chronological sequence of events. The unique character of the moment is of particular importance. χρόνος, on the other hand, characteristically tends to indicate notions of time in the abstract. Although it frequently refers, like καιρός, to points or periods of time, it does so with an emphasis upon the length of the period rather than upon its specific content or character. See: Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (New (ninth) ed., revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, et al., completed 1940; Oxford, 1953), pp. 859 f., 2008 f. Cf. also, the Greek mythological and speculative concern with change, recurrence, and notions of an eternal ideal.
The essence of the topocosm\textsuperscript{153} is that it possesses a two-fold character, at once real and punctual, and ideal and durative, the former aspect being necessarily immerged in the latter, as a moment is immerged in time. If it is bodied forth as a real and concrete organism in the present, it exists also as an ideal, timeless entity, embracing but transcending the here and now in exactly the same way that the ideal America embraces but transcends the present generation of Americans.

In this light, the observance of what we would classify as being culturally the more primitive times of restriction—such as the unlucky and "dangerous days"—appears to be chiefly a response to a realization of punctual time in terms of the content and quality of its passing moments. The passingness of moments was balanced, however, with an experience also of their recurrence, again and again, in the cyclic processes of nature.\textsuperscript{154} Each recurrence of a moment brought with it all the powers and influences with which it had been invested by various numina in the past.

In the observance of what we would consider as being culturally the more advanced times of restriction—the seasonal festivals, for example—we see a communal response which, although based upon the same notions of time in terms of the quality of its events, emphasizes the awareness of duration and the durative power and significance of certain

\textsuperscript{153}The word is "formed (on the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm) from Greek \textit{topos}, 'place,' and \textit{cosmos}, 'world, order.'"—Gaster, \textit{Thespis}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{154}The word "nature" is, of course, an anachronism, for the ancients were also quite without an abstract concept of nature as a unity.
events. 155 Since, to the ancients, the events of supreme durative significance and power were those initiated by the gods in the "Great Time" of creation, the seasonal festivals characteristically prescribed a ritual repetition of the primordial acts of the gods, thus continuing the durative power and influence of these events in the ongoing life of the community. 156

Days of restriction and festal celebration were frequently intercalary days, or days closely associated with intercalary periods. 157 This is no mere coincidence. The two ideas are closely related. In a sense, intercalary days are "outside of time." The same is true of sacred time. In sacred time the durative aspect of existence is experienced and the punctual aspect essentially eliminated. The suspension of human activity at such times is a universal practice and would seem to be a natural and logical mode of attunement with such periods. 158

A different motive, but similar logic, is seen in the restriction of human activity on unlucky and dangerous days. Since time was experienced so largely in terms of content, these days could be robbed of their normal content by such restriction, and, to that extent, they, too, ceased to exist.

155 For the ancient pagans, events with durative quality were mythologized. In Israel, they were historicized. See below, pp. 159 ff., 165 ff.

156 See below, pp. 64 ff.

157 For examples and a thorough discussion of the significance of this fact, see Gaster, Thespis, pp. 9 ff.

Thus the evil forces threatening disaster on these days could not exercise their powers.

It thus appears that, except for such market days as escaped the accretions of religiously-motivated tabus, the observance of primitive days of restriction constituted a logical and practical religious solution to the problems of man's relationship to time as then apprehended—the chief of these problems being (1) how to avoid the disastrous possibilities of the fleeting and recurring moments of time, and (2) how to partake of the durative and significant aspect of existence. The more primitive forms of days of restriction represented adjustment primarily to the punctual aspect of time and the solution of the first problem; the more advanced forms represented primarily an attempted attunement with time's durative aspect and the solution of the second problem. This understanding of primitive days of restriction would seem to account, in large measure, both for the universality of such observances and for their central importance in primitive community life.

Some Implications for the Biblical Sabbath

In this representative survey of days of restriction among primitive and ancient peoples, it has been shown (1) that such observances of one kind or another are quite universal; (2) that, apart from the primitive market institution, their primary original motivation is fear and superstition; (3) that such days tend to develop into stable and worthy social
institutions serving both religious and social ends; (4) that with the
development of civilization there is a tendency toward accounting
rationally for such observances--first, by pointing out their supposed
origin; second, by delineating their purpose and benefits; 159 (5) that
such days are directly related to primitive concepts of time and constitute attempts to solve the problems of human frailty in relationship to
time; (6) that many days of restriction are tied to the cyclic processes
of nature--especially to the lunations of the moon and to the recurring
seasons--and to the intercalary days of artificial calendars; and (7) that
in different places, but especially, perhaps, in Mesopotamia, there was
a marked tendency toward the recognition of seven-day periods of time
with the last day of each such period being a tabu day.

While it is not a purpose of this study to establish the precise origin
of the Sabbath, it does seem relevant, at this point, to say that in the
light of (1) these observations on primitive days of restriction, (2) the
fact that the Bible nowhere attempts to account for the original establish-
ment of the Sabbath as an institution in human society, 160 and (3) the a-
chievements of the ancient Hebrews in transforming other traditional
institutions into vehicles for expressing and preserving their new re-
ligious insights; 161 it seems only reasonable to conclude that the origin
of the Sabbath must have been similar to that of some other days of re-

159 Cf. above, pp. 12 ff., 18 ff.

160 Gen. 2:1-4a says nothing about man observing the day; and Ex.
16 assumes the existence of the Sabbath before the Decalogue was pro-
claimed on Mt. Sinai, but says nothing about the origin of the day.
striction,162 and that whatever distinctions be rightly attributed to the biblical Sabbath institution they must be accounted for largely through the unique ideology which the creators of the Bible subsequently built into that institution. It should also be noted, however, that even in the creation of an ideology for the Sabbath, the Hebrews were but bringing to a higher degree of development—and excellence, if we choose so to consider it—a tendency observed elsewhere, especially in ancient Greece.163

Finally, anticipating the remaining chapters of this study, it seems appropriate here merely to assert that while at several points the biblical ideology of the Sabbath appears to rest upon such underlying presuppositions as are characteristic of ancient near eastern culture generally, in their developed form, the themes associated with the Sabbath appear also to be, to a large degree, a protest against ancient near eastern culture in general, and against certain implications of other days of restrictions in particular.

162 Most modern studies assume this, but they differ considerably in their account of the biblical material. This wide disagreement on the precise nature of the Sabbath's antecedents only points up the fact that if the creators of the Bible had any idea of what that origin actually was, they did a good job of eliminating all clear traces of it. They were, apparently, not interested in the social origins of the Sabbath; they were profoundly interested in the ideology with which they had invested it.

163 See above, pp. 12 ff.
II. THE SABBATH AND ISRAEL'S DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE OF TIME

Enuma elish and the Cosmological Orientation
of the Ancient Near East

It is a curious but significant fact that what we call the creation narratives of the ancient Near East were, to those who produced them, not primarily intended as factual accounts of, or even as serious conclusions about, the actual origin of the universe. These ancient cultures produced numerous accounts of the world's genesis, but the physical processes of origin did not constitute the point of central interest or concern in these stories. This is indicated, first of all, by the fact that in the same culture different—even contradictory—stories of creation were apparently equally accepted and preserved, side by side, without embarrassment. Of more consequence, however, to our understanding of these ancient tales and the peoples out of which they sprang is the fact that when the stories themselves are analyzed, with particular attention given to the elements of emphasis and climax, and, wherever possible, to their cultic use, other more primary motives for these stories become

164 Cf. John A. Wilson, "Egypt: The Nature of the Universe," in BP, pp. 59 ff; Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, pp. 61 ff. The inclusion of two somewhat contradictory creation stories in our Bible (Gen. 1 and 2) is a prime illustration. Cf. also: Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia: The Cosmos as a State," BP, p. 195: "Enuma elish accounts in two ways for the creation of the sky. First, the sky comes into being in the person of the god Anu, whose name means sky and who is the god of the sky; then, again, the sky is fashioned by the wind-god out of half of the body of the sea."
clearly evident.

Thus, Enuma elish,\textsuperscript{165} which E. A. Speiser has characterized as "the most significant expression of the religious literature of Mesopotamia,"\textsuperscript{166} and which Alexander Heidel asserts to be "the principal source of our knowledge of Mesopotamian cosmology,"\textsuperscript{167} is acknowledged by Heidel to be "not primarily a creation story at all."\textsuperscript{168}

On the basis of the relatively large amount of space devoted to Marduk himself, as compared to "the brief and meager account of Marduk's acts of creation," Heidel concludes that\textsuperscript{169}

in its present form, Enuma elish is first and foremost a literary monument in honor of Marduk as the champion of the gods and the creator of heaven and earth. Its prime object is to offer cosmological reasons for Marduk's advancement from the position as chief god of Babylon to that of head of the entire Babylonian pantheon, ..., the story of the creation of the universe, was added not so much for the sake of giving an account of how all things came into being, but chiefly because it further served to enhance the glory of Marduk and helped to justify his claim to sovereignty over all things visible and invisible.


Although the text is conventionally known as the "Babylonian Epic of Creation," (italics mine), from the standpoint both of its theme and its function, its classification as a \textit{myth} would seem to be more accurate.

\textsuperscript{166}\textit{ANET}, p. 60 bc.


\textsuperscript{168}\textit{Heidel}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{169}\textit{Heidel}, p. 11.
Heidel recognizes also a secondary motive:170

Next to the purpose of singing the praises of Marduk comes the desire, on the part of the Babylonian priests, who were responsible for the composition of this epic, to sing the praises of Babylon, the city of Marduk, and to strengthen her claim to supremacy over all the cities of the land. . . . Our epic is thus not only a religious treatise but also a political one.

That in Enuma elish there is an emphasis upon the glorification of Marduk and Babylon substantially stronger than that upon creation is obvious. What Heidel appears to overlook, in spite of his nearly two pages of discussion on "'Enu.ma .:e li.sh' and the New Year's Festival,"171 is the supreme importance of the cultic function of this myth in this festival for determining its significance and purpose in the culture which produced it, and for determining the significance of the emphases upon Marduk and Babylon.

Enuma elish was not merely a pious or patriotic paean of praise to God and country. It was a cult-myth and constituted an integral part of the Mesopotamian akitu or New Year's Festival which Svend Aage Pallis, in his thoroughgoing study of the institution, 172 describes as "the principal religious festival of Babylon . . . celebrated for about

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171 Heidel, pp. 16 f.

two thousand years in Babylonia from the earliest Sumerian period until the establishment of Persian rule in Mesopotamia. Henri Frankfort says of the akitu festival that it "appears as the confluence of every current of religious thought, as the expression of every shade of religious feeling. . . . must be considered the most complete expression of Mesopotamian religiosity."

During this festival, which lasted for eleven or twelve days, Enuma elish was recited twice. Pictures on the gates of Ashur's akitu temple show "one of the chief scenes in Enuma elish, Marduk's contest with Tiamat." Because of this close connection between the Enuma elish myth and the akitu festival, the myth itself must be interpreted in the light of the culture which produced and utilized it.


174 Kingship and the Gods, p. 313.

175 Fallis, pp. 297 f.; Heidel, pp. 16 f.

176 The festival reached its climax in an especially holy temple known as bit akitu. Fallis, pp. 110 f.

177 Ibid., p. 298.

The cult-myth has been shown by Gaster to be an essential ingredien
to the seasonal rituals of archaic man. Of the universality and
general purpose of these rituals, Gaster says: 179

All over the world, from time immemorial, it has been the custom to usher in years and seasons by means of public ceremonies. These, however, are neither arbitrary nor haphazard, nor are they mere diversions. On the contrary, they follow everywhere a more or less uniform and consistent pattern and serve a distinctly functional purpose. They represent the mechanism whereby, at a primitive level, Society seeks periodically to renew its vitality and thus ensure its continuance. . . . The renewal, however, is not effected by grace of superior Providence nor by any automatic Law of Nature, for of such the primitive has no conception. Rather has it to be fought for and won by the concerted effort of men. Accordingly, a regular program of activities is established which, performed periodically under communal sanction, will furnish the necessary replenishment of life and vitality.

Basic to the entire procedure is the conception that what is in turn eclipsed and revitalized is not merely the human community of a given area or locality but the total corporate unit of all elements, animate and inanimate alike, which together constitute its distinctive character and 'atmosphere.'

It was a function of the seasonal ritual with its accompanying myth to translate the durative power and acts of the gods into terms of punctual event so that human involvement and participation with the gods in the essential life processes would be possible. 180 A consideration of certain

179 Thespis, pp. 3 f.

180 We are here dealing with religious ceremony in a pre-worship state, where the fundamental element is sacramental. Cf., e.g., the Catholic mass. For a helpful study of this aspect of the roots of religion, see: R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion (London, 1909), esp. chaps. i and ii. On the functions of myth and ritual, see: Theodor H. Gaster, "Myth and Story," Numen, Vol. I, Fasc. 3 (Sept., 1954), pp. 185 ff.
features of primitive experience and psychological outlook will help to further clarify the apparent logic involved.

In the first place, primitive man, immersed as he was in the very being of nature, experienced a deep sense of consubstantiality with everything he knew or imagined. This included what we call the universe of nature, society, and all those personalized unseen forces—some friendly, some unfriendly—which seemed to him to be a part of everything he saw. In short, "God and man, world and society" formed "a primordial community of being." Ancient man could not view his participation in the community of being objectively from the consciousness of that selfhood which we experience. His was an immediate experience of total involvement within the whole of things.

181 Those powers the fear of which, it has already been shown, tended to generate times of restriction. See Chapter I.


183 Cf.: H. and H. A. Frankfort, BP, p. 12: "The ancients... saw man always as part of society, and society as imbedded in nature and dependent upon cosmic forces. For them nature and man did not stand in opposition and did not, therefore, have to be apprehended by different modes of cognition... natural phenomena were regularly conceived in terms of human experience and... human experience was conceived in terms of cosmic events. We touch here upon a distinction between the ancients and us which is of the utmost significance."; and p. 20: "Primitive man cannot withdraw from the presence of the phenomena... Hence the distinction between subjective and objective knowledge is meaningless to him. Meaningless, also is our contrast between reality and appearance. Whatever is capable of affecting mind, feeling, or will has thereby established its undoubted reality."

A second important feature of the mentality developed within archaic societies was a preoccupation with the problems of change and death. 184

This concern assisted in the development of the ability to distinguish the various elements of the "primordial community." Eric Voegelin

of any sharp distinction between the nature of different kinds of visible beings appears in the oldest myths, in which all kinds of objects, animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, appear as cognate with one another, with men, and with the gods." Cf. pp. 28 ff.

Raphael Patai, Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual (London, 1947), pp. 8 ff.; "The fact that primitive man draws no strict line of cleavage between the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms on the one hand, and human beings on the other, has been so often emphasized that it can be regarded as an anthropological commonplace."

On consubstantiality in Egypt down to as late as 1300 B.C., see:

Cf. also: Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New Haven and London, 1944), esp. pp. 81 ff., where: "Its view i.e., of "the primitive mind" of life is a synthetic, not an analytical one. Life is not divided into classes and subclasses. It is felt as an unbroken continuous whole which does not admit of any clean-cut and trenchant distinctions."

puts it this way: 185

Consubstantiality notwithstanding, there is the experience of separate existence in the stream of being, and the various existences are distinguished by their degrees of durability. One man lasts while others pass away, and he passes away while others last on. All human beings are outlasted by the society of which they are members, and societies pass while the world lasts. And the world is outlasted by the gods, but is perhaps even created by them. Under this aspect, being exhibits the lineaments of a hierarchy of existence, from the ephemeral lowliness of man to the everlastingness of the gods. 186

Out of this growing awareness of a hierarchy of existence, there evolved, it appears, with good primitive logic, the notion of the possibility of conscious action toward the attunement of human life, which is short, with those categories of existence which are lasting (society, the cosmos, and the gods) in order thus to maintain a sense of significant participation in reality, and to assist in the maintenance of the very order of reality.

The most obvious and powerful order inviting such attunement is the world of natural phenomena, through which the gods and, to a large extent, their wills and desires, are "revealed" to the consciousness of men.

185 Voegelin, pp. 3 f.


Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?
The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find.
When the gods created mankind,
Death for mankind they set aside,
Life in their own hands retaining.
ness of men. Indeed, the order of the cosmos, and the demand for human life to be attuned thereto, are easily understood to have been decreed by the gods from the beginning of things. The "natural" logic of this "revelation" is succinctly expressed by Mircea Eliade:

The world stands displayed in such a manner that, in contemplating it, religious man discovers the many modalities of the sacred, and hence of being. Above all, the world exists, it is there, and it has a structure; it is not a chaos but a cosmos, hence it presents itself as creation, as a work of the gods. The cosmic rhythms manifest order, harmony, permanence, fecundity. The cosmos as a whole is an organism at once real, living, and sacred; it simultaneously reveals the modalities of being and of sacrality. Ontophany and hierophany meet.

So, apparently, arose the myth of cosmological order being decreed by the gods as the pattern for earthly order. This myth constituted the

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188 The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 116 ff.

189 Voegelin (pp. 5 f.) defines the cosmological myth as "the symbolization of society and its order as an analogue of the cosmos and its order... letting vegetative rhythms and celestial revolutions function as models for the structural and procedural order of society." According to Voegelin, "the cosmological myth, as far as we know, is generally the first symbolic form created by societies when they rise above the level of tribal organization." He cites the Chou dynasty of China and early Andean civilization as examples "where Babylonian or Egyptian influences are improbable." He also points out that despite this basic orientation there are distinctive variations of the myth and its associated social order in the different cultures. -- p. 14.

For illustrations of this analogical mode of thought in the ancient Near East, see: Eric Burrows, "Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion," The Labyrinth, ed. S. H. Hooke (London, 1935), pp. 43 ff.;
motivating center for the organization of human life and thought throughout the time of known history down to the time of the Hebrew prophets and Greek philosophers.\footnote{190}

It is important to note that while the order experienced by man was thought of as being modeled after the "heavenly" order and decreed by the gods, in reality what occurred was that ancient man, apparently without being fully aware of the fact, saw and interpreted the order of the cosmos and the will of the gods in terms of his own experience.

This fact is especially evident in the obvious incorporation of historical events into the primeval acts and decrees of the gods and the consequent

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\footnote{190} Cf. H. and H. A. Frankfort, "The Emancipation of Thought from Myth," in BP, pp. 235 ff., where: "The differences between the Egyptian and Mesopotamian manners of viewing the world are very far-reaching. Yet the two peoples agreed in the fundamental assumptions that the individual is part of society, that society is embedded in nature, and that nature is but the manifestation of the divine. This doctrine was, in fact, universally accepted by the peoples of the ancient world with the single exception of the Hebrews."--p. 241. Cf. Voegelin, pp. 13 ff.
evolution of the myths. Ancient man experienced being—reality and significance—through attributing the initiative of his own actions to his gods and conceiving of himself as an imitator of the gods. Only in this way, it seems, could he assure himself of support from the ultimate powers of the universe. He was extremely hesitant in exercising his own volition consciously and in assuming the responsibility which would therein be implied.

A fourth feature of primitive psychology relevant here is the concept of the effective power of the spoken word and of the

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ritual act which imitated the primeval paradigmatic gestures of the gods. The reasonableness of this concept, especially in the light of the notion of consubstantiality, is set forth by Patai:

Homogeneity in spiritual quality means not only a structural but also a functional similarity. This essential similarity between man and the other parts of nature implies not only a similarity in reactions and feelings, but also the possibility of influencing all parts of nature by the same means and methods that have proved successful in social intercourse among human beings.

The failure of ancient man to grasp that concept of homogeneous time which is commonplace for us has already been indicated. A similar failure seems apparent for his notions about space. The ancients appear to have experienced both time and space in "pieces," as it were, with "interruptions, breaks," between the "pieces." That is, "some parts . . . were qualitatively different from others." These qualitative differences led the ancients to relegate both the moments of time and the parts of space into two major categories: the sacred and the profane. It was through a sense of relatedness to the sacred place and the sacred time that archaic man experienced real existence—participated


195 Patai, pp. 11 f.

in being and quenched his "ontological thirst." For him, life in profane space and time had little or no genuine significance. Sacred space and sacred time were the windows through which he communicated with the divine world and gained meaning for his life. It was therefore to sacred space and sacred time that his thought and life were primarily oriented.

197 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 74.
I am fully aware that not only such terms but the abstractions themselves are ours—not those of ancient man. Still, such terms seem appropriate in an attempt, such as this, to translate ancient experience into terms that are meaningful to us. For a vigorous defense of this position, see Paul Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality ("Phoenix Books"; Chicago, 1955), in which, p. 9: "Man is by nature a philosopher, because he inescapably asks the question of being. He does it in myth and epic, in drama and poetry, in the structure and the vocabulary of any language." Cf. also the following:

Eliade, Cosmos and History, p. 3: "Obviously, the metaphysical concepts of the archaic world were not always formulated in theoretical language; but the symbol, the myth, the rite, express, on different planes and through the means proper to them, a complex system of coherent affirmations about the ultimate reality of things, a system that can be regarded as constituting a metaphysics. . . . If one goes to the trouble of penetrating the authentic meaning of an archaic myth or symbol, one cannot but observe that this meaning shows a recognition of a certain situation in the cosmos and that, consequently, it implies a metaphysical position. It is useless to search archaic languages for the terms so laboriously created by the great philosophical traditions: there is every likelihood that such words as 'being,' 'nonbeing,' 'real,' 'unreal,' 'becoming,' 'illusory,' are not to be found in the language of the Australians or of the ancient Mesopotamians. But if the word is lacking the thing is present; only it is 'said'—that is, revealed in a coherent fashion—through symbols and myths."

H. and H. A. Frankfort, BP, pp. 15 f.: "The imagery of myth . . . is nothing less than a carefully chosen cloak for abstract thought. . . . Myth, then, is to be taken seriously, because it reveals a significant, if unverifiable, truth—we might say a metaphysical truth."


The ultimate in man's experience of the sacred has characteristically been associated with creation. This was certainly true in the ancient Near East. Eliade has indicated something of the logic which probably accounts for this association:

Any orientation implies acquiring a fixed point. It is for this reason that religious man has always sought to fix his abode at the 'center of the world.' If the world is to be lived in, it must be founded—and no world can come to birth in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of profane space. The discovery or projection of a fixed point—the center—is equivalent to the creation of the world.

The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence it founds the world in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world.

As Eliade here indicates, the most sacred place of a given culture or community was typically conceived to be the center of the world at which the creator-god first vanquished chaos and from which his power was manifested and order established. This "center" was sometimes called the "navel" or "omphalos" of the world. In the mythology, it was regularly conceived as a hill or mountain; it was associated with a city and a temple; it was considered to be the abode of the god(s) and the meeting place of heaven and earth; hence also a chief place or means of communication between the gods and men. By extension, every sacred city, every temple or palace became a "center" of the world. From this center divine influence and power went out to impart order and significance to the

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community within its orbit. Consequently all space brought under the
dominion of this order became sacred space. 200

In the same way, the sacred time of religious rituals was conceived
as coinciding 'with the mythical time of the 'beginning.' Through repeti-
tion of the cosmogonic act, concrete time . . . [was] projected into myth-
ical time, *in illo tempore* when the foundation of the world occurred." 201

Thus, "by the transformation of profane space into a transcendent
space (the center)" and "also by the transformation of concrete time into
mythical time," were "the reality and the enduringness" 202 of things as-
sured. It was this transformation year by year that the great seasonal

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A. J. Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel
of the Earth," Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen,
n. s. XVII, 1 (Amsterdam, 1917), a work citing many biblical as well as
extra-biblical examples.; Patai, pp. 85 ff., 130 ff. See also: John A.
Wilson, ed. and trans., "Creation and Myths of Origins" (Egyptian), in
ANET, pp. 3 ff.; and E. A. Speiser, trans., "The Creation Epic" (Mesopo-
tamian), in ANET, pp. 68 ff (Tablet VI, 50 ff.).

The illogic of many different cities all claiming the distinction of
being the "center" appears to have caused the ancients no concern. Through
the miracle of ritual for the consecration of sacred space, whatever cult-
center a community was related to could be conceived as the sacred primeval
center of the world and sanctified by act of the gods at creation. Says
Eliade in this connection: "Naturally, the consecration of the center occurs
in a space qualitatively different from profane space. Through the paradox
of rite, every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world."
John A. Wilson, in ANET, p. 8a: "Every important cult-center of Egypt
asserted its primacy by the dogma that it was the site of creation."


202 Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, pp. 20 f., et passim.
festivals were thought to effect; and in these festivals the myths of creation played an indispensable role, as stated by Gaster:203

The successive leases of its life [i.e., of the "topocosm" (see above, p. 45 n. 153)] therefore exist not only in the reality of the present but also in a kind of infinite continuum of which the present is but the current phase. Accordingly, the seasonal ceremonies which mark the beginnings and ends of those leases possess at once a punctual and a transcendent aspect. In the former, they serve as effective mechanisms for the expression of immediate circumstances and the satisfactions of immediate needs. In the latter, however, they are substantiations, in terms of the present, of situations which are intrinsically durative and sempiternal.

The function of Myth (so obstinately misunderstood) is to translate the real into terms of the ideal, the punctual into terms of the durative and transcendental. This it does by projecting the procedures of ritual to the plane of ideal situations which they are then taken to substantize and reproduce. Myth is therefore an essential ingredient in the pattern of the seasonal ceremonies.

In this context, Myth is not... a mere outgrowth of Ritual, an artistic or literary interpretation imposed later upon the sacral acts; nor is it merely... the spoken correlative of 'things done.' Rather is it the expression of a parallel aspect inherent in them from the beginning; and its function within the scheme of the seasonal pattern is to translate the punctual into terms of the durative, the real into those of the ideal.

203 Thespis, p. 5. The nature and significance of the festivals are further discussed on pp. 6 ff., 34 ff., 49 ff. For other discussions, see: Eliade, Cosmos and History, pp. 5, 20, 51 ff., et passim; Idem, Myth and Reality, pp. 1, 8 ff., 41 ff.; Idem, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, pp. 15 ff.; Idem, Patterns, pp. 410 ff.; Idem, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 68 ff., 85 ff., 104 ff. (Note the conflicting senses in which Gaster and Eliade use the terms "duration/durative" but with similar concepts of time and the functions of the festivals. Cf. Eliade, Cosmos and History, p. 35 with Gaster, Thespis, p. 5. In this study, I have followed Gaster's terminology at this point.) Additional discussions are: S. G. F. Brandon, Time and Mankind, p. 23 et passim; Idem, History, Time and Deity (Manchester and New York, 1965), pp. 13 ff.; Idem, "The Ritual Technique of Salvation in the Ancient Near East," in Brandon, ed., The Saviour God (Manchester, 1963), pp. 17 ff.; Childs, pp. 18 ff.,
In the light of this functional use of *Enuma elish* in the rituals designed to bring into the present experience of the community the reality, the power, the significance, and, above all, the renewal and continuation—the durative quality—of that divine power first manifested in "creation," we can better appreciate the central emphasis of that myth upon the creator-god, Marduk, and his city and temple—the "center" ("navi") of the world; the place of the meeting of heaven and earth—from which the divine power and order were conceived to radiate. 

It is thus evident that a basic motivation for both the myth and its associated festival resulted from the ancients' tenuous experience of time. The ritual expressed a concern for the continuance of satisfactions for the immediate needs of life; it expressed also a concern for the experience of significance in durative time. Both of these concerns are clearly reflected in *Enuma elish* at the beginning of the final main


204 As important, perhaps, as the theme of creation (and closely associated with it, both in the myth and in the festival) is that of the decreeing of the destinies. On this, see: Pallis, pp. 186, 189 ff., 296 f.; Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 325 f., 331 ff.; Hooke, *The Origins of Early of Early Semitic Rituals*, pp. 18 f.; S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (London, 1963), pp. 97 f., 110, 113 ff.

section in which the fifty names of Marduk are proclaimed:

Let us then proclaim his fifty names:

'He whose ways are glorious, whose deeds are likewise,
Marduk, as Anu, his father, called him from his birth;
Who provides grazing and drinking places, enriches their stalls,
Who with the flood-storm, his weapon, vanquished the detractors,
(And) who the gods, his fathers, rescued from distress.
Truly, the Son of the Sun, most radiant of gods is he.
In his brilliant light may they walk forever!
On the people he brought forth, endowed with li [fe],
The service of the gods hd imposed that these may have ease.
Creation, destruction, deliverance, grace--
Shall be by his command. They shall look up to him!

What is of utmost relevance to this study is the manner in which
these problems of time--better, perhaps, of the ravages of time--were
resolved. We have already seen that they were solved through ritual.
It remains to be pointed out that, in the last analysis, they were solved
largely through a renewed and strengthened spatial orientation. As far
as the creation theme in Enuma elish is concerned, its crowning climactic
achievement is the building of the city of Babylon ("Gate of God") with its

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206 Enuma elish, VI, 121-132 (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 69c; cf.
Heidel, Babylonian Genesis, p. 51 f). To be sure, much, if not all, of the
passage refers to the benefits Marduk has bestowed upon the gods and to
their adoration of him. Even so, it is precisely such paradigmatic gestures
which the community, in the seasonal rites, appropriates to itself. Here,
clearly, the celebration of Marduk's satisfaction of mundane needs (in punctual
time) is immediately followed by the celebration of his bestowal of
everlasting (durative) grace: "In his brilliant light may they walk forever."

207 For an analytical summary, see Gaster, Thespis, pp. 6 ff.,
where four major elements are distinguished: (1) Mortification, (2) Purgation,
(3) Invigoration, and (4) Jubilation. Cf. Eliade, Cosmos and History,
pp. 35 ff., interpreting the rites as "the abolition of time," i.e., "of profane time." Cf. Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, pp. 23 ff., 34 ff.
sacred tower and temple—a place to serve as the connecting link between heaven and earth through which divine beneficences are to be imparted to man. The ritual experience of participation in the durative mythical time of "creation" leads, at its climax, to a sense of secure relationship to a secure and sacred fixed point to which the community (indeed, the civilization) is ultimately oriented, and from which the fateful decrees for the ensuing year are issued. It was thus largely through a renewed assurance of the continued security and duration of a point in space (established by the god(s) in primordial creative activity) to which they were attuned that the people of ancient Mesopotamia gained for themselves a sense of security in relationship to time. There is, actually, a significant juxtaposition of these two themes—time and space.

208 *Enuma elish*, VI, 47-66 (Speiser, trans., ANET, pp. 68d, 69a; Heidel, pp. 48 ff.).


210 Cf. above, pp. 63 f.; Eliade, Myths, Dreams etc., pp. 17 f.

211 See above, p. 66 n. 204.

212 i.e., for the ensuing year—their new lease on time.

A similar ultimate orientation to space, and the solution of the problems of time in terms of space, characterized ancient Greek civilization, as pointed out by Henri Marc Yaker, "Motifs of the Biblical View of Time," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1956), where, pp. 10 f.: "Most of pervading Greek mythology was an attempt to find harmony between recurrence and change. But in all cases a 'space mentality' determined the final harmony."

213 I have assumed the reader is aware that my use of the word "space" has, throughout this discussion, referred not to abstract or actual space,
--in the closing lines of Enuma elish: 214

May he vanquish Tiamat; may her life be strait and short!
Into the future of mankind, when days have grown old,
May she recede without cease and stay away forever.
Because he created the spaces and fashioned the firm ground,
Father Enlil called his name 'Lord of the Lands.'

A final witness to the ultimacy of spatial orientation in cosmologically-oriented societies is the emphasis upon the use of images of the gods in the rites of the cult, 215 a practice which to the Hebrew prophets became a major symbol of the religion of the pagans, and a major target for their contempt and denunciation. 216

The Epic of Gilgamesh and the Problem of Time in the Quest for Personal Significance

Ritual, by its very nature, emphasizes the social—the collective—aspects of human life. The great seasonal festivals of ancient cultures were obviously designed to enlist a communal response, as is indicated but to qualified space—that is, to parts of the material world which fill space.

Much the same principal applies to my use of the word "time."
See above, pp. 43 ff., 61.

214 Enuma elish, VII, 132-136 (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 72bc); cf. Heidel, p. 59. Here, plainly, confidence in the future is based upon Marduk's conquest of space.

215 On the use of images in the akitu festival, see Pallis, pp. 136 ff., 197 n. 1, 264, 304.

216 Such denunciations are frequent and well-known. See, e.g., Isa. 44:9 ff.; Jer. 10:1 ff.
in these lines from Enuma elish:217

'Most exalted be the Son, our avenger;
Let his sovereignty be surpassing, having no rival.
May he shepherd the black-headed ones, his creatures.
To the end of days, without forgetting, let them acclaim his ways, ...

Their support they shall furnish, shall tend their sanctuaries. ...
Without fail let them support their gods!
Their hands let them improve, build their shrines,
Let the black-headed wait on their gods. ...

The strength and duration of ancient Mesopotamian culture218 and of the akitu festival219 suggest that for most participants in that culture the socially-shared experience of ritual attunement with the durative cycles of nature and the durative mythological acts of the gods was an adequate solution to the problems of the human encounter with time. The popular Epic of Gilgamesh,220 however, informs us (as do also other


218 Cf. E. A. Speiser, in Robert C. Dentan, ed., The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East (New Haven, 1955), pp. 40 f.: "Mesopotamian civilization reaches back to remote prehistoric times--an indeterminate number of centuries prior to 3,000 B.C.--and it survives as an active force until Hellenistic times." "The underlying civilization enjoyed substantial uniformity throughout its long career."

219 See above, pp. 52 ff., ref. n. 172.

documents that there were those for whom such collective attunement with the cosmos was not adequate.

The central theme of this narrative is Gilgamesh's quest for lasting personal significance in the face of time's inevitable demands. From the standpoint of cosmological attunement, Gilgamesh should have been content with his personal fortune. He was two-thirds god, and he reigned as king over a sacred city graced with a temple "Which no future king, no man, can equal." But Gilgamesh was wiser than his generation. He knew as did others that

Only the gods [live] forever under the sun. As for mankind, numbered are their days. but with his keener insight he saw, as apparently most others did not, that of men, "Whatever they achieve is but the wind!"

Under the influence of an intense realization of this fact, Gilgamesh sets out to overcome the handicap. His early attempts to conquer time

\[221\text{See: Jacobsen, BP, pp. 227 ff.; Brandon, Man and His Destiny, pp. 74 ff., 95 ff. For Egypt, cf. John A. Wilson, BP, pp. 103 ff.}

\[222\text{Gilgamesh, I, ii (Speiser, trans., in ANET, p. 73d). The text is also found in Heidel, Gilgamesh.}

\[223\text{Gilgamesh, I, i (ANET, p. 73c).}

\[224\text{Ibid.}

\[225\text{Ibid., III, iv, Old Babylonian Version (ANET, p. 79d).}

\[226\text{Ibid.}
take the form of heroic action for the sake of lasting fame: 227

'Should I fall, I shall have made me a name:
"Gilgamesh"—they will say—"against fierce Huwawa
Has fallen!" (Long) after
My offspring has been born in my house."

'I will cause the lands to hear!
My hand I will poise and will fell the cedars,
A name that endures will I make for me.'

When, however, the friend who has shared his exploits dies, Gilgamesh finds fame quite an inadequate compensation for life: 228

For Enkidu, his friend, Gilgamesh
Weeps bitterly, as he ranges over the steppe:
'When I die, shall I not be like Enkidu?'

Thereupon, Gilgamesh launches upon his famous but ill-fated quest for immortality. When he comes at last to sense the futility of his quest he sits down and weeps, and from his soul pours forth a bitter complaint expressing the keen sense of disillusionment to which his quest for personal significance in time had led him: 229

'For whom is being spent the blood of my heart?
I have not attained a boon for myself.
For the earth-lion have I effected a boon!
And now the tide will bear (it) twenty leagues away!
I found that which has been placed as a sign for me:
I shall withdraw,
And leave the boat on the shore!'

227 Ibid., and also III, v (ANET, p. 80a).

228 Ibid., IX, i (ANET, p. 88b).

229 Ibid., XI, 294 ff. (ANET, pp. 96 f.).
With his boatman, Gilgamesh returns to his place under the sun—his home city, Uruk—there to enjoy as he can the things of space.\textsuperscript{230} Gilgamesh says to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman:

'Go up, Urshanabi, walk on the ramparts of Uruk.
Inspect the base terrace, examine its brickwork,
If its brickwork is not of burnt brick,
And if the Seven Wise Ones laid not its foundation!'

and to publish to others his experience of enlightenment:\textsuperscript{231}

He who saw everything to the ends of the land,
Who all things experience, considered all! . . .
The hidden he saw, laid bare the undisclosed.
He brought report of before the Flood,
Achieved a long journey, weary and worn.
And his toil he engraved on a stone stela.

The epic witnesses, in eloquent terms to the cul-de-sac to which, in the minds of its own thinkers, cosmologically-oriented civilization finally led. With historical events of importance relegated to the realm of the gods through myth \textsuperscript{232} and man's life seen as dependent upon his imitating the gods in harmony with the repetitive cycles of nature, there was no provision for man's attainment of lasting significance for his own life.

The purpose of his life, in Mesopotamian thought, was, in the words of Marduk in \textit{Enuma elish}: "the service of the gods that they might be at ease!"\textsuperscript{233}

\textsuperscript{230}Ibid., XI, 304 ff. (ANET, p. 97). The passage is essentially a repetition of lines from I, i (ANET, p. 73c); the literary form thus emphasizing the circular pattern of ancient thought.

\textsuperscript{231}Ibid., I, i, 1 ff. (ANET, p. 73c). There are several lacunae in this passage for which words or portions of words supplied by the translator. For the sake of appearance, I did not indicate them in the quotation.

\textsuperscript{232}See above, pp. 59 f., with note 191.

\textsuperscript{233}\textit{Enuma elish}, VI, 8 (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 68b).
Some Distinctives of the Egyptian Cosmological Orientation

The long stability of the Mesopotamian cosmological orientation and the nature of the extant texts exhibiting that orientation make it particularly suitable for illustrating the various elements of such orientation on a general level—especially for the ancient Near East. Nevertheless, there are recognizable differences in the character of cosmological orientation from civilization to civilization.

In Egypt we find all of the elements of cosmological orientation already surveyed. Its creation myths are contradictory, and obviously have as primary purposes the glorification of gods and cities. The sense of consubstantiality is strong; political order is conceived as analogous with cosmic order; and there are seasonal festivals with their associated myths for attunement and renewal, with their implications for the experience of punctual and durative time and for notions concerning the power and efficacy of ritual act and spoken word.


237 See Wilson, BP, pp. 71 ff.

238 See Voegelin, pp. 63 ff.; 88 ff.

The pyramids and mortuary practices witness to the ancient Egyptian concern with the experience of lasting and passing. Important historical events were mythologized. There is the emphasis upon the "center"--the primeval hill and city founded by the god(s), which, along with the pyramids, witnesses to an ultimate orientation to space for the conquest of time. Lastly, a disillu00.pngsionment not unsimilar to that in Mesopotamia is reflected in certain Egyptian literature.

Among the distinctive variations of cosmological orientation found in Egypt, of importance to this study are several which seem to have

240 For studies on the Egyptian concern with time, see Brandon, Time and Mankind, pp. 27 ff.; Idem, Man and His Destiny, pp. 31 ff.; Idem, History, Time and Deity, pp. 18 ff.; Voegelin, pp. 57 ff.; Wilson, BP, pp. 103 ff.

241 The so-called "Memphite Theology" is a prime example. See Voegelin, pp. 88 ff.; Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 24 ff.

242 Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 152 ff. Cf. Brandon, Time and Mankind, p. 34; and see above, p. 64 n. 200 for other references. Cf. also Voegelin, pp. 89 ff.

243 One illustration (among many that could be cited) of texts pointing to place as symbol and evidence of eternity is this from Leyden Papyrus I, 350 (Wilson, trans., ANET, p. 369a): "All gods are three: Amon, Re, and Ptah, and there is no second to them.... Their cities are on earth, abiding forever: Thebes, Heliopolis, and Memphis unto eternity."


245 See: Frankfort, Kingship, pp. 4 ff.; Voegelin, pp. 63 ff.
carried within them potentialities for breaking the cosmological form of order--potentialities never realized in Egypt, but suggesting principles with which the Hebrews later succeeded in making such a break.

Along with the orientation to the mythical past, there was also in Egypt a very substantial interest in and orientation to the future and its possibilities for a solution to the problem of time. This interest was, however, attached chiefly to the prospect of a post-mortem existence and found expression almost exclusively in the mortuary cult, 246 around which so much of ancient Egyptian civilization revolved. The idea was developed wholly within the limits of cosmological thought. The mortuary ritual "performed on behalf of the deceased person, re-presented or re-enacted the sequence of actions which, it was believed, had originally led to the revivication of the dead Osiris." 247 Thus, "it was believed that the efficacy of a past event, namely, the resurrection of Osiris, could be perpetuated by repeated ritual re-enactment." 248 Furthermore, the importance of preserving the body, of equipping the grave with the physical accoutrements of life on earth, and of building for it an everlasting home


247 Brandon, History, Time and Deity, p. 21

248 Ibid., p. 22.
(mastaba or pyramid), demonstrates once again the tendency under cosmological order to solve the human problem of encounter with time in terms of space.

Of interest in the Egyptian speculations concerning the future are those lines in *A Dispute Over Suicide* in which the writer suggests that as a god in the life beyond he might be able to do more good than he is now able to accomplish during his earthly lifetime. Of more relevance to this study, however, is a passage suggestive of the messianic idea:

(Then) it is that a king will come, belonging to the south, Ameni, the triumphant, his name. He is the son of a woman of the land of Nubia; he is one born in Upper Egypt. He will take the [White] Crown; he will wear the Red Crown; he will unite the Two Mighty Ones; he will satisfy the Two Lords with what they desire. . . .

Rejoice, ye people of his time! The son of a man will make his name forever and ever. They who will incline toward evil and who plot rebellion have subdued their speech for fear of him. The Asiatics will fall to his sword, and the Libyans will fall to his flame. The rebels belong to his wrath, and the treacherous of heart to the awe of him. . . .

In the Memphite Theology we find an approach toward both a

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249 John A. Wilson, trans., in *ANET*, p. 407b.


rational monotheism and a rational cosmogony based upon ordered creative processes of thought, purpose, will and word on the part of the one high god, Ptah, who was before all else:252

It so happens that heart and tongue prevailed over all other members of the body, considering, that the heart is in every body, and the tongue is in every mouth, of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, and whatever else lives;

[Ptah prevails] by thinking [as heart] and commanding [as tongue] everything that he wishes.

The speculation, nevertheless, remained within the confines of Myth.

Ptah first created the other gods—"the traditional divine-cosmic forces."253

Then he made the cities and the districts of Egypt, established the shrines of the gods, and254

their bodies . . . so the gods entered into their bodies of every (kind of) wood, of every (kind of) stone, of every (kind of) clay, or anything which might grow upon him in which they had taken form. . . .

(Thus) it happened that it was said of Ptah: 'He who made all and brought the gods into being." . . . for everything came forth from him, nourishment and provisions, the offerings of the gods, and every good thing. Thus it was discovered and understood that his strength is greater than (that of the other) gods. And so Ptah was satisfied, after he had made everything, as well as all the divine order.

The cosmological and spatial emphases are plain.

252 Condensed by Voegelin (pp. 92 f.) on the basis of the translations by Wilson (ANET, p. 5), Frankfort (Kingship, p. 29), and Junker (Pyramidzeit, pp. 22 ff.).

253 Voegelin, p. 91.

254 Wilson, trans., in ANET, p. 5 (d, c).
There are also a number of hymns in which the movement toward monotheism is evident. In one of these, the high god is thought of as "being before the time and beyond the space of the world . . . invisible, formless, and nameless." Still, he is revealed in other gods and associated with space (places). "The differentiating movement does not break with polytheism; it preserves the experience of consubstantiality intact when it interprets the gods who are manifest in the world as participants in the one highest divine substance."

A noticeable distinction of the Egyptian experience is the emphasis placed upon the god-king. This also, as Gaster has pointed out, is closely related to the principles of lasting and passing—to the punctual and durative experiences of time. The king "symbolizes, or incarnates, . . . the living entity of his contemporaries" as a community. "The group, however, is (at least theoretically) perpetual and continuous. . . . That continuum likewise possesses its focus and quintessence, and this is the local genius—the god. The king is therefore . . . an avatar

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255 See ANET, pp. 365 ff.

256 Voegelin, p. 86. Egyptian text from Leyden Papyrus I 350, Wilson, trans., in ANET, pp. 268 f.

257 See quotation above, p. 75 n. 243.

258 Voegelin, pp. 86 f.

of a continuous, perpetual being; . . . as such he is its real incarnation."

Out of this initial identification of the king with "the perpetual local genius," it is but a small step to see him, as is so common in Egypt, as the incarnation also "of the perpetual cosmic powers, e.g., the sun."261

This godship of the king was in Egypt developed in a unique direction which closely relates (as has been shown by Voegelin) to Israel's experience of Yahweh.262 Voegelin has assembled several passages from the Pyramid Texts (greetings from the gods to the dead king in the beyond) establishing the Egyptian stance:263

This is my son, my first born . . .
This is my beloved with whom I have been satisfied.

This is my beloved, my son;
I have given the horizons to him, that he may be powerful over them like Herachte.

He lives, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, beloved of Re, living for ever.

261 Ibid., p. 270.
262 Voegelin, pp. 75 ff., 388 ff., et passim.
263 Voegelin, p. 75 (Pyramid Texts, 1 a-b, 4 a-b, 6, 207 c-d, 212 a-213 b). Voegelin includes several more passages, and, in a fine exposition (pp. 76 ff.) shows how "the order of society emanating from the Pharaoh is consubstantial with the order of the world created by the god, because in the Pharaoh is present the creative divinity itself. The Pharaonic order is the continuous renewal and re-enactment of the cosmic order from eternity."--p. 78.

The first-born sonship of the king illustrates the use of what Gaster calls "secondary symbols" by which the durative (ideal) is made punctual (actual)--that is, effective in the experience of man. On this, see: "Myth and Story," Numen, I, 3 (Sept., 1954), pp. 194 ff.
Thou art king with thy father Atum, thou art high with thy father Atum;
Thou appearest with thy father Atum, distress disappears.

Thou hast come into being, thou hast become high,
thou hast become content;
Thou hast become well in the embrace of thy father,
in the embrace of Atum.
Atum, let N. ascend to thee, enfold him in thy embrace,
for he is thy bodily son forever.

The characteristic order of cosmological thought is hierarchial,
but in one Egyptian text from the Middle Kingdom period, a thinker has
found within such thought a basis for the democratic idea.\textsuperscript{264}

'I repeat for you four good deeds which my own heart did
for me in the midst of the serpent-coil, in order to still evil. I did four good deeds within the portal of the horizon.

'I made the four winds that every man might breathe thereof
like his fellow in his time. That is (one) deed thereof.

'I made the great inundation that the poor man might have
rights therein like the great man. That is (one) deed thereof.

'I made every man like his fellow. I did not command that
they do evil, (but) it was their hearts which violated what I
had said. That is (one) deed thereof.

'I made their hearts to cease from forgetting the West, in
order that divine offerings might be given to the gods of the
nomes. That is (one) deed thereof.'

In Voegelin's words, "the conditio humana is here the organizing center
of thought, not the Pharaoh and his unified Egypt.\textsuperscript{265} The passage also

\textsuperscript{264}Wilson, trans., ANET, pp. 7 f. Cf. Voegelin, pp. 96 ff.

\textsuperscript{265}Voegelin, p. 97.
is unique in its insistence that "if there is evil in the world, it stems from the heart of man--a heart that violates the commands of the god." 266

At any of these points there might, conceivably, have developed a shift away from cosmological orientation toward what Voegelin calls a "macroanthropic symbolization" of society 267 such as was later developed in Greece through philosophical speculation and in Israel through religious reform. 268 But in Egypt, such a shift did not occur: the ties to "space"--i.e., to Myth 269--were too strong. The stance is concisely stated in these lines from the divine savior-king, Thutmose III: 270

I have built his house with the work of eternity. ... I have extended the places of him who made me. I have provisioned his altars upon earth. ... oxen and cattle without limit. ... for this temple of my father Amon ... and he is satisfied with that which he wished might be. I know for a fact that Thebes is eternity, that Amon is everlastingness.

266  Ibid.
267  Ibid., p. 6.
269  In using the capital "M" here, I follow Gaster (Numen, I, 3 (Sept., 1954), p. 185) who writes: "Taking our cue from its cultic function rather than from its mere literary or artistic content, Myth--in this larger sense--may be defined as any presentation of the actual in terms of the ideal. It is an expression of the concept that all things can be viewed at once under two aspects--on the one hand, temporal and immediate; on the other, eternal and transcendent. " I speak of Myth, here, as this worldview functioning as the experiential center of the civilization.
270  Wilson, trans., ANET, p. 447b (italics mine).
Cf., from Pyramid Texts, 854: "who took his place, as the sky was separated from the earth] at the place where thy heart was satisfied."--quoted in Voegelin, p. 68 (italics mine).
Henri Frankfort summarizes the Egyptian orientation in this way: 271

The tendency to interpret changes in unchanging mythological terms is strong in Egypt. . . . The Egyptians viewed the world as essentially static. The incidents of history, therefore, lacked ultimate reality.

The Legend of Abraham--Paradigm of a New Orientation to Time

The saga of biblical Israel, as her own consciousness preserved it, begins with the deliberate, purposeful migration of Abraham away from Mesopotamia, his homeland. 272 The Old Testament dramatically portrays Abraham’s break with the cultural environment of his forebears in these words:

And Yahweh said to Abram: Go thou from thy homeland -- thy kindred, thy father’s house -- to a land which I will shew thee. And I will make thee a great nation and I will bless thee and make thy name great, that thou mayest become a blessing. 275 I will bless those who bless thee, and anyone cursing thee I will curse. And in thee will all the families of the earth be blessed. And Abram went as Yahweh instructed him.

271 Frankfort, Kingship, p. 35.

272 The biblical narrative makes a point of using a shorter form, Abram, in the early part of the narrative, accounted for in Gen. 17:1-5.


274 Gen. 12:1-4a. The translation of biblical passages is my own but based upon familiarity with the standard versions (KJV, RSV, JPS). I have occasionally consulted JPS2. For Gen. 1--12, I have also utilized U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Parts I and II, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1961 and 1964).

275 On the interpretation of the Hebrew at this point (though not, precisely, in my wording), I have followed Cassuto, II, p. 314, based upon Gen. 20:7 and 42:18.
The passage is a remarkable one. If we take it as a dramatic portrayal of Abraham's reasoning leading to the migration, it appears evident that Abraham sensed a lack of significance in his life and concluded that his homeland, despite its cultural advantages, did not provide the environment in which genuine fulfillment could be gained. Hence, somewhat like Gilgamesh, Abraham embarked upon an experimental quest for fulfillment.

The biblical text places Abraham's decision wholly within the context of an experience of growing religious insight, which suggests that his departure from Mesopotamia constituted a rejection of and a protest against the religious orientation of its culture, which as has already been shown, was ordered by the cosmological myth and hence tied to the mythological past, to the rhythms of nature, and to space.

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278 Gen. 12:2, "I will make thee a great nation, . . . and will make thy name great."
It is significant, therefore, that the Abraham legend\(^{279}\) begins with Abraham leaving his place without any clear idea of where he was going.\(^{280}\) The text, however, is equally clear in informing us that while Abraham had no idea of precisely where he was going, he had no doubt about the objectives to be reached in time.\(^{281}\) It is evident that Abraham is here pictured as turning away from a primary orientation to space, to a primary orientation to time, in so far as these dimensions of human existence are concerned.

To be sure, Abraham is still interested in space, and place is included in his objectives. He is confident that he will find a place with which to become identified. But place is, at this point, secondary, and the fact that this was so seems to be emphasized in the passage. The fact seems to be of the essence of his act as an act of obedient response to the voice of Yahweh.

Not only is Abraham's primary orientation to time, it is an orientation to the future—the future as an ordered sequence of events in human experience dependent upon human action conceived as a response to divine purpose. This is an antithesis both to that ritualistic attunement

\(^{279}\) I use the word "legend" quite without any connotations one way or the other as to the historicity of the narrative. This is a problem in its own right and outside the scope of this study.

\(^{280}\) Gen. 12:1, "to a land which I will shew thee."

\(^{281}\) Gen. 12:2, 3.
to mythological primeval time which characterized the culture in which Abraham lived, and to that expectation of fulfillment—again, through ritual—in a personal existence beyond death which characterized Egyptian culture. Nor was Abraham motivated, as was Gilgamesh, by any hope of some miraculous prolongation of his life beyond its normal length. A complete contrast to cosmological thought was Abraham's hope for significance based upon confidence in the processes of time as a continuum of events that would eventually bring a fulfillment of divinely-supported goals toward which he could act, in the present, under Yahweh.

Unlike Gilgamesh, Abraham did not return to the place of the beginning of his quest. Indeed, the narrative tells us that he took deliberate steps to insure that his son would not do so. The narrative implies that Abraham died with a sense of achieving the personal objectives of his quest, and with confidence in the greater fulfillment, which, to have participated in, was sufficient for his own satisfaction. The primacy, under allegiance to Yahweh, of orientation to time.

That the realization of divine purpose requires a primary orientation to time rather than to space is a prominent and consistent theme in the Old


283 Cf. Gen. 24:7. This attitude is more clearly stated in the last words of Jacob (Gen. 48:3, 4; 49:29 ff.), and of Joseph (Gen. 50:22 ff.). See also: Gen. 15:13 ff.
Testament, as the following passages will show:

(1) Gen. 2, 3. Quite in harmony with cosmological thought, the second creation-myth of Genesis begins with a portrayal of the relationship of earth's first humans to the divine through the medium of a place suggestive of the typical cosmological "center" of the world. The element of time is, however, also introduced by the requirement for a continued (durative) response to divine command. When the desired durative relationship to divine will ceases, Adam and Eve are driven from their place, and from access to the "center" of their world, with no further designation of spatial orientation. The words of Yahweh, in the curses of Genesis 3, orient man, instead, to the prospects of his ongoing experience of time.

(2) Gen. 11. In the "Tower of Babel" story, Yahweh thwarts a massive build-up of human power through the concentration of a cosmological-type civilization around a single spatial and organizational center. 285

(3) Ex. 33:7 ff.; 40:34 ff.; 25:15. A mobile tent and sacred chest are made to symbolize the constant (temporal) presence of Yahweh. Similarly, the cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21 f.) are tied to no particular

284 Cf. Gaster, Thespis, p. 171.

285 It would appear that Abraham's leaving his place (cosmological civilization) for an adventure with Yahweh in time is deliberately intended as a direct contrast to this story.
place but are constant in time.

(4) Num. 14:26 ff. According to the interpretation imposed upon Israel's historical records by the bible writers, Israel is turned back from her spatial objective that she might first learn the supremely-important lesson of the necessity of a sustained relationship to her God in time. Cf. Deut. 4:10; Ps. 95:10 ff.; Eze. 20:15 ff.

(5) Deut. 4: esp. 15-30 (theme also elsewhere in Deut., e.g., in chap. 28). Moses warns Israel that her continued (temporal) enjoyment of Canaan (space) is dependent upon a continued (temporal) conformity to Yahweh's commandments.

(6) Jer. 7. This chapter, similar to the passage cited just above, illustrates the typical attitude of the prophets, expressed in many places: the continued enjoyment of place is dependent upon a sustained conformity with Yahweh's demands. "Trust not in lying words, saying 'The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh.'" In other words, all claims to Yahweh's favor based primarily upon orientation to place are declared invalid. The prophetic interpretation of the captivities and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple as punishments from Yahweh for Israel's failure to sustain in time the righteousness which he demanded are well known.

(7) Isa. 48:1-15. A call away from orientation to spatial symbols (v. 2, city; v. 5, idols) to attunement with the God of time—that is, the God who orders events in time according to his purposes.
(8) Psalm 78. Here the responsibility of generation after generation for maintaining allegiance to Yahweh in time is set forth, after which past history is cited as evidence of Yahweh's guidance in time. His anger at the people's turning to cosmological worship is also depicted.

286 vv. 56 ff.

287 This psalm is also of interest because it illustrates the fact that cosmological symbolism and experience were not eliminated from biblical thought, but incorporated into it (cf. below, pp. 165 ff.). Jerusalem, the temple, and the kingship became prominent centers of Hebrew religious experience. The following lines from this psalm will remind the reader of the widespread use of cosmological terms elsewhere in the Old Testament, especially in the psalms.

The mount Zion which he loved.
   Like the heights he built his temple,
   Like the earth which he established forever.
He chose David for his servant. . .
   To shepherd Jacob his people,
   Israel, his inheritance.

The presence in Israel of these two approaches to religious assurance was a major source of tension to which the prophets addressed themselves. The prophets, however, did not condemn the use of cosmological symbols; they themselves used them (e.g., Isa. 2:2 ff.; 60; Eze. 40-48; frequently elsewhere): but the prophets did insist that orientation to Yahweh in time be primary (e.g., Hos. 6:4; 13:3; Eze. 33:13 ff.; cf. Ps. 1).

For a thoroughgoing study of the tensions between cosmological thought and the ideology of "existence in the present under God", in the experience of Israel, see Voegelin, Israel and Revelation. For a brief presentation of the modifications cosmological thought underwent in the prophetic usage, see: Childs, pp. 85 ff., where (pp. 90 f.): "the mythical understanding of sacred space as possessing an unchangeable quality of holiness was emphatically rejected by the Hebrew prophets."
(9) Dan. 4. At the beginning of this tale, Nebuchadnezzar's primary orientation was to place: "Is not this a great Babylon which I have built?" At its close, he is oriented to the God "whose dominion is ... from generation to generation."

(10) Dan. 6:17. "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." (Italics mine.) To be sure, Daniel is, in his religious experience, oriented to place: he prays through windows open toward Jerusalem (v. 10). It is, however, the constancy and faithful continuance of his devotion to Yahweh which is here extolled.

Perhaps the greatest of all evidences of the primary of a temporal orientation to the divine in biblical thought is the Covenant concept. Since this will be discussed below in another context, further comment is unnecessary here, the point under consideration being adequately established without it.

Divine purpose revealed and realized in the sequence of events

As Israel saw and presented her own history, that history began with Abraham. Hence, for Abraham, orientation was entirely to the future. As subsequent events unfolded, however, as a consequence to Abraham's action, a tradition was developed in which past events were judged to be significant as they were seen to have contributed to the attainment of Yahweh's over-all purposes. Thus Israel's "history" was born. Thereafter, Israel's relationship to Yahweh in time involved
both a backward and a forward look. It is a characteristic of Old Testament thought that Israel's recital of the past was as movement toward a significant end—an end purposed by Yahweh. The following passages will illustrate the point:

(1) Deut. 6:20-25. Parents are to recite the national history to their children as evidence of the providence that had made the present possible ("as it is this day") and as a basis for the obligation to continue serving Yahweh. (Cf. Deut. 32:7 ff.)

(2) Deut. 26:4-9; Josh. 24:2-13. Ritual recitations of historical events in the nation's history as the basis for meaning to the present experience and for allegiance to Yahweh.

(3) Psalms 78, 105, 136. Hymns celebrating the nation's history as a revelation of Yahweh, his providence, and his purpose.

(4) Isa. 41:21-24. Precisely Yahweh's unique ability to discover significance in the sequence of human events is here paraded as evidence of his superiority over the divinities of cosmologically-oriented nations.

(5) Neh. 9:6 ff. An extended recital of national history showing divine purpose in the sequence of its events—both the desirable and the undesirable events.

(6) That the general tenor of the historiographic works of the Old Testament is an expression of this theme is a commonplace observation of which the following statements are typical:
Most OT historical writing is didactic, "history with a purpose."288

The dynamic approach of the Hebrews to reality is expressed in their interest in history. Their God is characteristically one who acts in history, and these actions in history are the core of the religious tradition of Israel . . . Time is not an empty vanity but a scene of meaningful action.289

Among the sacred literatures of mankind that of the Hebrews is distinguished by its concern with what purports to be historical fact. . . . This past. . . constitutes a definite pattern of events . . . .290

Israel's religion was in the truest sense an historical religion: in history God chose Israel and summoned her to destiny as his people, in history is his judgment and saving power revealed, in history he will accomplish his purpose.291

(7) Equally familiar are the prophetic appeals to history as a revelation of Yahweh—his character, and purposes; and, as a revelation also of Israel's character and prospects for the future.292


290Brandon, _History, Time and Deity_, p. 107.


The centrality of this theme throughout the Old Testament is succinctly stated by Walther Zimmerli: 293

When we survey the entire Old Testament, we find ourselves involved in a great history of movement from promise toward fulfillment.

"Time versus Space": a Perspective

The facts herein surveyed would seem to warrant the use of the phrase "Time versus Space" as a symbol of a major aspect of the ideological conflict between biblical Israel and her environment. Paul Tillich has well stated the appropriateness of this symbol and the concept it is designed to express:

Time and space should be treated as struggling forces, as living beings, as subjects with power of their own. This, of course, is a way of speaking, but it is a way which I think is justified by the fact that time and space are the main structures of existence to which all existing things, the whole finite realm, are subjected. . . .

But while time and space are bound to each other in such an inescapable way, they stand in a tension with each other which may be considered as the most fundamental tension of existence. . . .

In man the final victory of time is possible. Man is able to act towards something beyond his death. He


is able to have history.

Paganism can be defined as the elevation of a special space to ultimate value and dignity.

The turning point in the struggle between space and time in history is the prophetic message. To the birth of man out of nature and against nature corresponds the birth of prophetism out of paganism and against paganism. This birth is symbolized in the story of the vocation of Abraham.

The God of time is the God of history. He is the God who acts in history towards a final goal.

In the Old Testament the opposition of these two basic orientations is set forth essentially in terms of "time versus space" in those two commandments of the decalogue which are also distinguished by their being the longest of the ten commandments. The second commandment sternly prohibits an approach to the divine through spatial representation, while the fourth, by way of contrast, enjoins a temporal approach. 295 This perspective appears to unify and clarify the ideology of the biblical Sabbath, and to account, in large measure, for the extraordinary emphasis which the creators of the Old Testament placed upon it.

This is not to imply that Israel's initial identification with a primary orientation to time, and her opposition to her neighbors' orientation to space were deliberately made directly upon the basis of conscious reflection, or that the creators of her Bible necessarily ever conceived of their experience precisely in these terms. It would seem more likely that Israel's orientation to time, and her creation of

295 Cf. Ex. 20:4 f. (Deut. 5:8 f.) with Ex. 20:8 ff. (Deut. 5:12 ff.). Some sense of the relationship between these commandments seems to be implied in Lev. 19:3 f. (The "fifth" commandment is also related to time.)
the biblical Sabbath for particularizing her experience of Yahweh, came about somewhat intuitively as the result of a sequence of events experienced as a divine manifestation; just as the primary orientation to space and the use of images for particularizing the experience of the divine in cosmologically-oriented societies must have developed naturally from an experience of what we call nature as a manifestation of the divine. In both cases there was a deep inner consistency between the mediating symbols and the respective primary experience of the divine.

Though they probably did not clearly distinguish between the two thought systems and their respective symbols, 296 the creators of the Bible certainly recognized the incompatibility of the two systems, expressing that recognition in their consistent opposition of the two symbols by enjoining the observance of the Sabbath while protesting against the use of images in worship.

The symbols must at first have represented inner emotive experiences rather than concepts. The symbols and the experiences behind them, nevertheless, implied concepts--regardless of the degree to which these concepts were recognized and expressed. 297 It is the complex


297 Compactness and lack of rational explanation seem to be characteristic of the central symbols through which ancient cultures first express
of rational implications of the biblical Sabbath, as a symbol of Israel's experience of the divine, which this study, in the light of the foregoing, now explores directly as the ideology of that Sabbath.

Israel's Major Creation Myth and the Sabbath

In the manner characteristic of ancient near-eastern cultures, the creation narrative with which the Old Testament begins quite obviously has as its major objective not a factual account of the physical world's genesis, but an account of the establishment of the world's order as Israel understood it—a setting forth of basic suppositions of the "faith" upon which the religious system of its authors rested.

their sense of relationship to the ultimate. With the passing of time, tensions develop between experience and the inherited symbols. At these points reflective analysis frequently results in a differentiation and development of various elements in the old symbols. For my use of the concept of compactness and differentiation, I am much indebted to Voegelin, who, however, did not treat the Sabbath in his study. On the concept of compact symbolism and differentiation, see Voegelin, pp. 94 f., and various pages indicated in the Index, under "Cosmological order (myth)" and "Symbols and symbolization." Cf. also: Snaith, DIOT, pp. 31 f., where the expression "embryo ideas" is used.

298 See above, pp. 50 ff.

299 Gen. 1:1--2:4a.

300 I use quotation marks to indicate something of the rather singular connotations intended by this word in this context, especially on the side of its oblique inference of application to the belief systems of peoples other than Israel.

301 This is commonly recognized, as the following will illustrate. Bernhard W. Anderson, "The Earth Is the Lord's: An Essay on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation," Interpretation, IX, 1 (Jan., 1955), pp. 4 f.: "The biblical view of creation . . . . does not purport to deal primarily
I take the major themes set forth in this myth to be these: (1) the singular unity of the divine being through whose free and unhampered power, and for whose purposes, all things were brought into an ordered existence; (2) the position of man as divinely endowed with "dominion," under God, over the material world, and as enjoined with the responsibility of peopling the earth, which would seem to imply the consequent necessity of ordering the society he was to create; (3) the sequence of days we know as the week as an aspect of the original created order; and (4) the Sabbath as the final climactic act of creation. All of these themes appear to give expression to the cleavage between Israel's

with the speculative question of the origin and genesis of the earth. . . . The fact that the Priestly creation story reaches its climax in the observance of the Sabbath is clear witness to the existential foundation of the creation-faith in the Israelite cultus."; Eliezer Berkovits, God, Man and History: A Jewish Interpretation (New York, 1959), p. 60: "The religious idea of creation is not so much the answer to the question how the world came to be; but foremost to the question, what this world is."; S. G. F. Brandon, Creation Legends, pp. 120 f., 211; E. O. James, Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East, pp. 144, 169; B. D. Napier, "On Creation-Faith in the Old Testament," largely a survey of von Rad on the subject, Interpretation, XVI, 1 (Jan., 1962), pp. 25 f.: "Genesis 1 must be seen as a part of a dogmatic corpus, representing the theological point of view of the innermost circle of the cult relationship between Yahweh and Israel. . . . Yahweh's creation of the world is recounted, certainly not in and for itself, but precisely because of P's interest in Heilsgeschichte." In this same study, basic elements of Israel's creation faith are traced to "the influence of Egypt through Israel's wisdom teachers,"--p. 27.; Napier also points out (p. 30) the use of the creation theme for setting forth the "order" of Israel under Yahweh in Psalm 29.; B. D. Napier, From Faith to Faith (New York, 1955), p. 29.

302 It is commonly ignored that the days of the week constitute, in this narrative, an important product of the creative activity of God along with the physical products. In fact, the creation of the days is a point emphasized in the narrative.
ideology and that of her cosmologically-oriented environment.

Whether or not Genesis I was composed with Enuma elish in mind is a question beyond the scope of this study; but, since both myths are major creation myths giving expression to basic aspects of the ideologies of their respective societies, it is both convenient and appropriate to make some comparisons between the two narratives.

The contrast between the God of Genesis I and the gods of Enuma elish is so evident, so well known, and so frequently commented upon, that it requires little elaboration here. Furthermore, not all of these contrasts are directly related to this study. It should be observed, however, that in the Genesis I story, there is no celebration and praise for the creator, while in Enuma elish this is the climactic point of the entire narrative. This would seem to suggest that Genesis I was not designed, as was Enuma elish, for ritual performance.

In Genesis I, the creative ability of God is taken for granted and all creation results from his purpose and will, without resistance. In Enuma elish, the god Marduk is impressed into the roll of creator.

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303 I use this term, Genesis I, for convenience to refer to the first creation narrative of Genesis in its entirety, including chap. 2:1-4a.

304 For an introduction to different views of possible relationships between the two narratives, see: Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, pp. 82 ff.; Clay, The Origin of Biblical Traditions, pp. 66 ff.; Jastrow, HBT, pp. 65ff.

305 See: Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, pp. 96 f.
There is at first only a hesitant hope that he can and will conquer Tiamat. 306 This hope is then nursed into confidence: first by granting Marduk a bribe, 307 then by conducting a practical test of the prospective creator's power. 308 The final paean of exaggerated praise 309 and the ritual use of the myth 310 may well be interpreted as suggesting a lingering anxiety about the continuance of Marduk's providence. 311 In Enuma elish, the motive for Marduk's creative activity is the safety, ease, and pleasure of the gods; 312 in Genesis I the leading motive for creation appears to be the existence and welfare of man. 313 Genesis I leaves no room for anxiety or doubt about its God's power to effect his purposes, or about the quality and motivation of those purposes. 314 The entire narrative breathes a spirit of confidence and certainty.

306 Enuma elish, II, 90 ff. (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 64ab).
307 Ibid., II, 120 ff. (ANET, p. 64b).
308 Ibid., IV, 20 ff. (ANET, p. 66b).
309 Ibid., VI, 105 ff. (ANET, pp. 69b ff.).
310 See above, pp. 52 ff.
312 This theme is developed in Enuma elish beginning with II, 85 ff.
313 Gen. 1:26 ff.
314 Contrast Marduk's blackmail. See above, ref. n. 307.
The contrast between the position of man in the purpose of the God of Genesis I and his position in the purpose for his creation expressed in Enuma elish could scarcely be greater. In Enuma elish, man is created "for the service of the gods that they might be at ease!" In Genesis I, the whole world is turned over to man's rule as a kind of do-it-yourself kit not quite completed by its maker: God granting to man a share in the experience of creation, and a considerable responsibility for the future success of the enterprise. That this theme was given significant consideration in Israel is evident in Psalm 115:16:

The heavens are the heavens of Yahweh,
But the earth he has given to the sons of man!

And in Psalm 8:

What is man that thou rememberest him?
The son of man that thou givest heed to him?
Thou madest him but little lower than God,
Thou hast crowned him with honor and splendor;
Thou madest him rule over the works of thy hands,
Thou hast put all things under his feet!

Of interest is the fact that both of these passages appear to cite Yahweh's giving man dominion as an evidence of Yahweh's superiority over cosmos-

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315 Enuma elish, VI, 8 (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 68b).

316 Gen. 1:26 ff., and see above, p. 97. Cf. N. W. Porteous, "Man, Nature, of, in the OT," IDB, K-Q, p. 243: "Man is given the charter of civilization. He is to . . . use the world to satisfy his legitimate needs."

317 vv. 5-7.
logical deities.  

As important, however, as these themes are in Genesis I, and in the life and thought of biblical Israel, the structural and other literary devices found in this myth place its emphasis unquestionably upon the aspect of time: the sequence of the week's seven days, and, more especially, upon the Sabbath.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host. And since, by the seventh day, God had completed the work upon which he had been engaged, He ceased, on the seventh day, from all the work he had been doing. And God blessed the seventh day and consecrated it, because He had ceased from the work which he had undertaken.

Ps. 115:2 ff.; Ps. 8:2 ff. This latter passage is, I think, frequently misinterpreted as a contrast between the magnificence of the heavens and the insignificance of man. As Richard G. Moulton long ago pointed out (The Modern Reader's Bible (New York, cpr. 1935), pp. 1534 f., 1602), it may better be read as a comparison favorable to man, suggesting that man has a splendor greater, even, than that of the heavens.

There is, first of all, a repetitious mention of the specific day upon which each major unit of work was completed. This mention comes after the day's work has been described, as a climax to each unit. There is also a deliberate extended description of each day as an evening and a morning. Though nothing is made on the seventh day, it holds a position of climactic emphasis in the narrative, and is given further prominence in being made to memorialize the completion of the week's work in six days; and it is blessed and consecrated.

Gen. 2:1-3.

No word for word translation of this passage can do justice to its meaning. Indeed, certain ambiguities seem to make a confident translation impossible. In a compromise between a completely literal and a completely free translation, I have attempted to state what I understand to be the intent of the passage. Subsequent references to portions of this passage, in this study, will imply a direct reconsideration of the Hebrew
The Sabbath: symbol of purposed movement in time toward significant achievement

Quite obviously, a deity

Who spoke, and it was;
Who commanded, and it stood fast

had no need of time for creating a universe—no need, even, for six days. Why, then, did Israel's creation myth so much emphasize the division of the task into six parts assigned to six days? One might answer that six-day periods and seven-day periods were conventional features of ancient tales, and therefore the creation of Genesis I merely follows a convention. Or, one might reply that the number seven expressed the ideas of completeness and perfection; and, since the seventh day of the creation week is made a day of celebration over a completed and perfect work, this is a sufficient reason to account for the design of the narrative.

322 Ps. 33:9.


Hehn sees notions of fulness and totality as the most basic meaning of the root יָּשָׁבַע, the idea of seven being secondary. On this, see also: Farbridge, pp. 136 ff.
That convention and the significance of 'seven' were important factors can scarcely be questioned, but they do not adequately account for the deliberate emphasis upon progressive accomplishment in Genesis I. A review of the ancient near-eastern literature will show that the emphasizing of temporal progression in accomplishment is not typical in this literature so far as our sources enable us to judge; and, if the significance of the number seven were the sole determining motive for the spread of the work of creation over six days, it would, in accordance with the extant literature, seem more likely that some outstanding aspect of the work would have been reserved for the seventh day.

Seven-day periods of time are frequently found in the extra-biblical literature of the ancient Near East. Their use in time-reckoning, and in separating days of restriction, has already been shown. The oldest

324 Other short-period designations are also found--e.g., two days (apparently) in Ugaritic Text 127:20 ff. (Gordon, Ugaritic Literature, p. 82); three days, Gilgamesh I, ii, 44 and iii, 48 (ANET, pp. 74b, 75a); ten days (implied), Enuma elish, V, 1 ff. (see above, pp. 22 f., n. 69); twelve days, Gilgamesh, VII (fragment GETh, 34; Pls. 15-16, trans. Speiser, ANET, p. 87c)--but with far less frequency than seven-day periods. There are also many such references in the ancient Greek literature. These various time-periods were not considered relevant to this study; but, in some instances, they may represent some kind of ancient "weeks" of lengths other than seven days, and calendar systems conflicting with those into which the Hebrew Sabbath was subsequently fitted. An introduction to this problem may be made with: Landsberger, p. 96; Langdon, The Babylonian Epic of Creation, p. 160, n. 4; cf. Lewy, HUCA, XVII (1942-43), pp. 47 ff.; North, Biblica, XXXVI (1955), p. 197. See also: Webster, RD, chap. vi, pp. 173 ff.

325 Above, pp. 26 ff.
extant indication of seven-day periods appears to be found in two inscriptions by Gudea (21st century, B.C.). In one, a temple dedication is said to have been celebrated for seven days; the other refers to a seven-day period in which certain stelae were set up in this temple.\footnote{George A. Barton, The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad (New Haven, 1929), pp. 187, 229, 253.}

In the Mesopotamian flood story, storm raged for six days, and, in the seventh day, subsided.\footnote{Gilgamesh, XI, 127 ff. (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 94c).} Following this, Utnapishtim waits out seven days after his boat has landed before releasing his first bird.\footnote{Ibid., XI, 141 ff. (ANET, p. 94d).} After enjoying "six days and seven nights" of sexual relations with the "harlot-lass," Enkidu "had (his) fill of her charms."\footnote{Gilgamesh, I, iv (ANET, p. 75b).} Gilgamesh wept over Enkidu's death for seven days and nights; and slept at Utnapishtim's home for six days and nights to be awakened on the seventh day.\footnote{For the weeping: Ibid., X, ii (ANET, p. 89 f.); and, for the sleeping: Ibid., XI, 200 ff. (ANET, p. 95d).}

In the Adapa myth, the south wind did not blow for seven days.\footnote{Adapa, B, 5 ff. (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 101c).} Other such periods of seven days might be cited, but these are sufficient to illustrate one typical use of seven-day periods in ancient near-eastern literature: an action or condition is sustained for six or seven days, and then, simply ceases.
In another usage of seven-day periods in the ancient literature, six days of anticipation are followed by fulfillment on the seventh day. Not infrequently, in such cases, a sustained preparatory action may continue throughout the six days of anticipation. The Ugaritic literature best exemplifies this form of presentation. A fire is built and kept burning for six days to smelt gold and silver bricks for Baal's palace, and ceases (or is put out) on the seventh day when the process is complete. In the legend of Aqht, Daniel prays for six days while the gods banquet, and has his prayer answered on the seventh day.

There is a possible exception to these modes of the use of seven-day periods in the ancient literature in the flood story, where Utnapishtim appears to have taken seven days to complete the building of his boat. One line,

On the fifth day I laid her framework.

and the apparent completion of the boat on the seventh day, suggest a possible original in which significant progress was allotted to each day.

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333 Aq:I:12 (UL, pp. 85 f.). Cf. Krt:105 ff., 114 ff., 218 ff. In Krt:195 ff., there is a period of 3 days with some climactic action on the 3rd day, immediately followed by a period of 4 days with climactic action on the 4th day. Together, this would make 7 days with climactic action on the third and seventh.
334 Gilgamesh, XI, 56 (ANET, p. 93c).
335 Ibid., XI, 76 (partly illegible).
Against this, however, are these facts: (1) while four lines, occurring some several lines before mention is made of the fifth day, are too fragmentary for translation, they seem to be scarcely adequate, in the light of the context, for telling of four days' work; (2) there is no mention of a sixth-day's achievement, and, though there are small gaps in our texts, there appears to be no place for mention of the sixth day.336

There are narratives in which advancement in space is carefully delineated337 but Israel's emphasis upon temporal movement and accomplishment toward a purposed goal, as found in Genesis I, is unique.

Now it is true that all stories—including, of course, the ancient myths—embrace a sequence of events and therefore move toward some end in time. Furthermore, as pointed out by Cassirer,338 the very essence of myth is "the intuition of purposive action—for all the forces

336 Ibid., lines 56-76.
(During Gilgamesh's six- or seven-day sleep, Utnapishtim's wife puts out a new loaf of bread each day and each day increases the spoilage of previously-baked loaves. This is not progression in accomplishment; it is only a means of proving the length of time involved—measurement.)


338 Ernst Cassirer, Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. R. Manheim, Vol. II, Mythical Thought (New Haven, 1955), p. 49. Cf. pp. 104 ff., where (p. 104): "True myth does not begin when the intuition of the universe and its parts and forces is merely formed into definite images, . . . it begins only when a genesis, a becoming, a life in time, is attributed to these figures."
of nature are for myth nothing other than expressions of a demonic or divine will.

Mythical time, however, is not the same as that time experienced by man. In Cassirer's words:

In general, the mythical intuition of time, like that of space, is altogether qualitative and concrete, and not quantitative and abstract. For myth there is no time "as such," no perpetual duration and no regular recurrence or succession; there are only configurations of particular content which in turn reveal a certain temporal gestalt, a coming and going, a rhythmical being and becoming.

The past itself has no "why": it is the why of things. What distinguishes mythical time from historical time is that that for mythical time there is an absolute past, which neither requires nor is susceptible of any further explanation. . . . Thus it is understandable that the mythical consciousness—despite the fundamental and truly constitutive importance which the universal intuition of time possesses for it—has sometimes been called a timeless consciousness. For compared with objective time, whether cosmic or historical, mythical time is indeed timeless.

It should also be observed that in myth, the capacity of the gods to fulfill their desires and purposes is limited by the will and power of other gods or demons. Thus the element of uncertainty in fulfillment is always present.

In Enuma elish, especially from line 29 of Tablet I to the end of the tale, some purpose is evident in every action. Indeed, the idea of being able to plan ahead and fulfill the plan is emphasized as an attribute attained by Marduk in his creation exploits. There is, in fact, ample

339 Ibid., pp. 108, 106.
justification for recognizing this as a major theme of the myth.

Early in the story, Apsu purposes to destroy the boisterous young gods;\(^{340}\) the entire remaining narrative tells how Apsu's purpose was thwarted, and with what consequences—creation being a somewhat side issue.

The first deliverance of the gods is affected by Ea who was able to design and execute the slaying of Apsu. But, having accomplished this purpose, Ea is confronted with another threat—that of Tiamat—which he readily acknowledges to be too much for him.\(^ {341}\) Thereupon, Anu, especially commissioned with the authority of Anshar, head of the pantheon, attempts to stand up to Tiamat:

\[ \text{But when Anu was near (enough) to see the plan of Tiamat,} \]
\[ \text{He was not able to face her and] he turned back} \]

reporting his venture to "his father, Anshar."\(^{343}\)

Speechless was Anshar as he stared at the ground,
Hair on edge, shaking his head at Ea
All the Anunnaki gathered at that place;
Their lips closed tight, they sat in silence.
"No god" (thought they) "can go [to battle and],
Facing Tiamat, escape [with his life]."

\(^{340}\) Enuma elish, I, 35--40 (Speiser, trans., ANET, p. 61bc).

\(^{341}\) Ea's words have been lost, but the context is plain enough. See: Speiser, in ANET, p. 63d; Heidel, Genesis, pp. 6, 27.

\(^{342}\) Enuma elish, II, 81 ff. (ANET, p. 63d).

\(^{343}\) The following quotation is from Enuma elish, II, 86 ff. (ANET, p. 64a).
Marduk is then elected to make the attempt to conquer Tiamat. He agrees to do so, but first demands that he be given the authority to "determine the fates. Unalterable shall be what I may bring into being; Neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips."\(^{344}\)

The gods, after some deliberation over a banquet of "festive bread . . . and strong drink" (in which they indulged until "their bodies swelled,")\(^{345}\) agreed to Marduk's demands.\(^{346}\) Marduk then tests and demonstrates the efficacy of the decree by making a piece of cloth vanish and reappear in the sight of the gods.\(^{347}\)

The story goes into considerable detail in telling of Marduk's carefully-planned preparations for the battle with Tiamat, and in describing his subsequent victory. What is here of special importance to this study is the question that remained as to the outcome until the battle was actually fought.

\(^{344}\) Ibid., II, 123 ff.

I have referred to this incident above as a bribe (p. 99 n. 307), and as blackmail (p. 99 n. 314). That is one perspective from which the incident may be judged. To me, it seems highly probable, however, that the motive was much deeper than this, and that Marduk is also pictured as recognizing the logical necessity for absolute and unquestioned authority if he was to fulfill his purposes. It should, nevertheless, be remembered that the myth evidently reflects the actual political "history" leading up to the recognition of the supremacy of Babylon, a fact which provides some grounds for giving credence also to the baser motivations. In any event, the myth reflects the uncertainty which the ancient Mesopotamians associated with their gods. It was precisely this uncertainty—on the practical level, uncertainty about the future—which this myth, and the whole akku festival of which it was a part, was designed to expel from the community.

\(^{345}\) Enuma elish, III, 133 ff. (ANET, p. 66a).

\(^{346}\) Ibid., III, 138; IV, 1 ff. (ANET, p. 66a).

\(^{347}\) Ibid., III, 19 ff. (ANET, p. 66b).
After Marduk's victory, 348

His heart prompts (him) to fashion artful works.
Opening his mouth, he addresses Ea
To impart the plan he had conceived in his heart.

The plan Marduk had conceived was the creation of man. This plan involved the slaying of a god. In his bid for the support of the other gods in this project, Marduk cites his prediction of victory over Tiamat and its subsequent fulfillment as a reason for the gods to continue trusting in his judgment. 349 The gods agree to Marduk's proposal, 350 and man is created. After this, Babylon is built, with its tower and temple--a place for the enjoyment of the gods. 351

In this context--reflecting, as it does, prevailing notions characteristic of the cosmologically-oriented civilization of Mesopotamia which the Hebrews claimed as their background, and from which, as their own tradition had it, Abraham departed in protest--the importance of the theme of God's steady, unhampered, unquestioned movement through the acts of creation toward the complete achievement of his purpose, as this theme is presented in Genesis I, acquires considerable significance, especially in the light of the fact that this theme is elsewhere prominent in the Old Testament, as shown above. 352

348 Ibid., VI, 1 ff. (ANET, p. 68a).
350 How could they do otherwise? Not only had they granted Marduk unchallenged authority; the proposition was an attractive one, its purpose being to relieve the gods of the necessary chores incident to their lives.
351 Enuma elish, VI, 47 ff. (ANET, pp. 68d, 69a).
352 Pp. 90 ff.
In Genesis I, there is no uncertainty: there are no obstacles to be overcome; there are no hindrances to the fulfillment of the divine purpose; there is no struggle with antagonistic forces; there is only a steady advance toward the fulfillment of divine purpose from the beginning to the end of the narrative. 353 This view of God's creation is emphasized by a careful delineation of each single day's activity and fulfillment. Of this theme—purposed movement toward significant achievement in time—the Sabbath was made a perpetual symbol and vehicle in Israel. 354

Israel, to be sure, did not originate the bare idea of action toward the achievement of purpose in time. It was, as has been shown, a concept toward which cosmological thought was striving; it was also a concept which cosmologically-oriented societies did not have the courage to lay a vital hold upon. The basic assumptions of polytheistic thought stood in the way. The peoples of these societies were not sure that their gods possessed the power to achieve their purposes. Indeed,

353 The creator's conflict with chaos and other allusions to ancient cosmological myth and ritual do occur in the O. T. (e.g., Ps. 74:13; 89:11; Isa. 51:9; etc.), but they are eliminated from Genesis I, and are effectively superseded by the general tenor of the O. T. as a whole. For studies of such mythological references, see Hermann Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Göttingen, 1895); Gaster, Thespis, pp. 73 ff., 414 ff.

354 Ex. 20:8-11; 31:17.

"Remember," in the fourth commandment, has frequently been taken to refer to a more ancient practice of Sabbath observance. This, I think, was not the intent of the biblical text. "Remember," here, seems rather to be a command related to the future. Cf. S. R. Driver, "Sabbath," HDB, IV, p. 320.
they were sure that most of them, at least, did not have such power. There were too many unpredictable and unmanageable forces ever surrounding them.

These peoples were even less sure of their own ability to act significantly in time. Such significant accomplishments as they did achieve in the way of change, they relegated to the gods in myth. 355

Certain prophets of ancient Israel, on the other hand, seized upon this idea of purposed achievement in time, and made it central in the ideology of the Bible which she bequeathed to our civilization. 356 Not only did these prophets assert the principle to be active in the sphere of the divine, and its acceptance a major key to the perception of divine will; they applied it also to the human sphere, which they conceived to be ever under the judgment of the divine nature and purpose. It was a concept designed to build confidence and hope and trust, in place of that lack of confidence and that superstition and fear which characterized cosmologically-oriented societies. It provided an essential foundation for the development of that moral consciousness with which the Old Testament

355 See above, pp. 59 ff. (references in nn. 191, 192); and p. 83, n. 271.

prophets came to be identified. It generated a sense of awareness to a divine demand for significant action in harmony with divine purpose; and it generated confidence both in the human capacity for such action, and in the support of unlimited divine power for such action. 357

In another way did Israel's association of the Sabbath with Genesis I indicate an advance over cosmological thought about time. In the Old Testament, Israel's Sabbath was not, like other days of restriction in the ancient world, considered to be--by its own inherent qualities--apart from other days. 358

In the first place, whatever special qualities attached to the Sabbath, they were attached only by the design and will of the creator. The point is emphasized in Genesis I by having the creator perform no act on the Sabbath day except to set the day itself apart, bless it, and sanctify it.

Furthermore, both in its mythical origin and in its observance as commanded by the decalogue, observance of the Sabbath comprehended all the other days of the week, as well. The God of Genesis I clearly sanctifies the Sabbath because of its relationship to the preceding six days. In other words, the special import of the Sabbath derived from

357 See above, pp. 83 ff., 90 ff.; cf. Ps. 22:5 f.; 37:5. This is, of course, an underlying theme in the whole saga of Israel. Cf. William Creighton Graham, The Prophets and Israel's Culture (Chicago, 1934) pp. 85 f.

358 Cf. above, pp. 43 f., 61.
the creator's previous activity on these six days. Likewise, it is not alone God's sabbath rest after creation which is made a paradigm for Israel's life; the entire week is a part of the paradigm. Hence, all time was by the Sabbath embraced.

This does not mean that biblical thought grasped that abstract concept of time which we have. It does, however, imply a significant awareness of the continuing aspect of days and events in a sequence which can be utilized and made meaningful by the injection thereinto of purpose and action--under God.

In the light of ancient near-eastern mythological thought, Israel's mythologizing of the Sabbath idea also implies that it is in the continual round of daily work, with periodic rest, rather than in a yearly ritual of renewal, that attunement with the divine is to be found; and that in this attunement, one may give durative value to his punctual experience of time. There is a large sense in which Genesis I served a functional purpose in Israel comparable to that purpose which Enuma elish, together with its accompanying ritual, served in the cosmological civilization of Mesopotamia.

Though of the nature of myth, Genesis I also differs from myth in a manner which reveals yet another aspect of Israel's distinctive attitude toward time. The creation story of Genesis I is not relegated to a

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359 Ex. 20:8-11; 31:17. Whether or not the Bible writers were aware of it, the implication seems to be that proper Sabbath observance requires significant achievement during the week, so that man may, on the Sabbath, celebrate his accomplishments as God did on the "first" Sabbath.
separate indefinite category of mythological time "before the world was," as are all other creation narratives of the ancient world. In Biblical thought, man's days in the ever-new present are but successive moments in that ongoing stream of days and events initiated by God in creation. Genesis I makes creation the beginning of that very sequence of days in which man lives. The days utilized by God in the creation of the world were not different in quality from those which are given to man made in his image, and to whom the God of creation had entrusted the care of this world. It is the Sabbath and the Sabbath idea which is made to carry this thought. It is the Sabbath and the Sabbath idea which bridges the gap between the mythological time of cosmological thought and historical time experienced by man, and discovered first by Israel. 360

The Sabbath: symbol of a completed process of creation

As the Sabbath of Genesis I bridged the gap between the time of creation and the time of man's historical experience, connecting the two times into a single sequence, it also stood between these times and separated them.

Attention has already been given to that basic notion of cosmological thought which necessitates a repeated seasonal ritual re-enactment of

creation for the restoration and continuance of man's harmonious involvement with and participation in the world's order, including "the regular functioning of nature upon which the well-being of man almost exclusively depended." It will, however, here be in order to re-summarize, in the briefest possible space, this aspect of ancient thought. Patai has done this in the following manner:

The development of this ritual pattern has been subjected to thorough investigation by a number of scholars, the gist of whose findings Professor S. H. Hooke sums up in the following words:

"The picture which emerges from a study of the great seasonal rituals of the ancient East and their associated myths is that of a community seeking to bring under control by means of an organized system of ritual actions the order of nature upon the functioning of which its well-being depends."

In the light of this background, the extraordinary emphasis upon completion of creation in Genesis I is somewhat clarified. In introducing the Sabbath, the fact that the work of creation was finished is four times mentioned.

In the first two references to this fact, verbs from the root נָנַע are used, both verbs being intensive forms. This root is defined as "be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent."

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361 See above, pp. 64 ff., with special attention to nn. 203, 207, 209.
363 Ibid.
364 Hooke, ed., The Labyrinth, pp. 213 f.
365 BDB, p. 477.
other two references utilize verbal forms of the root \( \text{\textit{naw}} \) from which the word "Sabbath" is derived. Though these verbs have here commonly been translated into English "rested,"\footnote{So: KJV, RSV, JPS, and others.} this translation is an anachronism and quite unwarranted.\footnote{See: Cassuto, Genesis, I, p. 63.}

Regardless of what the etymology of the root may be (a matter on which scholarly opinion varies, and on which we seem not to have sufficient evidence for a final conclusion),\footnote{Cf. above, p. 1.} the biblical verbal use of this root quite clearly establishes its connotations in biblical Israel.

In addition to the two verbs already cited, there are sixty-nine other verbal uses of the root \( \text{\textit{naw}} \) in the Old Testament.\footnote{Includes infinitives and participles. Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae, Editio Altera Locupletissime Aucta et Emendata, Cura F. Margolin, 1937, pp. 1147 f.} Six of these cases have to do with Sabbath observance,\footnote{Ex. 16:30; 23:12; 31:17; 34:21 (twice); Lev. 23:32.} and five others have to do with the land "resting"\footnote{Lev. 25:2; 26:34 f. (three times); II Chron. 36:21.} in a sense related to the Sabbath idea. The remaining fifty-eight cases refer to other things. In every instance, the idea is a stopping, a discontinuance of, a ceasing, and/or the consequent absence of a condition or thing that has previously existed.
--the consequent state of having stopped or been stopped. The connotation is always a vacuity or a negation of something that has been. 372

In Genesis I, therefore, nothing is said about rest or refreshment. These anthropomorphic concepts do appear elsewhere in connection with creation's Sabbath, 373 but in Genesis I the emphasis is solely upon the idea that on the seventh day God ceased or abstained from all his work,

372 Typical are the following. Because of the variety of forms of expression in a heterogeneous collection of passages like this, it seemed most practical to summarize the gist of each passage rather than to translate. Josh. 5:12, the manna stops; Jer. 48:33, God has caused wine to stop flowing from the wine presses; Eze. 12:23, God will make a proverb to be no longer used in Israel; Isa. 33:8, in a wasted land the traveler no longer passes over the road; Lam. 5:14 f., the elders are absent from their customary place at the city gate, and joy is absent from the heart; Isa. 24:8, musical instruments have stopped playing; Eze. 7:24, God will make the pride of the strong to cease; Prov. 18:18, the casting of lots can bring an end to strife; Hos. 1:4, God threatens to bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel; Jer. 48:35, God will cause Moab to be no more; Eze. 34:25, God will eliminate evil beasts from the land; Ps. 46:10, God makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth; Ex. 12:15, in preparing for the passover feast, Israel is to remove all leaven from her houses; Lev. 2:13, Israel is never to omit "salt of the covenant" from her meal-offerings; Job 32:1, Job's friends stopped talking to him; Eze. 34:10, God will remove unfaithful shepherds from their job of feeding his sheep; Gen. 8:22, as long as the earth remains, the regular seasons "shall not cease;" Ex. 5:5, Pharaoh asks Moses and Aaron why they should wish to make Israel stop their work.

The remaining thirty-eight cases are found in: Lev. 26:6; Deut. 32:26; Josh. 22:25; II Kings 23:5, 11; Isa. 13:11; 14:4; 16:10; 17:3; 21:2; 30:11; Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 31:35; 36:29; Eze. 6:6; 16:41; 30:10; 23:27, 48; 26:13; 30:13, 18; 33:28; Hos. 2:13; 7:4; Amos 8:4; Ps. 8: 3; 89:45; 119:119; Prov. 22:10; Ruth 4:14; Dan. 9:27; 11:18; Neh. 6: 3; 4:5; II Chron. 16:5.

373 Ex. 20:11; 31:17.
and did so because he was completely finished with what he had purposed
to do.

In the light of the ancients' fears about the dissolution of their
world, back into chaos, and their sense of a need for participation
through ritual in a repeated re-construction of their world, the Sabbath
in Genesis I appears to be a protestation of the security and permanence
of the order of God's creation, without either the possibility or need for
a ritual renewal. 374

That this theme of the world's permanence--the dependability of
nature's order--under God was prominent in biblical ideology is indicated
in the following passages selected from among many that could be cited:

He commanded and they were created,
He established them for ever and ever,
He fixed a limit which cannot be passed. 375

Yahweh is king,
Therefore the world is established;
It shall not be moved. 376

Through all the days of the earth,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter,
and day and night, shall not cease. 377

374 Cf. Yaker, p. 180: "The biblical view of time, therefore, stands
against the cultic cyclicism which sought the new life through re-enactment
of primeval events."

375 Ps. 148:5 f.

376 Ps. 96:10. This sounds like cosmological ritual, and the psalm
may, possibly, have been used for such a ritual in Israel (Cf. Gaster,
Thespis, p. 87). If Israel did actually practice annual ritual-renewal
rites of a cosmological type, then my interpretation of the Sabbath in
Genesis I is even more directly pertinent as an attempt to eliminate such
thought.

In this last passage it is stated that what God did on the seventh day (יָמִּים שְׁשִׁים), the seasons will never do (יָמִּים שְׁשִׁים)! In Job, God’s decree establishing the permanence of the earth is associated with creation. Other relevant passages reinforce the theme.

Quite obviously, Genesis I represents an attempt to eliminate cosmological notions. In the light of this fact, and the prominence given in the Old Testament to the theme of the permanence and security of the created world, under God, it is reasonable to infer that the strong emphasis in Genesis I upon the simple fact that God had, by the seventh day, finished his work, was, along with the Sabbath which symbolized that idea, intended as a direct opposition to the cosmological principles of an uncertain and unstable creation, requiring seasonal repetitious renewal.

Whereas, then, in cosmological thought, human life and action had little ultimate significance in the face of those changes wrought by

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378 Job 38:4-11; cf. also, vv. 31 ff.
379 E.g.: Ps. 33:9; 89:38; 104:5; Isa. 41:26; Jer. 33:20, 25 f.
380 Cf. John L. McKenzie, Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology (Milwaukee, 1963), p. 137: "If Genesis I is not a polemic against the creation myth, then I find it impossible to explain why the story was put in this form at all."
381 On the reversible or repeatable nature of time and creation events in cosmological thought, see Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return; Idem, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 68 ff.
time,

Do we build a house for ever?
Do we seal (contracts) for ever?
Do brothers divide shares for ever? ... 

The dragon-fly leaves (its) shell
That its face might (but) glance at the face of the sun,
Since the days of yore there has been no permanence! 

and the best one could do was, through ritual, to "reidentify with
nature's eternal repetition the few primordial, creative, and spontaneous gestures" man did experience; in biblical thought, temporal change, in which man could participate, with permanent consequences, was seen, under divine purpose and providence, as the very condition and expression of significance. The Sabbath was, in biblical ideology, a symbol of this distinctive orientation to time.

This orientation to time was, in turn, intimately related with notions of human dignity and with ideas concerning the divine. All of these distinctive ideas of Israel were, whether by deliberate design or by fortuitous instinct, artfully woven together in the creation narrative, Genesis I, with the Sabbath as its all-comprehending symbol.

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382 Gilgamesh, X, vi, 26 ff. (Speiser, trans., ANET, pp. 92d, 93a.

383 Eliade, Cosmos and History, p. 155.
III. THE SABBATH AND ISRAEL'S DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLY

It appears that the one common abstraction which, more than any other, identifies religious experience, is "holiness"; the fundamental nature of which has been stated well by Durkheim:

All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred. . . . This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought; the beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are either representations or systems of representations which express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers which are attributed to them, or their relations with each other and with profane things.


Eliade sharpens the point: 386

The first possible definition of the sacred is that it is the opposite of the profane. 387

Such categorical clarity concerning the most fundamental aspect of "holiness" is, however, somewhat deceptive; for, while "the distinction between what is holy and what is common is one of the most important things in ancient religion," writes W. Robertson Smith, 388 it is, nevertheless, a distinction which "is very difficult to grasp precisely, because its interpretation varied from age to age with the general progress of religious thought." To this, Eliade has added: 389

The history of religion is, from the scientific aspect, largely the history of the devaluations and the re-evaluations which make up the process of the expression of the sacred.

In the Old Testament, "the chief and proper Hebrew word for 'holiness' is qodesh" 390 (וּדְשָׁ). While "the etymological origin of the word is uncertain," 391 two chief theories have been developed: one links the word ultimately with the idea of brightness; the other,

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386 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 10.
388 The Religion of the Semites, p. 140.
389 Patterns, p. 25.
390 Snaith, DIOT, p. 21.
with the idea of separation. In biblical usage, that which is qadosh is also regarded as being "separated" and ritually sacred, and is protected by taboo. It is commonly accepted that, in its primitive meanings, both within and without the Bible, the idea of holiness did not have moral and ethical connotations.

The idea of "separation" is usually accepted as the most original and most basic signification of the word (Snaith, DIOT, pp. 24 ff.; BDB, pp. 871 ff.; Muilenburg, in JIDB, p. 617), but no one has, it appears, as yet, satisfactorily answered this pertinent question (suggested to me in a conversation by my teacher, Prof. Gaster): Are things considered holy because of some inherent qualities they possess, and then separated from the normal routine of thought and life; or, do things become holy after they have been so separated? In this latter case, we are left with a question as to why the thing was separated in the first place: thus, in either event, the act of separation is secondary. It would therefore seem to be only an arbitrary position to hold that the idea of separation is primary and original to the notion of holiness; it is more likely that the primary and original meaning of the word still eludes us.

Eliade considered the one concept broad enough to embrace all the various experiences of the holy to be hierophany, which he defined as a "manifestation of the sacred" (The Sacred and the Profane, p. 11). This concept, he claims to be an advance over Otto in that while Otto confined his "numinous" to the irrational experience of the holy, he (Eliade), in his concept of hierophany, embraces "the sacred in all its complexity, and not only in so far as it is irrational!" (The Sacred and the Profane, p. 10). Eliade, however, appears not to have adequately considered the implications of the question raised just above, and his definition appears to be a circular one.

Otto, pp. 5 f.; H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament ("Oxford Paperbacks"; Oxford, 1962), p. 54 (citing biblical evidence); W. Robertson Smith, pp. 140 ff. Snaith, however, (DIOT, p. 32), contends that "the embryo qodesh (holiness) involves an embryo ethical content and embryo ideas of sin. If sin did not exist in the proper sense of the word, then neither did qodesh." (On the "embryo idea," cf. Voegelin's concept of compactness and differentiation in the use of word symbols, as indicated above, pp. 95 f. n. 297.)
In the wide range and long span of human experience, it appears that "anything--object, movement, psychological function, being or even game... anything man has ever handled, felt, come in contact with or loved"--may be considered holy. 394

In touch with that which is holy, man experiences an intuition of something beyond what things normally appear to be--something transcendent --something to which he instinctively reacts in a spirit of subservience. The response man makes to this awareness of the holy is an ambivalent one; for the holy both "attracts and repels." 396 In the terse words of Hutton Webster, 397 there is a universal surmise that "the power that blesses can also blast." On the one hand, man venerates the means through which his experience of the holy appears to have come, and "hopes to secure and strengthen his own reality by the most fruitful contact he can attain with" them. 398 On the other hand, these objects, perhaps as frequently, give rise to fear; and, not infrequently, are considered to bring about the most disastrous consequences.

394 Eliade, Patterns, p. 11.
397 RD, p. 87.
398 Eliade, Patterns, p. 17.
This sense of danger and fear may result from the fact that the "sacred" and the "defiled" often possess alike a mystic potency; and, being experienced in the same manner, are therefore not carefully distinguished from each other; and, consequently, are reacted to in the same manner. Danger may also arise from the possibility of an imperfect observance of the requirements for an effective relationship to the holy thing; or, from having too close a contact with a sacred object which, with a more distant relationship, would be beneficial. One may have a fatal overdose of "holiness." \(^{399}\) "However," writes Eliade, "the elements of taboo itself are always the same: certain things, or persons, or places belong in some way to a different order of being, and therefore any contact with them will produce an upheaval at the ontological level which might well prove fatal." \(^{400}\) We would tend to consider such attitudes as representing the more primitive experience of the holy, and they may, it would seem, appropriately be considered as representing a negative experience of the holy.

\(^{399}\) Ibid., p. 15, where examples from several different cultures are cited. For a more extended study of holiness and taboo, see: W. Robertson Smith, pp. 140 ff., 165 ff.; cf. Snaith, DIOT, pp. 36 ff.

In this paragraph, I used the words "close" and "distant" in a metaphorical sense not necessarily implying spatial distance.

\(^{400}\) Eliade, Patterns, p. 17.

Cf. R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion (London, 1909), pp. 127 f.: "... tabu simply implies that you must be heedful in regard to the supernatural, not that you must be on your guard against it." Marett speaks of tabu as "the negative mode of the supernatural, to which mana corresponds as the positive mode!"—terms I use in the next two sentences.
In contrast, in what may be considered a positive experience of the holy, it is in consciously involving himself with the "something more"--the transcendent aspect of the holy--that man has always found religious meaning for his life. In this meaning, religious man has found an awareness of power to overcome his sense of frailty, an awareness of lastingness to overcome his sense of passing, an awareness of being (reality, significance) to overcome his sense of non-being (non-reality, illusion, insignificance). Of this experience, Eliade writes:

Human existence therefore takes place simultaneously upon two parallel planes: that of the temporal, of change and of illusion, and that of eternity, of substance and of reality.

The one plane is the profane; the other, the holy. When viewed in this perspective, religion may be seen as man's modus operandi for increasing and strengthening his attunement with, and participation

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401 Eliade, Patterns, pp. 19 ff., et passim; Idem, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 8 ff., 12; Otto, pp. 9 ff., 120 ff.; Van der Leeuw, esp. Vol. I, part 1 (pp. 23 ff.). Van der Leeuw's entire two-volume study is based upon relationship to power as the object of religious experience.


403 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 12 ff., et passim; Idem, Cosmos and History, pp. 3 ff., et passim; and, for a study on the biblical quest for being, see: Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality.

404 Eliade, Patterns, p. 460.
in, the holy, \(^{405}\) for the sake of such benefits. \(^{406}\) It is natural that he should attempt such attunement through systematically relating himself to those objects \(^{407}\) --or to representations, duplications, or symbols of those objects \(^{408}\) --through which he conceives the holy to be manifested to him.

It seems natural that man should gain his first primary experiences of the holy through visible spatial objects--the things of nature. Hence, it is also natural that in their religions they oriented themselves primarily to space \(^{409}\) for the satisfaction of their religious quest. Thus, the use of images, in these ancient religions, was both logical and entirely justified by the experiences they were designed to represent and foster--the only primary experiences then adequately recognized and understood. \(^{410}\)


\(^{406}\) I am in this paragraph considering ideological aspects of religious motivation--omitting, but not excluding, the ever-present practical and material motivations of such benefits as rain, a bountiful harvest, victory over enemies, protection from harm, etc.


\(^{408}\) Cf. above, pp. 63 ff., and note esp. n. 200.

\(^{409}\) I continue to use the word "space" in the general sense indicated above, pp. 68 f., n. 213, and pp. 93 ff.

It was equally natural that the writers and redactors of Israel's Scriptures, having experienced the manifestation of the nobler aspects of the holy (i.e., of transcendence, reality, significance, meaning) not primarily through space but through time, should attempt to substitute the temporal symbols of that experience (which they considered to be a significant advance in the apprehension of the holy) for the cosmological symbols of their surrounding culture.

Illustrations of the wide range of man's experience of the holy, however—from extremely primitive notions to the most exalted—are

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411 I use the word "symbols" here, as elsewhere, in a very broad sense to include the objective means of the experience of the sacred as well as what may be symbols in the more technical sense of representation only. Surely the ancients did not carefully distinguish between the two.

Also, in this instance, I use the plural in order to include, along with the Sabbath, Israel's seasonal feasts, which, although temporal symbols, are outside the scope of this study. There is, however, a relevant observation that should be made. The Old Testament, in its finished form, completely historicizes the seasonal festivals which had previously been related to the myths and rituals of cosmological experience. In Israel, these festivals came to commemorate historical events and were no longer attached to mythical time. (On this, see Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year. Cf. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament, p. 90: "It is central to the Hebrew concept of God's revelation in history that these historically conditioned institutions are not assimilated by projecting them back into the beginning.")

On the other hand, the week's labor with a seventh day of rest, was mythologized—made a primordial pattern for human action (See Eliade, Patterns, p. 410)—indicating an important difference in the attitudes of the Bible writers toward the Sabbath and toward the seasonal festivals, though both were temporal symbols. (For comments on the limitations of the mythologizing of the Sabbath, see above, pp. 114 f.)

412 Eliade, Patterns, pp. 25 ff. Cf. above, p. 95.
to be found in the Old Testament as a part of Israel's historical religious life. Furthermore, there are some indications that Israel's Sabbath observance may at one time have been motivated by the most primitive and negative notions of the holy. In the light of the character of, and motivations for, all other ancient days of restriction known to us, this, rather than surprising us, should be expected.

The Primitive Experience of the Holy and the Sabbath

Morris Jastrow, Jr., has perhaps best presented the case for a primitive Sabbath in Israel. In support of his thesis, Jastrow first cites the restrictive character of the day as indicated by:

1. a prohibition upon leaving one's house on the seventh day (Ex. 16:29),
2. a prohibition against kindling fires on the Sabbath (Ex. 35:3),

For evidences of primitive notions, cf., e.g., Lev. 6:20 ff. and 22:4 ff., where similar attitudes are apparently taken toward both "holy" and "unclean" things.

In Lev. 10:2, priests Nadab and Abihu are slain by a sacred fire issuing miraculously from Yahweh as punishment, apparently, for their not observing all the rules for the handling of fire before Yahweh.

In II Sam. 6:16 ff., Uzzah, upon touching the sacred ark, seemingly with only the best of intent, is slain by a manifestation of sacred power. While it is possible that Uzzah broke an established rule of ark-etiquette, this would not account for David's reluctance to have the ark come "into the city of David." It is obvious that David feared that too much of the ark's manifestation of the holy was dangerous. Cf. I Sam. 6:19; Ex. 19:21; 20:18 ff. For further on this topic, see: Snaith, DIOT, pp. 36 ff.

Cf. above, pp. 14, 48 ff.


AJT, II, 2 (April, 1898), pp. 322 ff.
(3) the stoning of a man for gathering wood on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32 ff.), (4) an injunction against baking and cooking (Ex. 16:23),

(5) a hint of a possible ancient Sabbath fast (Isa. 58), (6) the most basic restriction of the Sabbath—that upon labor (Ex. 20:9 f.; Deut. 5:13 f.; Ex. 34:21). Other suggestions of an original dire character in the Sabbath Jastrow finds in the use of נִדְרָת and נִנְשַׁפֶּה which he interprets as "warnings" introducing the Sabbath commandment (Ex. 20:8; Deut. 5:12); the inclusion of the Sabbath in the decalogue as suggesting the idea of propitiation; and in God's abstention from creation on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3) as a possible reminiscence of an older version of "his pacification after his conquest of the forces hostile to the order of the world."

While, as has been shown, in the larger context of ancient near-eastern religion, the central thrust of Jastrow's thesis is entirely

417 Jastrow further suggests that this is also a prohibition against eating anything cooked on a fire. HBT, p. 168. Cf. above, p. 27 (ref. n. 87).

418 AJT, II, 2 (April, 1898), pp. 340 f., where: "it is difficult to believe that people should have been 'warned' and cautioned not to forget the Sabbath, unless the day was one that was fraught with a certain kind of danger." Jastrow's interpretation seems quite far-fetched to me, other implications of נִדְרָת and נִנְשַׁפֶּה appearing more appropriate; detailed comment here is irrelevant.

419 Ibid., p. 341.

420 For all of these, Jastrow cites the Babylonian parallels. The final quotation in the paragraph is from Ibid., p. 345.
warranted, the meagerness of actual evidence which he finds in the Bible, and the extreme casuistry of several of his interpretations, are revealing. If these constitute the biblical evidences for an original experience of a negative response to holiness in Israel's Sabbath, then they are also strong evidences for a purposed ideological reversal of such attitudes by the writers and redactors of the Bible. Surely the intent in the Old Testament is to present the Sabbath as a day of joy, and as a day of positive response to the holiness imparted to the day by Yahweh.

All of the restrictions applied to the Sabbath can be interpreted as coming under, and developing out of, the comprehensive prohibition against labor. Since, however, the singular prohibition against kindling fires is general in its form, it is highly probably that this did reflect an ancient tabu. It is also quite possible, though somewhat less likely (for they are particular prohibitions relating to a single circumstance and may be merely applications of the labor prohibition), that

421 See esp., HBT, pp. 134 ff. Cf. above, pp 48 ff. Though Jastrow presents other arguments more cogent, I think, than some cited here, they are here omitted because of the indirect nature of their possible relationship to the Sabbath.

422 The point is well expressed in Goldman, The Ten Commandments, p. 165. Cf. also: Cassuto, Genesis, I, p. 68.

the injunctions against leaving the house and against baking and cooking were tabus in their own right. Many modern scholars have seen Israel's earliest Sabbath motivated by a response to influences of the moon.

It is of some significance to this study that while there are a number of expressions of ideology concerning the Sabbath in the Old Testament, there are no such expressions, or explanations of the day, setting forth such primitive motivations as were commonly attached to other ancient days of restriction motivated by tabu. The Old Testament clearly represents an advanced stage in the development of days of restriction—a stage in which the more primitive notions had been purged.

Israel's Distinctive Experience of the Holy

It is not within the scope of this study to set forth the whole wide range of Israel's experience of the holy; but, in that experience,

\[424\] Cf. above, pp. 17 ff., 26 f.

\[425\] See, for illustrations of different views: Meinhold, SWAT; Meek, JBL, XXXIII (1914), pp. 201 ff.; Snaith, JNYF, pp. 117 ff. For a review and summary of various theories involving primitive responses to the holy, see: Kraeling, AJS, XLIX, 3 (April, 1933), pp. 218 ff. (Cf. other days of restriction, above, pp. 20 ff., 28 ff.)

\[426\] Cf. above, pp. 18 ff., 27.
certain characteristics may be observed which may be said to be
distinctive and which have a direct bearing upon the ideology of
the Sabbath.

The use of the root $\upsilon \tau p$ in forming an epithet for the gods
is attested in Byblos as far back as the twelfth century B.C., $^{427}$ and
is several times found in the Old Testament with reference to the
pagan gods. $^{428}$ In the Old Testament, however, Israel's experience
of the holy is developed exclusively in her relationship with Yahweh. $^{429}$

"Yahweh of Hosts" is "the Holy God," $^{430}$ "the Holy of Israel." $^{431}$

This is so well known that $\upsilon \tau p$ ('holy'), alone, can serve as

$^{427}$ In the inscription of Yahawmilk: $\upsilon \tau p \, \tau \gamma \tau $ Ν "Company of the Holy Beings." -- Theodor H. Gaster, "A Canaanite Magical

$^{428}$ Gaster, Orientalia, n. s. XI (1942), p. 59, cites the following
passages where this, or, at least the more general "Holy Beings", is
evident: Hos. 12:1; Ps. 16:3; 89:8; Job. 5:1; 15:15; Zech. 14:5; Prov.
30:3; 9:10.

Cf. also: "the holy gods," in Dan. 4:5, 6, 15; 5:11; and the comments
of A. B. Davidson, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel ("The Cam-
bridge Bible"; Cambridge, 1893), p. xxxix. Extra-biblical references
in Aramaic are cited in Gaster, Orientalia, n. s. XI (1942), p. 60; Snaith,
DIOT, p. 42.

$^{429}$ Snaith, DIOT, pp. 42 ff.


$^{431}$ II Kings 19:22; Ps. 78:41; Isa. 1:4; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14;
47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; Jef. 51:5; et al.
his name. His name is holy. He swears by "his holiness." His arm is holy. His word is holy. His spirit is holy.

Things belonging to him are holy: e.g., "my holy mountain"; "his holy heavens." Priests, etc., are holy--not primarily because of their relationship to holy places, but because they have been consecrated to Yahweh. Places where his presence is manifested are thereby made holy.

Underlying all such passages, and implied in the biblical idea of Yahweh's holiness, is the idea of transcendence. The transcendence of Yahweh is not, however, the transcendence of remoteness: it is,

432 Isa. 40:25.
433 Ps. 111:9.
434 Amos 4:2; Cf. Amos 6:8, "has sworn by Himself."
435 Isa. 52:10; Ps. 98:1.
436 Ps. 105:43; cf. Jer. 23:9 ("his holy words"); Ps. 77:14 ("thy way is holy").
437 Ps. 51:13; Isa. 63:10.
438 Isa. 11:9.
439 Ps. 20:7.
440 Ex. 29:44; Jud. 17:5, 12; Lev. 21:6 ff.; II Kings 4:9; II Chron. 35:3. The point is made by Snaith, DIOT, p. 44.
441 Ex. 3:5; cf. Ex. 29:43.
rather, the transcendence of otherness, and the transcendence of uniqueness or singularity.

To whom will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him? says the Holy.

Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is One (or, alone)!

In spite of this transcendence and singularity, the God of the Old Testament is also always near to those attuned with him.

For I am God, and not man:
The Holy in your midst.

Thus says the High and Exalted One, who inhabits time and whose name is Holy: in the high and holy place I dwell, and also with the contrite one and the humble of spirit.

It was, apparently, a sense of the nearness of this otherness of Yahweh which led Jacob to exclaim: "How awe-ful is this place: for it is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

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442 Snaith, DIOT, p. 47.
443 Israel I. Efros, Ancient Jewish Philosophy (Detroit, 1964), pp. 7 f.
444 Osa. 40:25.
445 JPS².
446 Deut. 6:4.
447 Hos. 11:9.
448 Isa. 57:15.
449 Gen. 28:17.
Isaiah, the near presence of the holy Yahweh was manifested in the shaking door-posts of the temple. 450

In the Old Testament, though the place of a manifestation of Yahweh may partake of the holiness of Yahweh, it never does so on any principle of consubstantiality. 452 It is a unique feature of Israel's experience of her holy God, that it combined transcendence with nearness without consubstantiality. 453 Surely the stern and strong opposition to image-representation combined with a primary orientation to time instead of to space must have contributed toward that development.

But neither the holiness of Yahweh, nor his nearness, were experienced primarily in such manifestations of mysterium tremendum as are pictured in the theophanies of Jacob, Moses, and Isaiah. 458

450 Isa. 6:4.
451 Cf. also the experience of Moses at the flaming bush: Ex. 3:5.
452 Cf. above, p. 55.
453 Cf. Efros, chap. i.
454 Ex. 20:4, 23; 34:17; Deut. 5:8, et al. Cf. above, pp. 95, 128 f.
455 See above, pp. 84 ff., 93 ff.
456 Gen. 28:17 (ref. above, p. 136).
457 Ex. 3:5 (ref. above, n. 451).
458 Isa. 6:4 (ref. above, this page).
The point is well made in the story of Elijah at the cave. I Kings 19:9 ff.
For biblical Israel, such experiences were relatively rare, and constituted only a starting point, as it were, for her distinctive experience of Yahweh and his holiness. 459

Israel Efros has most concisely summarized the development of the idea of holiness in the Old Testament: 460

The word "holy" kadosh is an attempt to express both ontological and moral transcendence. Three meanings are imbedded in this term which primarily denotes "set aside," or "separate." First, it suggests separate or unapproachable because of danger, as in the case of Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19:12) or the Ark (I Sam. 6:29; II Sam. 6:5-7) and hence the prohibition of even looking at holy objects evolved (Num. 4:20). Second, and perhaps latest, the term means set aside for moral excellence and divine worship, as in the expression "a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). And the third use, . . . which came between the other two strata of meaning, denotes unapproachable not because of danger but because of ontological and ethical excellence. . . . (Isa. 6:3).

Isaiah's theophany 461 well illustrates this precise progression of Israel's experience of holiness: there is, first, an overwhelming and dread-filled experience of the divine presence and power; there is, second, a perception of that holy presence in its ontological and ethical transcendence; there is, third, an experience of participating in the

459 Cf. the Sinai "revelation" which was, in a very real sense, the starting point of Israel's life as a people, and as the people of Yahweh.

460 Efros, p. 9. Cf. also, p. 2.

461 Isa. 6:1 ff.
divine holiness, with a cleansing from moral imperfections, and becoming consecrated as the agent of that holiness.

In biblical thought, the transcendence (holiness) of Yahweh, which included his being in absolute control of things, ruled out the principle of fate—so common in cosmological thought, and so closely tied to days of restriction—and came to demand, in its stead, ultimately and logically, the principle of ethical and moral perfection:

Shall not the judge of all the earth make right judgment? 464

Abraham's rhetorical question takes us to the heart of biblical thought about Yahweh. As Snaith succinctly puts it: 465

The Hebrew does not say that Jehovah is, or that Jehovah exists, but that He does.

This conception underlies a whole cluster of words which, taken together, may fairly be said to characterize Israel's holy God. The centrality of four of these words is clearly indicated in Psalm 89:15 where they are

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462 Cf. above, p. 72 (Gilgamesh ponders the inevitability of fate); pp. 66 n. 204, 68, 109 (With his rise to the position of supreme deity, Marduk also receives authority and power to "determine the fates").

463 Cf., e.g., above, pp. 15 ff., 26 ff.


465 DIOT, p. 48.
closely associated with the holiness of Yahweh:

Righteousness (מַחֲטֵפָה) and justice (מִשְׁמַרְתֶּךָ) are the foundation of thy throne;
Steadfast love (חֳבוֹדֶךָ) and faithfulness (דִּבְרֵי חָיָה) go before thee.

For our shield belongs to Yahweh,
And our king to the Holy of Israel (הַגָּדוֹלָה הָיָה).

In a moving declaration of Yahweh's intent toward Israel, Hosea uses essentially these same words:

I will betroth you to me for ever ( הודֹתֵנִי מֵעָלֶיךָ),
I will betroth you to me with righteousness (מַחֲטֵפָה מִשְׁמַרְתֶּךָ)
and with justice (מִשְׁמַרְתֶּךָ מִשְׁמַרְתֶּךָ),
With steadfast love (חֳבוֹדֶךָ חֳבוֹדֶךָ), and with mercies (חֳבוֹדֶךָ חֳבוֹדֶךָ);
I will betroth you to me with fidelity (דִּבְרֵי חָיָה דִּבְרֵי חָיָה),
And you will know (יְדַעַתְּךָ יְדַעַתְּךָ) Yahweh.

In the Old Testament, the character of Yahweh is not delineated by philosophical abstraction; it does not consist merely in qualities which he possesses; and it is not apprehended by mere reflection. The

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466 Ps. 89:15, 18 (substantially following RSV).

467 Hos. 2:21 f.

468 Whatever the precise meaning of this word, it certainly carries the notion of duration, which is of particular interest to this study. Cf. BDB, pp. 761 ff.: "long duration, antiquity, futurity", etc. It is also of particular interest here that this notion of duration is paralleled with Yahweh's righteousness, justice, etc.

469 BDB, p. 933: "compassion". (This word is in addition to the four roots cited above in Ps. 89:15).

470 From the same root (כַּלְכַּלָּה) as is יְדַעַתְּךָ in Ps. 89:15 above.

471 Cf. below, pp. 190 f.
God of the Old Testament is a God who manifests himself and his holiness in action:

Who is like you, O Yahweh, among the gods;
Who, like you, is so majestic in holiness—
Awesome in splendor, working wonders! 472

Especially is Israel's God manifested to her in the events of her historical existence:

I am Yahweh, thy God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves. 473

One who does righteous deeds is Yahweh:
Acts of justice for all oppressed ones.
He made known his ways to Moses:
To the children of Israel his deeds. 474

When Samuel recites the history of his people, he characterizes that recital as a pleading (as before a judge), a setting forth of right

(מִשְׁפָּטִים). The history itself, he avers, constitutes "all the righteous acts of Yahweh which he did to you and your fathers." 475

Micah makes the same characterization of Israel's history: its events are the "righteous acts of Yahweh." 476 Even Israel's calamitous experiences are interpreted by her prophets as manifestations of the holiness and righteousness of Yahweh: 477 so also are the calamities

472 Ex. 15:11 (the last two lines substantially as JPS2.)
473 Ex. 20:2.
475 I. Sam. 12:7.
476 Micah 6:5.
477 The theme is almost constant in the prophetic books. See, e.g., Jer. 4, 5, 6. The theme is explored as a problem in Habakkuk.
of other nations. These facts indicate that Yahweh was not so much judged to be righteous by comparing his acts with some standard of righteousness as he was considered to himself set the standard of righteousness—perhaps better, to reveal himself to be the standard of righteousness—by his acts. In the words of Isaiah:

Yahweh of hosts is exalted in justice (אֱלֹהֵי הָיָם יַעֲבֹדֵהוּ),
The holy God shows himself holy in righteousness (יָשָׁר יָשִּֽׁרְאֵהוּ).

R. B. Y. Scott appears to have caught the intended implication of these lines when he writes:

That which exalts God above man is not merely the mysterious power of deity but the justice which is of the essence of his being, and the judgment by which that justice is vindicated; either translation of mishpat is suitable here. ... Holiness is the quality of divinity, that which distinguishes God from a man; the idea has no necessary ethical content in itself. ...

What Isaiah declares with resounding emphasis is that justice and righteousness belong to the very nature of Israel's God and hence are fundamental in the quality of holiness associated with him and with his worship.


478 Again, a common theme. See, e.g.: Jer. 51; Eze. 28; Isa. 43:3, 14; 45:14; 47; 48:14; 49:22 f.; et al.

479 Isa. 5:16.

480 Moral and ethical qualities, and gracious beneficence, were frequently ascribed to cosmological deities (see, e.g., Enuma elish, VII, 34 ff.; and, for Egypt, cf. J. H. Breasted, DRT, pp. 174 ff.), but, as long as polytheism and the principles of consubstantiality and fate prevailed, absolute sovereignty was impossible for the gods; hence the development of moral excellence and its ultimate demand upon man, as enjoined by certain Old Testament prophets, was impossible. Cf. Kaufmann, pp. 38 f.

Testament, so frequently associated together that a close similarity in their meanings seems obvious. They are both also frequently associated with holiness (root: יִשׁ כּ).

The original signification of the root יִשׁ כּ is usually thought to be straight.

The word thus very easily comes to be used as a figure for that which is, or ought to be, firmly established, successful and enduring in human affairs. It stands for that norm in the affairs of the world to which men and things should conform, and by which they can be measured.

Tsedeq, with its kindred words, signifies that standard which God maintains in this world. It is the norm by which all must be judged. What this norm is, depends entirely upon the Nature of God.

P יִשׁ כּ is defined as rightness, righteousness, justness; what is right, just, normal, etc. It is not, however, so much an idea as it is a kind of action.

Tsedeq is something that happens here, and can be seen, and recognized, and known. . . . When the Hebrew thought of tsedeq (righteousness), he did not think of Righteousness in general, or of Righteousness as an Idea. On the contrary, he thought of a particular righteous act, an action, concrete, capable of exact description, fixed in time and space. (italics mine.) He could take note of tsedeq actually happening. If the word had anything like a general meaning for him, then it was as it was represented by a whole series of events. (italics mine.)

\[482\) DIOT, p. 72.
\[483\) Ibid., p. 73.
\[485\) BDB, pp. 841 f.
\[486\) DIOT, p. 77. Consider the emphasis on temporal event in contrast to the durative righteousness of pagan gods in myth. Cf. Jud. 5:11.
means:

the judgment which is given by the shophet (judge), whence the word can mean justice, ordinance, legal right, and so forth. . . . To the Hebrew it meant the demands of God's law, and God's justice. 487

Yahweh will "judge ( בדוע') the world with righteousness ( прав)." 488

Let them praise thy great and fearful name, for it is holy ( בחרות). . . . Justice ( בדוע) and righteousness ( נправ) hast thou executed in Jacob. 489

Yahweh's acts also reveal his נבון, traditionally translated mercy, and loving-kindness; more recently, steadfast love. 490 The word implies a relationship between persons who recognize and accept the obligations of that relationship; hence it is closely connected with the idea of covenant. It most frequently refers, directly or indirectly, to Yahweh's faithful firm adherence--with everlasting love and mercy--to his covenant with Israel; "and has from first to last a strong suggestion of fixedness, steadfastness, determined loyalty." 491 The well-known Psalm 136 well illustrates the use of this concept. 492


488 Ps. 98:9.

489 Ps. 99:3 f.

490 So, RSV.

491 DIOT, p. 130. For a somewhat extended study, see pp. 94 ff. Cf. BDB, pp. 338 f., emphasizing goodness, kindness, fidelity, etc.

492 Other passages are numerous. For citations, see: BDB, pp. 338 f.; DIOT, pp. 94 ff.
Also associated with Yahweh in his holiness, along with righteousness, just judgment, and loving faithfulness are two words from the root (to confirm, support): (firmness, steadfastness, fidelity), and (firmness, faithfulness, truth). The primary emphasis of these words is upon constancy—absolute dependability. Hence, though they are frequently translated truth, their truth is not so much the intellectually-perceived quality of correspondence between statement and fact, as it is a quality of behavior. Of Yahweh, we read:

He will judge ( ) the world in righteousness ( ), The peoples in his faithfulness ( ).

493 
494 
495 ( )
496 

497 BDB, p. 52. Cf. Arabic: , to be true, loyal, faithful; , to be secure; to trust to, confide in; to entrust with; etc.—J. G. Hāvā, Arabic-English Dictionary (Beirut, 1915).

498 BDB, p. 53. Also commonly translated as truth.


500 The emphasis upon absolute dependability, as applied to Yahweh, is a contrast to the ever-present anxiety over the lack of dependability characterizing the Mesopotamian gods. It absolutizes, however, that strong confidence in the gods which had long characterized Egyptian thought. See: H. and H. A. Frankfort, BP, pp. 240 ff. (For a brief discussion of various notions of truth (but with special reference to myth) see: Gaster, Numen, I, 3 (Sept., 1954), pp. 207 ff.).

501 Ps. 96:13. For other passages, see: BDB, p. 53; DIOT, p. 100.
Thou art righteous (יְשַׁעְיָהוּ) in all that has come upon us:
For with fidelity (יְשָׁעַי) has thou acted;
While we have acted wickedly.502

Such a development in the manifestation of Yahweh's holiness
led easily to the idea of Yahweh as the one who delivers from bondage,
distresses, and calamities of all kinds. He is therefore a "saviour"
(שָׂעָר ; root: שָׂעָר to deliver, to give victory, to give prosperity,
etc.),503 as in:

I am Yahweh, thy God, the Holy of Israel, thy saviour.504
I, even I, am Yahweh, and beside me, there is no saviour.505

He is also considered a "redeemer" (הָעָרֹב :506

Your redeemer, the Holy of Israel.507

502Neh. 9:33. For other passages, see BDB, p. 54; DIOT, pp.
100 ff.

503BDB, p. 446: associated with "(Ar. שָׁעָר, be capacious, II.
make wide, spacious, IV. make sufficient, V. VIII. be or live in abun-
dance) . . . . . . 1. be liberated, saved (prop. placed in freedom)",
etc. (Note: one should avoid reading into this word those later Christian
associations so familiar in our culture. The same is true of "redeemer"
considered next.)

504Isa. 43:3.

505Isa. 43:11. For other passages, see: BDB, p. 446, and
DIOT, pp. 80, 86.

506BDB, p. 145: from הָעָרֹב , redeem, act as kinsman, do the
part of next of kin; R. C. Dentan, in IDB, R-Z, pp. 21 f., where: "belon-
ging to the realm of family law."; DIOT, pp. 85 f.

507Isa. 43:14. This term is especially, but not exclusively, used
in II and III Isaiah: 41:14; 44:6; 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; Cf.
43:1; 44:22 f.; 48:20; 52:9; 51:10; 52:3; 59:20; 60:16; 62:12; 63:4, 9, 16.
For other passages, see BDB, p. 145.
In a study of the moral and ethical aspects of the character of Yahweh, Snaith found a "truly distinctive element" in "a deep-seated and fundamental bias" indicating "a special consideration for the poor and down-trodden." Illustrative passages presenting this theme are:

He raises up the poor from the dust;  
He lifts up the beggar from the dump. 509

To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon;  
From the prison, those who sit in darkness. 510

To thee the helpless one commits himself;  
To the orphan thou art a helper. 511

Various other words are associated with Yahweh's holy character -- so different, always, from that of men--but these are central, and sufficient to illustrate the basic nature of that "moral transcendence" and "ethical excellence" as it was experienced by the biblical writers. The following passages fairly summarize that experience:

509 I Sam. 2:8.
511 Ps. 10:14; cf. 72:12; 112:9. DIOT cites numerous passages, pp. 54 ff., et passim.
512 Efros, p. 9 (quoted above, p. 138 n. 460).

Cassirer sees the association of ethical and moral force with the divine as the essential ingredient of monotheistic religion which enabled it to supplant primitive mythology--the power of righteousness prevailing over the power of nature. -- Essay on Man, pp. 99 f.
Upright is the word of Yahweh,  
All his works are done with dependability (שֹׁלֵאָד).  
He loves righteousness (כְּרֵיעָה) and justice (מִשְׁרֵיָה).  
The earth is full of the steadfast love (כְּרֵיעָה) of Yahweh.  
By the word of Yahweh were the heavens made,  
By the breath of his mouth, all their host. . . .  
Let all the earth tremble before Yahweh,  
Let all the inhabitants of the world be awed before him.  
For he spoke and it was,  
He commanded and it stood fast.  
Yahweh brings the counsel of the nations to naught,  
He frustrates the plans of the peoples;  
But Yahweh's plans persist through all time.  

He will speak peace to his people—to his faithful ones,  
But not them that return to folly.  
Surely his salvation (יִשָּׁרֶא) is nigh to them that fear him;  
That glory may dwell in our land.  
Kindness (כְּרֵיעָה) and truth (כְּרֵיעָה) have met together;  
Righteousness (כְּרֵיעָה) and peace have kissed each other.  
Fidelity (כְּרֵיעָה) sprouts from the earth,  
And righteousness (כְּרֵיעָה) looks down from heaven.  
Surely Yahweh gives that which is good,  
And our land will yield her produce.  

"And our land will yield her produce." This, as we have seen,  
was precisely a major objective—perhaps the major objective—of cosmologically-oriented ritual. In the mainstream of biblical thought,

513 Ps. 33:4 ff. Note references to both creation and historical events, which here receive their character from the character of Yahweh. (For this last line, RSV: "The counsel of the Lord stands for ever.")

514 In an important study of "holiness" and "glory" in Hebrew thought, Efros writes: "Glory is the mystical tendency to divine nearness . . . whereas Holiness . . . is the rationalistic insistence on divine transcendence. . . . These two tendencies need each other."—Efros, p. 26. Cf. above, pp. 135 ff.

515 Ps. 85:8 ff.

516 Above, pp. 54, 61, 116.

517 Cf., with the line from Ps. 85:13, just quoted, this from the close of Enuma elish: "Who provides grazing and drinking places, enriches their stalls," "who furnishes millet, causes barley to appear." (VI, 124; VII, 67, Speiser trans., ANET, pp. 69c, 71b). Cf. Patai, p. 1.
it is not ritual, but the holy Yahweh's manifestation of righteousness, which brings into man's world that power of the "other" which is necessary for the creation and maintenance of order (cosmos).

The biblical term best comprehending and expressing the idea of divine power flowing into the world is "blessing." In the Old Testament, the power to impart blessing rests ultimately and exclusively with God. Biblical Israel saw herself experiencing the power of blessing especially in (1) the fertility of family and cattle; (2) in rain and the fertility of fields; and (3) in the conquest of her enemies. In general the experience of prosperity was considered to constitute the manifestation of blessing, but the idea seems to embrace "the entire power of life, the strength underlying all progress and self-expansion."

518 Or, ritual plus a god-king, as was especially emphasized in Egypt (see esp. Frankfort, Kingship; and cf. above, pp. 79 f.). There are, of course, numerous passages in the Old Testament reflecting cosmological thought in seeing Yahweh's sacred power mediated through Jerusalem, the temple, and the Davidic kingship. On this, see: Gaster, Thespis, pp. 73 ff., 414 ff., 456 ff.; Patai, Man and Temple; Pedersen, Israel, III-IV; and Voegelin, Israel and Revelation, esp. pp. 303 ff.

519 root: . Other meanings, not relevant here, are: to kneel, to praise, to adore, to salute, greet, etc. See: BDB, pp. 138 f.

520 See: Ex. 32:29; Num. 6:27; 23:20; etc.

521 Pedersen, I-II, p. 212. The concept is analyzed in detail in Pedersen, I-II, pp. 182 ff., where numerous biblical passages cited. Another study is: A. Murtonen, "The Use and Meaning of the Words Lebârek and Barâkah in the Old Testament," Vetus Testamentum, IX, 2 (April, 1959), pp. 158 ff. Murtonen emphasizes the positive aspect of "blessing" in claiming that the primary meaning of "blessing" is not fertility but fertilization.
The biblical ideal of man's participating in the blessing and benefits which constitute the desirable manifestation of Israel's holy God were not, however, to be realized automatically, anymore than 
was the experience of holiness and order in cosmological societies.
Man (in the Old Testament, it was, primarily, Israel) had a part to play--an important part--in bringing the constructive power of Yahweh's holiness into the world. Just as, in cosmologically-oriented societies, this sacred creative power was thought to be replenished by seasonal ritual reenactments of the myth of creation, so, for Israel, the flow of this power into the world depended upon her imitation of Yahweh's righteousness. 

In both cases, any failure to fulfill the established requirements had the same disastrous consequences: a return of their respective worlds to chaos. Therefore, to Israel, through her prophets, the word of Yahweh was:

Let justice (\(\mathfrak{y}\)) flow like water,
And righteousness (\(\mathfrak{y}\)) as a constant stream.

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522 Lev. 26:3 ff.; Deut. 7:12; 28:1 ff.; cf. I. Kings 17; Ps. 128. This is a theme frequently found also in the prophets: note, e.g., the explicit contrast of this theme with the ritual approach in Micah 6:6 ff. (This is not a condemnation of ritual, but an assertion that ritual, without righteousness, etc., is quite ineffectual with Yahweh.)

523 Lev. 26:14 ff.; Deut. 28:15 ff.; also a frequently-expressed theme in the prophets, for which see, e.g.: Jer. 4; 22:3 ff.; Micah 6:13 ff.; the book of Joel, etc.

524 Amos 5:24. Note, from vv. 21 ff., that this theme is presented as a deliberate contrast to the ritual technique which is said to be invalid under the present circumstances.
For the prosperity of Israel's land and people, the practice of those ethical virtues manifested to Israel through the acts of Yahweh was as important as nature's life-giving water.  

Israel: an "omphalos"

The figure of a river for representing the medium through which Yahweh's holiness is experienced in Israel is also appropriate in another respect: it is characteristic of ancient (and primitive) peoples to think of holiness as though it were a fluid—a fluid which passes easily from one person or object to another upon contact.

The contact, in one way or another, is essential; and a major concern of cultic religion is the social establishment, maintenance, and control of the modes of contact with the holy. Biblical examples are numerous,

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The association of "river" with "justice" was common in the ancient Near East. In Hammurabi's Code, persons accused of certain crimes were to throw themselves into the river; the river, as a divine judge, was thought to determine their guilt or innocence by whether or not the person was drowned. (The Code of Hammurabi, Laws: 2, 132 (cf. 133a). For trans. by Theophile J. Meek, see ANET, pp. 166, 171.) In Ugaritic texts, "Judge River" is a common epithet of the water god, Yamm. (See the Baal and 'Anat texts. For Gordon, trans.: UL, pp. 11 ff.; for Ginsberg, trans.; ANET, pp. 129 ff.) Cf. also: Gordon, Before the Bible, pp. 236, 257.

For us, perhaps electric current would be a more apt simile, but the modernity of such a figure makes it both anachronistic and incongruous. The idea, however, is not confined to ancients and primitives. It expresses what is probably a universal attitude toward the holy. One familiar example is the "laying on of hands" practiced, so far as I know, universally, in Christian churches, for the ordination of its ministers.
among which are: Ex. 29:37, "anything touching the altar shall be holy"; 527 Ex. 30:22 ff., the "tent of meeting" and its appurtenances are made holy through the application of an oil charged with the sacred substance; Eze. 44:19, the priests are not to wear their sacred robes out among the people lest they "sanctify the people with their garments." 528

Since holiness is, by its very nature, literally from "out of this world," it is important to have a fixed point through which the "fluid" can flow into the world. As indicated above, such fixed points are characteristic of ancient and primitive cultures and are considered to be "centers" of the world; such a center being frequently conceived as the omphalos (navel) of the world. 529 It is at such points that "heaven" touches "earth," 530 and through these points, the power of the holy is mediated to society. Most commonly, the so-called center is a sacred mountain (actual or imitative). By extension,


528 Cf. Eze. 46:20; Isa. 65:5; Num. 8:5 ff. An interesting discussion of the problem of transfer of holiness is found in Hag. 2:11 ff. Cf. also above, p. 130 n. 413. With Num. 8:5 ff., just cited, cf. 18:1-4, for an indication of degrees of holiness corresponding to the strength of various relationships.

529 See above, pp. 63 f.

530 Hell, also reaches upward to the earth at the omphalos.
sacred cities, temples, and royal palaces become identified with this center.

Eliade has collected and briefly summarized the data for Mesopotamia:

According to Mesopotamian beliefs, a central mountain joins heaven and earth; it is the Mount of the Lands, the connection between territories. Properly speaking, the ziggurat was a cosmic mountain, i.e., a symbolic image of the cosmos, the seven stories representing the seven planetary heavens (as at Borsippa) or having the colors of the world (as at Ur).

The names of the Babylonian temples and sacred towers themselves testify to their assimilation to the cosmic mountain: "Mount of the House," "House of the Mount of All Lands," "Mount of Tempests," "Link Between Heaven and Earth." A cylinder from the period of King Gudea says that "The bed-chamber [of the god] which he built was [like] the cosmic mountain . . . " Babylon was a Bab-ilani, a "gate of the gods," for it was there that the gods descended to earth.

Finally, because of its situation at the center of the cosmos, the temple or the sacred city is always the meeting point of the three cosmic regions: heaven, earth, and hell. Dur-an-ki, "Bond of Heaven and Earth," was the name given to the sanctuaries of Nippur and Larsa, and doubtless to that of Sippara. Babylon had many names, among them "House of the Base of Heaven and Earth," "Bond of Heaven and Earth." But it is always Babylon that is the scene of the connection between the earth and the lower regions, for the city had been built upon bab apsi, the "Gate of the Apsu"--apsu designating the waters of chaos before the Creation.

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531 Eliade, Cosmos and History, pp. 12 ff.

Wensinck lists the following mythical characteristics of the omphalos as being typical: (1) it is raised higher than the territories around it—hence, a mountain; (2) it is considered to be the origin of the earth; (3) it is the center of the earth; (4) it is the place of communication with both the nether and upper worlds; and (5) it is the place from which food is distributed over the earth. 533

The symbol omphalos seems most appropriate for expressing biblical Israel's self-image of her relationship both to Yahweh and to the world of nations surrounding her. 534

Jacob's dream 535 was, essentially, of an omphalos: its ladder connected earth with heaven; its "angels of God" mediated the stream of divine holiness; and Jacob himself evidently recognized the symbolism, calling the place "the house of God," "the gate of heaven." The significance of the dream was explained to Jacob by Yahweh himself from the top of the ladder:

The land whereon thou liest I will give to thee and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth

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533Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," VKAW, n.s. XVII (1917) No. 1, pp. xi, xii.

534 Cf. Voegelin, pp. 27 f., et passim.

535 Gen. 28:11 ff.

536 Ibid., vv. 13 ff. Note that, as with Abraham (Gen. 12:1 ff.), the primary orientation to time is made plain. Place is promised in the distant future; in the meantime, Yahweh promises to attend him wherever he goes.
... and in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land.

Here, with the dream symbolism of the omphalos in the background, Jacob is told that his seed is to mediate Yahweh's blessing to all families of the earth.

Consider also Ezekiel 5:5.

Thus says the Lord Yahweh: This Jerusalem! I placed her in the midst of the nations, with countries surrounding her.

Then follows a diatribe against the people for their sins, showing that Jerusalem, here, is not to be taken literally, but as an instance of metonymy for the people of Israel. That the idea of mediating the blessings of Yahweh's holy nature was in the prophet's mind is clear from his philosophy that the people living at the center had special obligations beyond those living elsewhere, and, from the fact that the thrust of his charges against the people is that they have defiled Yahweh's sanctuary.

Ezekiel 38:12 actually speaks of restored Israel as "the people ... dwelling upon the navel of the earth." 538

537 I use the word Israel here, as elsewhere, to refer to the whole Hebrew people. This is especially appropriate in reference to the text just quoted, for there was only one Hebrew kingdom when Jerusalem, the city, was established as the "center" of the nation and cult.

538 So BDB, p. 371; and LXX: εἵνεκα τοῦ ὄμπαλον τῆς γῆς. The omphalos theme is, of course, along with other cosmological themes, frequently associated with the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the Davidic kingship, along the lines of cosmological thought. It would
Attention has been called to the position of the pharaoh in Egypt as "an avatar of a continuous, perpetual being; . . . as such . . . its real incarnation." In a sense, the king constituted, along with his capital, the omphalos of Egyptian order. In this position, he was, as shown above, called the "son" of his god, the "beloved," the "first-born." Biblical thought not only utilizes this symbol—the "son," the "first-born"—transferring it to Israel; but, in doing so, so strongly associates it with the exodus from Egypt that there can be little doubt about its implications for the idea of Israel as the omphalos through which Yahweh imparts the blessings of his holiness to the rest of the world.

 semble to lie at the heart of Eze. 40-48, for example; it occurs many times in the prophets, and is especially frequent in the Psalms. On this, see: Patai, pp. 85 ff.; Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, pp. 262 f.; Voegelin, pp. 277 ff., 303 ff.; Gaster's study of the Seasonal Pattern in the Psalms, Thespis, pp. 73 ff., 415 ff.; Wensinck's more comprehensive study, "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," VKAW, n. s. XVII (1917), No. 1; and Eric Burrows in The Labyrinth (ed. S. H. Hooke), pp. 59 ff.

539 Above, pp. 79 ff.

540 Gaster, as quoted above, pp. 79 f. n. 260.

541 At his coronation, the Pharaoh was made to stand on an elevated place symbolizing the Primeval Hill (omphalos) of creation (Frankfort, Kingship, p. 108). See also Kingship, p. 152, where (citing De Buck, Oerheuvel) Frankfort writes: "There is some evidence to show that the throne of the Pharaoh—himself a god—also imitated the Primeval Hill."; note the curious notions and practices associated with the placenta (Kingship, pp. 70 ff., and see quotations from Egyptian texts on pp. 27, 59, 149, 181, et passim.

542 Above, pp. 80 ff.

To this may be added such direct statements as the following:

And ye shall be to me a property treasured above all peoples, though all the earth is mine. And ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. \(^{544}\)

Yahweh's holiness and time

Holiness and time are inextricably related: this is as true for religions of the cosmological form as it is for those of the historical form. Reference has already been made to Cassirer's observation that myth is an expression of the intuition of time. \(^{545}\) Cassirer also pointed out that, in myth, time constitutes the primary dimension in which the holy is seen as separated from the ordinary profane life of man:

All the sanctity of mythical being goes back ultimately to the sanctity of the origin. It does not adhere immediately to the content of the given but to its coming into being, not to its qualities and properties but to its genesis in the past. By being thrust back into temporal distance, by being situated in the depths of the past, a particular content is not only established, but also justified as such. Time is the first original form of this spiritual justification. Specifically human


\(^{545}\) Above, p. 106 n. 338.

\(^{546}\) Philosophy of Symbolic Forms; II, Mythical Thought, p. 105, (italics mine).
existence-usages, customs, social norms, and ties—are thus hallowed by being derived from institutions prevailing in the primordial mythical past; and existence itself, the 'nature' of things, becomes truly understandable to mythical feeling and thinking only when seen in this perspective.

It is, furthermore, of the essence of the holy that it be durative—durative in the sense of "an ideal, timeless entity, embracing but transcending the here and now." In large measure, it would seem, it is the human awareness of this aspect of existence, parallel to and transcending the everyday experience of the punctual and passing, that gives rise to the idea of the holy. The continued renewal of, and an increased realization of, participation in the durative aspect of the holy is a central purpose of all religions. There is, therefore, nothing particularly unique in biblical passages which merely ascribe duration to Yahweh and his righteousness: the like is common in cosmological literature.

On the other hand, it does seem that ascriptions of everlastingness to cosmological deities must have been made with "tongue in cheek," as it were, and must have constituted more a pious hope than

547 Gaster, Thespis, p. 5 (also quoted above, p. 45).
548 Cf. above, pp. 61 ff.
549 E.g., Ps. 117:2; 119:142; Isa. 63:16; etc.
550 For typical examples, see above, pp. 67 n. 206; 69 n. 214; 70 n. 217; 80 n. 263; 82 n. 270.
an absolute conviction; for the myths of the gods freely recited their feuds, their depositions, and even their deaths. 551 This would be unthinkable in the Old Testament. Its writers so much absolutized the durativeness of Yahweh—and all elements of his essential nature—that were this durativeness in any way impaired, or even threatened, Yahweh would no longer be Yahweh. Durativeness is so much the absolute and inviolable essence of Yahweh's righteousness that any break in its lastingness would vitiate it.

This duration of Yahweh's righteousness transcends that of the phenomena of nature; and, in contrast to cosmological thought, has no necessary relationship to nature. Nature's phenomena illustrate that duration; they do not set its limits. Furthermore, in the Bible, the manifestation of this duration is on the plane of the successive generations of men rather than on the plane of myth as in cosmological thought. It may be perceived, therefore, in the punctual events of human experience, rather than through ritual attuned to the rhythms of nature.

The heavens may be dissolved as smoke,
The earth, as a garment, wear out;
And those who dwell therein will die like gnats: 552
But my salvation shall be for ever,
And my righteousness shall not be shattered. 553

551 Enuma elish provides excellent examples of all these.
552 "like gnats" follows RSV; see: IB, V, p. 594 (exegesis by James Muilenburg).
553 Isa. 51:6 (cf. also, vv. 7, 8, where those who experience Yahweh's righteousness are promised "salvation to all generations" while those who do not are said to be doomed to disappear as a woolen garment infested with moths.)
The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed;
But my kindness shall not depart from thee. 554

Generation to generation shall laud thy works. . . .
And loudly sing thy righteousness. . . .
Thy kingdom is a kingdom for all ages,
And thy dominion endures through all generations. 555

Such a characterization of Yahweh reflects an absolute, total,
and invulnerable confidence which no passing events could demolish. 556

In the strength of this confidence, and in contradistinction to those
attitudes of cosmological order in which temporality was seen as an
obstacle to man's experience of the holy, 557 Israel's prophets em-
braced the experience of punctual time, regardless of the quality of

554 Isa. 54:10.

555 Ps. 145:4, 7, 13; cf. Isa. 40:8, 28; 21:8; 54:10; Ps. 90:1 ff.;
103:15, 17; 136; Ex. 3:14 f. (also: Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5).

556 The development and maintenance of this confidence is one
reason for the necessity of a revelation of the "glory" of Yahweh as
a complement to that of his holiness. Cf. above, p. 148, n. 514, the

557 See above, pp. 59 f., nn. 191, 192; 71 f. (Gilgamesh); 75 f.
(Egypt); and: Eliade, Cosmos and History, pp. 35 ff., 85 ff., et passim;
Idem, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 68 ff.; Idem, Patterns, pp. 388
ff. Eliade sees ancient and primitive societies at attempting, in their
ritual, actually to escape temporality—to abolish time. This, perhaps,
goes too far, but it does point up the failure of such peoples to satisfac-
torily solve the problems of change and decay. (For a criticism of
Eliade's position, here, see Brandon, History, Time and Deity, pp. 25 ff.)
It would probably be more accurate to say that a motive of ancient
seasonal ritual was to bring the efficacy and power of the past—especially
the primeval past—into the ongoing human experience of temporal exis-
tence. Cf. Gaster, Thespis, (on "purgation") pp. 6 f., 17 ff.
its content, and made it the medium of the nation's experience of the holy--of "the durative and transcendental." These prophets accepted the vicissitudes of temporal existence head-on, as it were, matching that acceptance with an ideology which made those vicissitudes not only bearable, but progressively revealing in an ontological sense, thus breaking the hold of "The Myth of the Eternal Return."

Because, in Biblical Israel, significant human events were conceived to be brought about by the initiative of, and to fulfill the purposes of, one divine being--beside whom there was no other, declaring from the beginning what should be afterwards, and from the outset, that which was not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and whatever I wish I will do--these events constituted a "history." Such events were, as in

---Desirable or undesirable.

---From Gaster, Thespis, p. 5 (in the quotation above, p. 65).

---As, e.g., in the bar-maid's philosophy: Gilgamesh, X, iii (ANET, p. 90a).

---Cf. above, pp. 90 ff., 102 ff.

---From Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return. (Formerly, the title consisted only of the portion quoted above.)

---Isa. 46:9 f.

---To indulge an alliteration: in a very real sense, His (Yahweh's) Story, just as myth was the story of the divine realm when conceived to be inhabited by many gods. For a discussion of the "meaning of history" in this context, see Voegelin, pp. 126 ff.
cosmological societies, interpreted as acts of the divine; but they were left where they were experienced--on the earthly plane of human experience: they were not taken out of this world and mythologized. Even ancient traditions already in mythological form were, by Israel, historicized; the most important instance being that of the creation, which was made but the first event in that sequence of events which constituted her "history," the entire course of which was taken as a manifestation of Yahweh, the Holy One.565

A most distinctive element, therefore, of the holiness of Yahweh, is the manifestation of its durative aspect in and through that continuum of events566 which makes up the human experience of punctual and passing time. In setting forth the mode of this unique experience of the holy, biblical Israel created "history,"567 and made of that history a hierophany568 for the world--a new center for the experience of order in human existence. 569

565 Cf. the "Shema"--Israel's watchword (Deut. 6:4).
566 It is important to remember that it was the content of time, rather than time itself, as we know it, with which the Old Testament deals, and which manifested the divine to Israel. Cf. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 487.
567 Cf. Voegelin, p. 163: "the idea of history had its origin in the Covenant", etc. Psalm 136 is an excellent expression of this theme.
569 Cf. Voegelin, p. 123, et passim (a major theme of this entire book). The hierophany of history did not, of course, eliminate the recognition, in Israel, of the hierophany of nature; its discovery did, however, mark a shift in the center of attention. See also Wright, God Who Acts, pp. 13 ff.
In still another way is man's experience of time related, in biblical thought, to his experience of the holiness—i.e., the "otherness"—of Yahweh.

As has been shown, one aspect of the transcendence of Yahweh consisted of ethical and moral excellence. II Isaiah gave expression to this concept in these words:

My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Neither are your ways my ways, says Yahweh:
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways,
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

Since the events of history were considered to constitute a primary exhibition of Yahweh's righteousness, it followed that a people's duration in punctual time was directly linked to the quality and degree of its correspondence to that enduring norm. Since that norm was seen to embrace and express moral excellence, it seemed obvious to Bible writers that the morality of a city's or nation's life in large part determined the temporal measure of its existence, as well as the

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570 Above, pp. 138 ff.
571 Isa. 55:8 f.
572 Thus, the time of four more generations is assigned to the Amorites, in the time of Abraham, to fill up the measure of sin which Yahweh will permit (Gen. 15:16). By way of contrast, Jehu's dynasty is promised four additional generations beyond Yahweh's original purpose for the apparently "righteous" act of having destroyed the wicked house of Ahab (II Kings 10:30). The destruction of Sodom is Yahweh's response to its utter lack of righteous inhabitants (Gen. 18:20 ff.). The theme is almost constant in the prophets, and constitutes a chief basis
quality of that existence.

When, however, the moral quality of a people fell short of the norm set forth by Yahweh (a condition recognized to be almost if not entirely universal) the attunement with Yahweh considered essential for both temporal and ontological existence could, nevertheless, be effected by repentance and reform—such a transaction expressing, for the prophetic ministry and power. In general, the principle was also applied to individual lives, but here, it seems to have been recognized that the correlation was less in evidence. See, e.g., Jer. 9:6 ff.; 22:1 ff.; Amos 1, 2.; 9:7 ff.; the numerous denunciations of cities and nations in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets; Mal. 3:16-4:3; Dan. 4:9:24; Ps. 1; 5:5 ff.; 9; 10; 37; 128; etc. Exceptions were recognized and enquired about, the typical answer being that, in some way not altogether clear to the understanding of men, these instances, too, served to exhibit the righteousness and purposes of Yahweh. See, e.g., for nations: the book of Habakkuk; and for individuals, Ps. 73.

573 Good or evil fortune.

574 When the prophetic denunciations of cities and nations is considered, it is obvious that practically all the known world was included. Cf. Ps. 14:2 ff.; etc.

575 I am well aware that both the word and the abstraction which it represents are of Greek origin and quite foreign to the Hebrew manner of thought. Though they failed to develop a terminology that fits our modern usage, the Hebrews, nevertheless, apparently recognized something of what is essentially the experience of participation in ontological "being" (Cf. above, p. 62, and Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality), and they wrote of that experience in pictorial imagery such as that of Ps. 1: "And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water; that bringeth forth his fruit in his season," etc. The tree doubtless suggests a long temporal existence (cf. Isa. 65:22), but that can scarcely be true of the fruit, which seems to me to suggest some kind of ontological awareness on the part of the writer (cf. Jer. 17:5 ff.). Perhaps a better illustration (because no practical benefit whatsoever is suggested) is Isa. 55:12, where, to those attuned with Yahweh's righteousness, the "mountains and the hills" are said to "break forth into singing; and all the trees of the field clap their hands." Cf. also Ps. 73, esp. vv. 23 ff. (quoting RSV): (continued next page)
on Yahweh's part, still another aspect of his righteousness. 576

Thus, in biblical thought, Yahweh sustains in time those who live by the norm of his righteousness; and, as certainly, he will, in time, destroy those who fail to do so.

A note on the use of cosmological patterns and symbols for the definition of historical order

History was not, of course, Israel's only means for experiencing the "otherness" of Yahweh. There was also the medium of cultic ritual. Though these two modes of apprehending the holy did at times appear to conflict with each other, 577 the official cult was eventually so transformed by the new hierophany 578 that its festal occasions--originally developed in the cosmological mode--became moments of historical

Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my right hand. . . .
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee.
My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

For lo, those who are far from thee shall perish; thou dost put an end to those who are false to thee. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all thy works.

(Voegelin sees the death sentence pronounced on man in the myth of Gen. 3 as indicating a "spiritual fall from being."--p. 21.)

576 See, e.g., Isa. 55:6 f.; Eze. 18; Joel 2:12 ff.; Jonah; etc.
577 See, e.g., Isa. 1; Jer. 7; etc. (A major theme in Voegelin.)
578 I. e., the hierophany of history (cf. above, p. 162).
commemoration rather than the celebrations of nature's rhythms and the reification of the mythical events of primeval time. 579

To be sure, the cult inherited and preserved much of cosmological thought and practice, but this was so developed as to become, for Israel, an expression of, and a means for sustaining, her more primary experience of the divine as manifested in the providence of her history. Temporal events were substituted for natural phenomena as the osten-
sible motifs of the seasonal festivals. Especially did Israel's cult center around those great events which had initiated her "history"--the exodus from Egypt and the Sinai "revelation." 580

It was natural that ancient man should first seek to deepen and sustain his experience of the holy through ritual attunement with the phenomena of nature, for it was in these phenomena that he first perceived the action of the divine. It was with equally good intuitive logic that, as Israel perceived the fulfillment of divine purpose in the temporal events that initiated her history, she should transform the nature festivals to which she had been accustomed by making those festivals the

579 See: Gaster, Festivals; and cf. Voegelin, pp. 359 ff., 380 ff., et passim.

580 In cosmological existence, such historic events would have been mythologized; as would also, e.g., the destruction of the two Hebrew kingdoms, their capitals and the temple, the restoration from exile, etc.: in Israel, they were preserved on the level of experienced history--memorialized, but not mythologized.

bearers of that new hierophany. Thus, the ancient festivals, through which the power of the durative had so long been experienced, continued to fill this traditional social function.

Through their many centuries of development and use, the traditional myths associated with the seasonal festivals had, of course, established certain affective connotations which gave them their power. They had also been developed in a way that impressed upon them certain characteristic and authentic forms and motifs. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Israel appropriated and transformed the festivals for the expression of her own distinctive experience, she should retain many of the ancient motifs and forms, thus preserving and utilizing the affective connotations, and thus giving to her new hierophany an authenticity that could not be had in any other way. Such motifs were incorporated into the lore of Israel's festivals, and were freely used by Israel's hymn writers and by her prophets who especially expounded the new hierophany. Such use of the cosmological symbols must have been extremely effective in convincing the masses that Yahweh was indeed acting in their history: he was doing so in the manner of the traditional gods of myth.

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582 Thus, Marduk's conquest of Tiamat, Baal's victory over Yamm, and similar myths, gave expression to a standard motif which is, in the O.T., not infrequently alluded to in reciting the acts of Yahweh. See, e.g., Ps. 74:13 f.; 92:10; 93; Job 9:13; 26:12 f.; 38:8 ff.; Isa. 27:1; 51:9; etc.
There was also in Israel a further development of this pattern of allusion to the past. Once the paradigm narratives of the founding of the nation had become established, they, too, served as archetypes for the telling of later events. In this way, the pattern of recurrence, so familiar in cosmological myth, also became a feature of the Hebrew historical lore, its poetry, and the prophetic word. The use of this pattern served the functional end of authenticating contemporary events as the righteous acts of Yahweh—investing them with the power and prestige of ancient tradition. Once established, the pattern provided clues for the recognition of Yahweh’s present activity and for anticipating his future course, thus effectively demonstrating the continuity of that activity. 583

Yahweh’s holiness and fulfillment

As has already been indicated, 584 biblical righteousness is not an abstraction and it is not static. It is always manifested in action toward divine purpose, even when, pertaining to men, that action be but a movement in the soul—an act of faith. 585 As we have seen, the call and promise to Abraham, 586 and the renewal of that promise to Jacob, 587

583 Thus, the exodus of Abraham from Ur is followed by a covenant between Yahweh and Abraham; the exodus of Israel from Egypt is followed by the making of a covenant; and, with the exodus of the exiles from captivity, Jeremiah associates the promise of a new covenant (31:31; cf. Eze. 16:60 ff.) Cf. Jud. 5; Jer. 30:7 ff.; Eze. 37:24 ff.; Hos. 3:5; Micah 7:15; Hab. 3; etc.
584 Above, pp. 139 ff.
585 As, e.g., in Gen. 15:5 ff.
586 Above, pp. 83 ff.
587 Above, pp. 154 ff.
envisioned movement in time toward a goal that embraced the world.

Consistent with these paradigms, Israel was made an omphalos for the flow of divine blessing into the rest of the world. It was a principle of prophetic faith that Yahweh's servant, Israel, as a lighted lamp,

will not grow dim or be snuffed out until he has established justice in the earth.  

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as waters cover the sea.  

"My word," says Yahweh,

will not return to me without effect; but will accomplish that which I please; and succeed in the purpose to which I send it.  

Yahweh stakes the honor of his holy being upon his ability to bring fulfillment to this purpose to which he has set himself in human history.  

A righteous God and a saviour--there is none beside Me!

... I am God, and there is no other.

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588 Above, pp. 151 ff. Cf. also, in addition to passages there cited: Isa. 2:2 ff.; 49:6 ff.
590 Isa. 11:9.
591 Isa. 55:11.
592 His entire career, so to speak. Cf. Eze. 36:22 ff., where the promised deliverance from captivity is declared to be motivated by Yahweh's concern for his own reputation--not by any concern for Israel.
593 Cf. Marduk, above, pp. 107 ff.
I have sworn by Myself,  
The word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness  
And it shall not return:  
That to Me, every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue shall swear. 594

Ridiculing and challenging the cosmological deities, there is, he says,  
no other god who can put significance into history and bring it to a  
purposed end. 595 In other words, this ability is an aspect of central  
importance to Yahweh's "otherness"—i.e., his holiness.

In the familiar cycles of nature, upon which the ancient myths  
were based, any one phenomenon bespeaks all subsequent phenomena  
in a given cycle until the round is completed: then the cycle begins  
again. Thus

myth envisages the future as a return to the past. . . .  
nothing essentially new can ever occur. The decisive  
act occurs in the Urzeit as the world's reality is  
structured. All change is absorbed into the myth and  
made part of the timeless past. 596

Once Israel discovered "hierophanic" significance in human events,  
and committed herself to what she conceived to be the end purpose  
of Yahweh in those events, subsequent events in her history were  
proclaimed acts of Yahweh as they were seen to contribute toward

594 Isa. 45:21 ff.
595 Isa. 46:5 ff.
596 Childs, p. 73.
the fulfillment of that purpose.

While the formulation of historical narratives in the Bible was strongly influenced by the cyclic pattern of myth, the prophetic exposition of that history insisted that something new was emerging through the historical sequence of events. The movement of history was, if not a straight line, at least a spiral in which the end was not the place of beginning. The hierophany of history, however much its power was derived from the recital and celebration of past events, looked always toward a future fulfillment which past events were conceived to prevision and ensure. Participation with Yahweh in temporal movement toward that end was a fundamental aspect of Israel's experience of the holy.

597 See above, pp. 167 f.


599 See, e.g., Isa. 42:5 ff.; 49:5 ff.; 55:5; etc.

In Israel's earlier experience, she saw the settlement in Canaan as the fulfillment of Yahweh's purpose (see, e.g., Josh. 21:42 ff.; Ps. 136; etc.). It was doubtless largely this deep-seated conviction that Yahweh was fulfilling his purpose in the changes wrought in time that enabled Israel to preserve her faith in Yahweh when she lost her "place," and that led to that type of eschatology expressed by her later prophets. Cf.: Brandon, History, Time and Deity, pp. 136 ff., where: "The Yahwist philosophy of history thus came to acquire a forward-looking motif. Its inherent teleology no longer found its telos in the original acquisition of Canaan; it was projected into the future, and it became... charged with a heightened sense of the nation's destiny at the hand of its god."
The present under God

One may be oriented to the future, strengthened by his awareness of a memorable and providential past, but one cannot live in the future, or in the past: there is only the present. Israel's experience of Yahweh reckoned with this elementary fact.

Remembrance was extremely important for biblical Israel's experience of the holy. That it was a major theme of the cult is a fact especially appropriate to Israel's experience of hierophany in history. Not alone the words of ritual, but, to the extent that it entered into the commemoration of past events, every act of ritual was an appeal to remembrance.

The book of Deuteronomy develops well the biblical ideology associated with remembrance:

(1) Deut. 7:17 ff. The remembrance of Yahweh's past acts will engender courage for a continued advance toward the fulfillment of his purpose.

(2) Deut. 8:2 ff.; 9:7 ff.; 24:9; 32:7 ff. Along with Yahweh's providences, Israel is to remember also the adversities of her experience, interpreted as discipline that she might learn to walk in Yahweh's ways.

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601 Cf. Neh. 9, where the past is recited to engender a sense of present obligation to Yahweh.

602 Cf. Neh. 9:26 ff.
(3) Deut. 8:18 ff. It is to be remembered that Yahweh imparts the power essential for prosperity. Remembrance of this fact is essential to Yahweh's fulfillment of the covenant; if Israel forgets this fact, she will perish. 603

(4) Deut. 5:15; 15:15; 16:11 ff.; 24:17 ff. A remembrance of her own servitude in Egypt is to foster, in Israel, a humane treatment of all slaves and domesticated beasts, and social responsibility toward strangers, the weak, and the underprivileged.

The prophets appealed to remembrance of the past as a motivation for repentance from wrong-doing, and for a renewed loyalty to Yahweh and his commandments. 604 Joshua appealed to a remembrance of the instructions of Moses in urging the people to move on toward the fulfillment of those instructions. 605

In all of these passages, one theme is constant: a remembrance of the past urges to present decision and action. 606 Indeed, remembrance

603 Cf. Eze, 6:9 f.

604 E.g.: Hos. 11; Eze. 20:10 ff. The same appeal is implied in the book of Judges, where the present conditions are consistently interpreted as being the result of Israel's previous relationship to Yahweh (e.g., Jud. 2:11 ff.).

605 Josh. 1:12 ff.

606 Cf. Wright, Interpretation, XVI, 1 (Jan. 1962), p. 20: "the constant referral to concrete and datable happenings of the past had the cultic function of renewing life as a vocation in the present." (italics mine).
in the Old Testament is not merely a cognitive experience of the mind. The biblical use of the Hebrew word, מְזָכָּה, includes whatever action the remembrance infers as appropriate. The principle is effectively applied in Joshua's farewell message to his people; where, after a recitation of the nation's history, under the providence of Yahweh, he concludes:

Now, therefore, fear Yahweh and serve him with an absolute commitment... and if it seems undesirable in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose you this day whom you will serve... but I and my house will serve Yahweh.

See: BDB, pp. 269 ff.

Any random sampling of the many passages in which the word occurs, will illustrate that the word implies action as well as mental recall. Thus, when God remembers Noah in the ark, "the waters assuaged" (Gen. 8:1); likewise, for God to remember his covenant is to fulfill that covenant (Gen. 9:15 f.); in remembering Abraham, He delivered Lot from Sodom (Gen. 19:29); when he remembered Rachel, he also "opened her womb" (Gen. 30:22); when Jeremiah prays for God to remember him, he asks also that God will revenge him of his persecutors (Jer. 15:15); etc. The same is true when the word refers to man remembering: e.g., to remember Yahweh's name is equated with keeping his torah (Ps. 119:55); when Israel remembered the diet she had known in Egypt, no substitute food could satisfy her (Num. 11:5 ff.); when Abimalech's relatives remembered their relationship to him, "their hearts inclined to follow" him (Jud. 9:3); when Ahasuerus "remembered Vashti, and what she had done," he took immediate action (Esther 2:1); when Jonah remembered his God, in the fish's belly, he did what he could—he prayed, and promised future sacrifices; etc. When Amos denounces Tyre for not remembering the brotherly covenant, it is for an act breaking that covenant (Amos 1:9).
As with the past, so also with the future: its use in the Old Testament is, characteristically, to incite to decision and action in the present. The prophets of Israel knew that things gain or lose importance in the present hour when compared with the things of the last hour.\textsuperscript{609} and, whether with threat\textsuperscript{610} or with promise,\textsuperscript{611} they frequently appealed to that motivation. In prophetic thought it was the purpose of Yahweh, as indicated in the light of his past action, which defined for the present moment such significance as made it a call to encounter with the divine.\textsuperscript{612} Through appropriate decision, faith, and action, in response to such an awareness of Yahweh's will, a moment of punctual and passing time takes on durative significance.\textsuperscript{613}

\textsuperscript{609} Yaker, pp. 171 f.

\textsuperscript{610} E.g.: Hos. 13:9--14:9; Joel 2:1-14; Amos 4:12; 5:1-6; Jonah 3:4 ff.; Eze. 33:11, 14 ff.; etc.

\textsuperscript{611} E.g.: Isa. 2:1 ff.; 44:26 ff.; 52:1 ff.; Jer. 4:1 ff.; 33:13; Micah 4-6; Deut. 30:19; etc.

\textsuperscript{612} Isaiah's parable of the vineyard (5:1 ff.) is an exposition of the principle. If Isaiah is an elaborately developed application of it. All the prophets appeal to it. The eschatological passages define it most clearly. Cf. Yaker, p. 227: "Eschatology arises with the possibility of transforming things at some future hour, the so-called 'last time,' defining, thus, for the present a meaning for things."

\textsuperscript{613} Cf. the use of "today" in Deut. 5:2 ff.; 9:1; 15:15; 26:17; 27:9; 29:9; 30:15, 19; and Voegelin, p. 374, citing also: von Rad, das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs, pp. 25 ff. Cf. also: Yaker, p. 50: "It is through the context of decision and faith that a moment of χρόνος becomes a religious moment of καιρός. Here man's time is transformed into God's time." (See above, p. 44 n. 152.)
The legend of Abraham provides a good illustration. The moment of Abraham's response to what he perceived to be a call from Yahweh toward a future goal became a moment of enduring import—an endless holy moment—to him and to all who, since his time, have lived within the aura of his faith. For others of his day, and since that day, that same moment passed by unnoticed and without significance.

It is another biblical principle that though the fact of attunement with the divine is experienced and revealed in the response of a moment, a mere occasional attunement is not sufficient to meet Yahweh's demands.

What shall I do to you, O Ephraim? What shall I do to you, O Judah? For your goodness is like a morning cloud; And as the early dew, it goes away.

As Yahweh manifests his righteousness duratively in an unbroken succession of punctual events, so also must the man that is attuned to him.

When I say to the righteous man that he shall life; if he trusts in his righteousness, and does iniquity, none of his righteousness shall be remembered.

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614 See above, pp. 83 ff.
615 The point is made by Yaker, pp. 50 ff.
616 Hos. 6:4. Cf. 13:3, where Yahweh, in response, threatens them with extinction: "Therefore they shall be like a morning cloud; and as the early dew that goes away."
617 Eze. 33:13; cf. Ps. 1.
Biblical righteousness, whether of God or man, implies not merely the performance of right deeds, but a sustaining of that performance throughout all successive moments. Only an unbroken sequence of right-filled moments validates any claim to a desirable relationship with Yahweh and his providence.

In biblical thought, then, the secret of experiencing ontologically the holy that is Yahweh lies in filling the present moments of passing existence with such decisions and actions as match the purposes of Yahweh. Thus may human action on the punctual level become significant in time on a durative level. Yahweh is the God who manifests his holiness--his otherness--in punctual acts that have durative significance because they are steps toward his purposed end. Israel, as Yahweh's holy--i.e., "separated"--people, partakes of the blessing of his holiness as she moves with him "through time, on a meaningful course, toward a divinely promised state of perfection." Thus, Israel discovered (or, created) "history" as a form for expressing her experience of the holy--the genuinely significant--through a continuing existence, in the present, under God--an experience which embraced but also transcended all moments of passing, punctual time, and, through repeated decisions and action toward divine purpose, related those moments to the durative "holy" which was Yahweh.

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618 Voegelin, p. 126.

Micah's famed rhetorical question 620 gives concise expression to the meaning and manner of such existence as ultimately defined in the prophets:

And what does Yahweh require from you, except doing justice (מְשַׁפֵּר), and loving goodness (רָאָל), and walking humbly with your God. 621

The passage makes three emphases: the first requires the personal performance of the established norms of justice; the second requires an acceptance and demonstration of the social obligations of love; the third requires a constant awareness of the movement of the divine, with a parallel movement of one's self: such is existence in the present under God.

Yahweh's holiness and self-determination

The demand upon man for decision and action implies that he has the power of self-determination. Without such a power, man could make no decisions and could perform no acts of response to any awareness of divine purpose. He would be, precisely as in cosmological thought, at the mercy of the fates as decreed by the divine. 623 It is, 620 Micah 6:8.

621 Because of the marked difference in concepts and manner of thinking, it is probably impossible to translate Hebrew accurately. RSV gives: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness [margin: steadfast love], and to walk humbly with your God?"

622 Our use of the word "love" makes it awkward here--there is nothing that precisely matches the Hebrew.

623 Cf. above, p. 66 n. 204; p. 109 n. 344; p. 139.
therefore, of primary importance to Old Testament thought that man was endowed by his creator with the power to choose his own course, and to act upon his own decision. This was rightly seen as essential to the historical form of existence in which ontological significance derived from man's responses to the possibilities of the moment.

As we have already seen, however, historical events bring significance not only to man. It was precisely upon his power to move in human history toward the fulfillment of his own purposes that Yahweh, according to the Old Testament, staked his reputation as superior to other gods. We now observe that Yahweh makes this claim to distinctiveness in the face of that limitation imposed upon him by man's capacity to direct his own course. This is a notable contrast to Marduk, who required, before he accepted the responsibility of bringing order to chaos, that he be given supreme authority to determine the fates.

The Old Testament is clear, moreover, that it is not because of any incapacity on Yahweh's part that he must submit to this limitation: it is he himself who, in accordance with his own purposes, endowed man

624 See above, pp. 169 ff.

625 See above, p. 178 n. 623.
with this essential freedom. 626 It is this freedom, first given to man at creation, which is restored to Israel in the deliverance from Egypt, before she is charged with her mission, as a nation, under God. The condition of Israel's freedom is stated to be the basis of Yahweh's requirements for attunement with him. 627

Yahweh's Holy Day

Precisely how or when a day of restriction became associated with Yahweh we do not know, but its ideological development closely parallels Israel's distinctive experience of the holy in Yahweh. 628 It is the infusion of this holiness into the day which creates the biblical Sabbath and makes it unique among the world's rest days. Not only does the Sabbath include all those aspects of Israel's experience of the holy surveyed above, its observance functions in Israel much as did the myth and ritual of cosmological societies.

The Sabbath as an "omphalos"

In Israel's thinking, the developed Sabbath had its ground in

Genesis I. This is no mere coincidence. At that stage of human de-

626 This is clearly implied in Gen. 1:26 ff. (cf. above, pp. 97, 100 f., 120 f.); and strongly emphasized in Genesis 3. In Gen. 2, man's naming the animals, at divine request, appears also to suggest this fact.

627 Cf. Ex. 20:1 f.; Deut. 5:2-6.

velopment which we call the beginning of historical times, both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia, "creation" had been discovered as the ontological ground of human existence. The "Great Time" of creation was considered the source of the holy—that is, of ultimate power, of present order, of lastingness, and of that reality or significance which constitutes "otherness." Human life attained significance only as it was related to that otherness. But the holy "is always manifested through something." Thus, creation in Enuma elish is perfected in the founding of Babylon with its sacred tower and temple—the omphalos of the society that created the myth. Mesopotamian society found its meaning—its reality—through relationship to that center. In Egypt, though the theoretical and structural mechanism through which it was effected was somewhat different, the same principle prevailed.

It is on this principle that the creation myth which Israel placed at the beginning of her Bible ends with the establishment of the major cultic medium through which the holy was conceived to be dispensed

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630 Enuma elish, VI, 50 ff. (ANET, pp. 68d, 69a).
631 See above, pp. 63 f., 152 ff.
633 See above, p. 64 n. 200.
to Israel by her God. Though the Sabbath is nowhere specifically called an omphalos, the evidence is clear that, to the creators of the Old Testament, the Sabbath served Israel as an omphalos, relating her to Yahweh just as Israel constituted an omphalos between Yahweh and "the nations."\(^{634}\)

We can with complete justification parallel Wensinck's list of characteristics common to the spatial omphalos: \(^{635}\) (1) in being blessed and sanctified, the Sabbath was exalted above all the other days, \(^{636}\) and by its position in Genesis I and in the decalogue the Sabbath was given the place of highest honor among the religious institutions of Israel; \(^{637}\) (2) its origin was at the creation of the world; (3) in III Isaiah's vision of a world-wide submission to Israel's God, the central importance of the Sabbath is demonstrated by its being the only cultic requirement imposed upon alien converts to Yahweh; \(^{638}\) (4) the Sabbath was a major link between Yahweh and

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\(^{634}\) Cf. above, pp. 154 ff.

\(^{635}\) See above, p. 154.

\(^{636}\) Cf. Cassuto, Genesis, I, p. 65: "The real meaning of נְפֹלָת [nephalot] is elevation and exaltation above the usual level; the seventh day was lifted up above the plane of the other days."

\(^{637}\) Surely honor was a major aspect of the significance of the mountain symbol in the spatial omphalos. For other evidences of the distinction given to the Sabbath, see above, pp. 2 ff.

\(^{638}\) Isa. 56:2 ff. The Sabbath is here made a rallying point—a center—for the whole world of nations. In Zech. 14:16, however,
Israel, through which was communicated the all-important evidence of participation in the covenant and in the holiness of Yahweh consequent thereto; that it was a means of communicating the power of the divine to Israel is further attested by God's act blessing the day; it also served as the link between the time of creation and the time of human history; (5) it was actually considered a major medium through which even material benefits were distributed to Israel.

To be sure, this application of the omphalos principle to time was unique; but it was certainly innate to the distinctive character of Israel's experience of the holy.

Transcendence in the Sabbath

The transcendence of Israel's God is clearly implied in his abstention, on the seventh day of creation week, "from all his work."

all nations "that have come up against Jerusalem" are required to keep the "feast of booths." The spirit of this passage differs markedly from Isa. 56 in that, in Zech. 14, the yearly assembly at Jerusalem appears to be imposed by right of victory in war, whereas, in Isa. 56, a voluntary submission to Yahweh is evident. These associations are, it would seem, of some significance.

639 Ex. 31:12 ff.; Eze. 20:12, 20; Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11; above, pp. 5,149.

640 Cf. above, pp. 114 f. This was precisely a function of the spatial omphalos. Cf. also, above, p. 153 n. 532, where "Link Between Heaven and Earth," is applied to spatial omphalos.

641 Jer. 17:24 ff.; Isa. 58:13; (implied in Neh. 13:17 f.; Eze. 22:26 ff.,) The imposition of the death penalty for Sabbath desecration (Ex. 31:14 f.; 35:1 ff.; Num. 15:32 ff.,) indicates the importance of the Sabbath for the welfare of the community.

642 Gen. 2:2 f.
Of the creator's transcendence, the Genesis narrative tells us, in the first place, that God himself determines the nature and extent of his labors: he desists from action when he chooses; when he does so, no needs press upon him; and, in this case, he made the seventh day holy to celebrate the completion of a planned series of actions. 643

Significant is the fact that no mention is made in this myth of an evening and morning to mark the passing of the seventh day, thought this is an especially emphasized feature of the account of each of the preceding six days. Evident from this is the clear intent to associate mere durativeness with the holy day, and to present that durativeness in contrast to the passing punctual time of the six days. Thus, in a sense, the nature of the Sabbath corresponds to the "Great Time" of cosmological myth.

Two features, however, distinguish the sacred time of the Sabbath from that of myth. Both of these features appear to express Israel's notion of Yahweh's transcendence over cosmological deities and a direct opposition to cosmological thought. In myth, the sacred time of the beginning of things derives its character from the fact that the great events of creation were wrought in that time. In Genesis I, though the Sabbath memorializes creation, it is precisely the time of God's creative acts which is not durative and is not made holy; and it

643 Cf. above, pp. 115 ff.
is precisely time in which He did nothing that is made holy. Thus
is emphasized the idea that the holiness of the Sabbath does not consist
(as did the sacredness of holy days in cosmological thought) in any
quality of the day itself, or in any merely coincidental (natural or
mythical) associations with the day. The holiness of the Sabbath
consists wholly in the quality of holiness arbitrarily put into the
day by the creator. This point is further emphasized in Israel's
making the weeks to follow each other with absolute succession, in
contrast to characteristic cosmological practice which geared holy
times to the cyclic processes of nature. Thus the Sabbath reflects
Israel's faith that whatever aspects of his being God manifests in
nature, he is not consubstantial with nature, but transcends it. 644

For all his transcendence, Yahweh, nevertheless, is always
near to his people. 645 As developed in Israel, the Sabbath was an
especially appropriate medium for expressing that faith. As en-
joined in the commandments, the observance of the Sabbath embraced
all the days of the week. Not merely on one day in seven 646 did the

644 Cf. Ps. 8; 19; 24; 104; Isa. 40:25 f.; Job 38; etc. Isa. 44:
24 f., and 47:13 f., especially emphasize opposition to cosmological

645 Cf. above, pp. 136 f.

646 Or only at the times of sacred festivals. Here, however, we
cannot say that Israel's sanctification of all time was essentially different
from that of cosmological societies, for it was the function of rites, and
the imitation of the gods in the methods of daily work, to mediate the sa-
cred time of rituals to all time. Israel's method was less involved and
more direct. See: Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, chap. ii.
Israelite Sabbath observer live in imitation of his deity, but on every day of every week.  

The importance of the six days of labor as a part of the Sabbath commandment would seem to be a direct emphasis, whether made purposely or intuitively, upon the ideal of a constant, continued existence in the present under God.

Furthermore, the Sabbath comes to everyone, in every place—it cannot be escaped. In this way, too, did the sacred day mediate the near presence of the divine "otherness" in a way no sacred space could.

Durativeness and the Sabbath

In the light of its association with the omphalos principle, and its actualization of the durative aspect of existence, it seems clear that Sabbath observance in biblical Israel was conceived as functioning in substantially the same manner as the seasonal rituals functioned in cosmological societies. "The function of Myth," we have seen,

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647 Cf. above, p. 113 f.
648 Ex. 16; 20:8 ff.; 23:12; 31:12 ff.; 34:21; 35:1 ff.; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12 ff.; Eze. 46:1 ff.
649 Cf. above, pp. 172 ff.
650 It is therefore not surprising that the later prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and III Isaiah—and Nehemiah, so much emphasized the Sabbath. They knew, from experience, what it meant to be separated from sacred place.
is to translate the real into terms of the ideal, the punctual into terms of the durative and transcendental, . . . by projecting the procedures of ritual to the plane of ideal situations which they are then taken to substantize and reproduce.651

The myth of Genesis I so projected the daily life of Israel in which six days of labor were followed by a day of rest.

It is thus evident that the relationship between myth and ritual, as utilized in the cosmological seasonal festivals, is precisely the relationship which the Old Testament establishes between Genesis I and Sabbath observance in Israel. In Israel's Sabbath ideology, everyday work (life) becomes a substitute for cosmological ritual and this work—normally constituting the punctual and passing experience of existence—is thus translated "into terms of the ideal and transcendental" which it is "then taken to substantize and reproduce."652

This would seem to account for the importance attached to the inclusion of the myth in the Sabbath commandment in its developed form. A mere command to abstain from work on the Sabbath day would not be sufficient to accomplish this religious end, for the Sabbath is no longer merely a tabu day charged with danger. It is now the purpose of Sabbath observance to translate passing existence

651 Gaster, Thespis, p. 5 (also quoted above, p. 65.)

652 Ibid.
under God "into terms of the durative," and such observance must therefore be accompanied by the myth which gives expression to that function. The Sabbath must be observed in the light of the myth because the interpretive myth is "a parallel aspect" of the observance itself, just as were the myths accompanying cosmological seasonal rituals.

On this basis, Jeremiah's insistence that whether Jerusalem should "remain forever" or revert to chaos depended upon whether Israel observed or desecrated the Sabbath becomes quite understandable.

653 Whether or not the Genesis I myth might at one time have been used as a ritual recitation is a question outside the scope of this study, which is an attempt to capture the various major strands of Sabbath ideology most evident at that point at which the Old Testament canon was fixed. The fact that no specific ritual participation is prescribed for the people on the Sabbath day, and the fact that Genesis I is not in the form of festival celebration would appear to indicate that either the Sabbath was never so ritualized, or there was a determined effort on the part of the Bible's creators to separate Sabbath observance from ritual. On the other hand, that the Sabbath had a position of some centrality in the temple cult, and may have been so ritualized, is shown by the prescription of extra sacrifices on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9 f.), by the change of the "bread of the presence" on the Sabbath (Lev. 24:5 ff.; I Chron. 9:32; cf. Num. 4:7); by the common association of the Sabbath with other festivals (Ex. 34:21; Lev. 23:2 ff.; II Kings 4:23; Amos 8:5; Hos. 2:13; Isa. 1:13; 66:23; Lam. 2:6; Neh. 10:32 ff.; II Chron. 2:4); by the designation of Ps. 92 as a psalm for the Sabbath; and by Ezekiel's prescriptions which did include the involvement of "the people of the land" at the temple on the Sabbath day (Eze. 45:17; 46:1, 3, 4, 12). Ezekiel's system obviously incorporates cosmological patterns of worship in the official Yahweh cult. Is he merely utilizing old features of Hebrew worship, or is he initiating new directions in that worship? One thing is significant: "the 'myth' of the Sabbath finds no reflection in the temple worship."—Kaufmann, p. 305.

654 Jer. 17:24 ff. The same thought is expressed in Neh. 13:15 ff., where Sabbath profanation by the fathers is understood to have been responsible for all the evil God had brought upon Israel. Cf. Eze. 20:13 ff.; 22:26 ff.; 23:38.
Sabbath observance—duplicating each week the divine action of creation, but cutting directly across the rhythms of nature to which cosmological societies were oriented—is considered essential for transmitting the durative power of creation into the historical order of the Hebrew commonwealth. Was the transmission of that power not a purpose of God's act in putting his "blessing" upon the day? In the light of this study, the implication that it was is strong. 655

Something of this idea seems also strongly implied in Exodus 31:12 ff.;

Surely my Sabbaths you shall keep for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations that ye may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you. . . . Between me and the children of Israel it is a sign forever that in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day abstained and was refreshed. (italics mine)

The ontological significance of the experience of Yahweh's holiness is here made plain in that this experience is assumed to be the ultimate objective of Israel's life. 656 For Israel, this ontological fulfillment in her experience of the holy depends upon Yahweh: it is he, and he alone, who makes this experience possible. But in order to participate in Yahweh's holiness, Israel must duplicate in her ongoing life that divine pattern of six days of work followed by a day of

655 See above, pp. 5, 149, 183.
656 As, indeed, it is of all religious quest.
rest which led, in creation, to the establishment of the omphalos of the holy. Only in this way can she know Yahweh's holiness.

In the Old Testament, the verb "to know" ( יָדַע ) commonly implies far more than mere intellectual awareness. It regularly signifies actual experience. Eve and Adam were aware of the tree of knowledge and of the consequences of eating its fruit before they ate of it, but only after the eating did they know "good and evil." 657 A man knows "the affliction of his own heart." 658 When Babylon says that she "will not know the loss of children," 659 she obviously means that she will not experience such a loss. Likewise, when Yahweh declares that Edom "shall know" his vengeance, it is evident that he intends that they shall experience that vengeance. 660 This verb is regularly used for the experience of sexual intercourse. 661 Many more examples could be given. 662

Furthermore, it is unthinkable that Yahweh could be satisfied with mere intellectual awareness. When he complains that there is

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658 I Kings 8:38.
659 Isa. 47:8.
660 Eze. 25:14.
661 Gen. 4:1, 17, 25; 19:8; 24:16; 38:26; Num. 31:17 f., 35; Jud. 11:39; 21:11 f.; etc.
no "knowledge of God in the land," he makes it clear that he is speaking of the practice of his righteousness, for this lack of knowledge, he declares, is evidenced by "lying, killing, stealing, adultery," etc. "They have broken my covenant, and sinned against my law." It is for this "lack of knowledge," which is not at all a lack of awareness but a rejection of knowledge that his people are being destroyed.

In this light, Yahweh's making Israel holy, in Exodus 31, is best understood as constituting, for Israel, the experience of being made holy, throughout her generations. And here, the actualization (or, realization) of this experience is said to depend upon Israel's continued imitation of the pattern of action established by her deity in creating the world's order and the omphalos of the holy.

The Sabbath and the historical revelation of Yahweh's holiness

Since Israel's history is interpreted as a major manifestation of Yahweh's righteousness (which, in turn, is the manifested essence of his holiness), it is natural that the exodus from Egypt which initiated

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663 Hos. 4:1 ff.
664 Ibid.
665 Hos. 8:1.
666 Hos. 4:6.
667 Ibid.
668 Cf. above, pp. 138 ff.; pp. 90 ff.
that history should be regarded as a hierophany equal to that of
creation. The recital of creation, the exodus, and Israel's history,
as one continuum of events manifesting Yahweh's righteousness is
an underlying theme of the entire Old Testament.

In one such recital, Nehemiah 9, which specifically includes
creation along with history, the "holy Sabbath " is especially
emphasized, indicating its instinctive association with the historic
manifestation of Yahweh's holiness. The power that delivered Israel
from Egypt, and that directs her history, is the same as that which
created the universe.

In relating Sabbath observance to the Exodus, precisely as
it was also related to creation, the Bible comes close to duplicating
the thought processes of cosmologically-oriented societies which
relegated history to mythological time. Indeed, there are biblical

669 Neh. 9:14.
670 Ps. 74:12 ff.; 136; Isa. 40:12--44:2, 24; 51:9 ff. are a few of
many passages expressing this theme.
671 Deut. 5:12 ff.
672 Ex. 20:8 ff. (Deut. 5 and Ex. 20 each relates one of these two
important events to the Sabbath as being the motive for its observance.)
It is commonly held that historically the exodus was associated with
the Sabbath before creation was. That may well be true, but ideologically,
en the relationship of the two events was perceived, logic required that
creation become the ground of all subsequent events including the exodus.
That the Bible writers recognized this is clear in their handling of the two
themes, and in the position given to the creation myth in the Bible, and in
such recitals as Neh. 9, Ps. 136, etc.
673 Cf. above, pp. 57 ff.
passages in which the exodus events are recited in the language of mythology. 674

In spite of such flights of fancy in her literature, Israel, did not, of course, lose her historicity in myth. She preserved that history, especially the exodus events, in her traditions and in her cultic festivals. Doubtless, the manner in which the creation was set forth as the actual beginning of history, and its association with the Sabbath torn loose from the rhythms of nature, also contributed toward that end. 675 The exodus-commemorative aspect of the Sabbath, however, is not of the same character as are those true memorials into which Israel turned her seasonal festivals. The fact that this is so, witnesses to, and follows inevitably upon, the character of the Sabbath as the medium of experiencing the durative power manifested in creation. Both creation and history manifest the same divine power; but the two processes are not the same. It is Israel's holy Sabbath which, in her thought, united the two.

In associating the exodus with the Sabbath, Israel was translating that event "into terms of the ideal" in order then "to substantize and reproduce" and sustain her experience of that event in its durative and transcendent aspect. In harmony with ancient thought processes, this, it would seem, was necessary if Israel's history was to be a lasting

674 E.g., Ex. 15; Isa. 51:9 ff.; Hab. 3:3 ff.; Ps. 74:12 ff.; etc.
675 Cf. above, pp. 115 ff., 185.
hierophany.

And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore did Yahweh your God command you to observe the Sabbath day. 676

The Sabbath, human dignity, and social responsibility

Both creation and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt express Yahweh's purpose that man should live in the dignity of self-determination and in the exercise of dominion over his environment, under God. 677

Since the benefits accruing to Israel are intended ultimately for all men, the exodus may appropriately be interpreted as a cosmic event of the first magnitude: as an act essential to the realization of the divine purpose in creation. As has been shown, the dignity of man, under God, is a major theme of the creation myth; and it is also a major manifestation of Yahweh's holy and righteous being. 678 As such, this theme deserves to be incorporated into the significance of the Sabbath: it is so incorporated.

Actually, the Sabbath, merely as a symbol of God's complete act of creation, already holds within this compact form the motif of human dignity; and this is implied in the Sabbath commandment of Exodus 20 which relates the Sabbath to creation. Beasts and slaves

676 Deut. 5:15. The Sabbath is to be observed (verb יָרֵא, literally, to make, to do; used eight times of God's work in creation in Genesis I) to perpetuate the memory of that manifestation of power through which Israel gained her freedom.

677 Cf. above, pp. 97 ff.; 120 f.; 178 ff.

are to rest from work on the Sabbath along with their masters. \(^{679}\)

The deliverance from Egypt, however, provides a most appropriate medium for further developing this motif, and such an added emphasis is made in the Deuteronomy recension of the commandment: \(^{780}\)

Keep the Sabbath day to make it holy, as Yahweh your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your God: in it you shall not do any work—you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male slave, nor your female slave, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor the stranger which is in your gates; in order that your male slave and your female slave may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm: therefore Yahweh your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

This version of the Sabbath law underscores the theme of human dignity: first, by emphasizing that the slaves must be allowed to rest along with their masters on the sacred day; and, second, by making the deliverance from slavery in Egypt the motive for Sabbath observance. \(^{681}\)

Thus did Sabbath observance come to express both the principle of human dignity as a divinely-endowed right of all men; and the principle of Israel's responsibility to mediate this divine righteousness to all those within her society. Thus were these principles given ontological significance. As Yahweh's "ethical excellence"\(^{682}\) is especially manifested

\(^{679}\) Ex. 20:10  
\(^{680}\) Deut. 5:12 ff.  
\(^{681}\) Cf. above, 191 ff.  
\(^{682}\) From Efros, as quoted above, p. 138.
in his concern and action in behalf of those who are most oppressed or needy, so must Israel be especially mindful of such persons in her society: of this the Sabbath is made a constant reminder.

In this light Amos' association of Sabbath observance with the social irresponsibility and abuses of his day takes on added significance. It is clear that the two themes—Sabbath observance and social responsibility—were related in his mind. "From this," observes Nahum Sarna, "one may gather that in the prophet's view the true Sabbath should be an expression of social morality."

Isaiah is even more explicit. In the same breath he exhorts the people to keep justice and to do righteousness, to observe the Sabbath and to desist from evil (Isa. 56:1, 2). Ezekiel, to whom the Sabbath is especially dear, combines its profanation with the sins of bloodshed, dishonoring of parents, oppression of the stranger, orphan, and widow (Eze. 22:6).

Isaiah 58 also combines the requirement of social morality with that of

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683 Above, pp. 146 f.

684 Of some interest is Ex. 23:12, which further emphasizes the humanitarian motif by speaking of the rest of beasts, servants and strangers as a refreshment. Ex. 31:17 makes Yahweh's rest at creation also to be refreshment. The two passages, taken together, illustrate the cosmological principle that, to have genuine significance, human action must imitate the gestures of deity. The word used in these two passages for refreshment is found elsewhere in the Bible only once, and may be translated literally as "to breathe freely," or "to catch one's breath." (Martin Buber, Prophetic Faith (Harper Torchbooks; New York and Evanston, 1960), p. 53.) This characterization of the Sabbath rest of God is commonly taken to be considerably older than the mere abstention of Gen. 2:1-3. Ex. 20 uses the common word actually meaning rest, and which is one of the words used for the rest of the gods in Enuma elish.


687 Ibid.
Sabbath observance as the way to ontological fulfillment. As Sarna has also shown, it is evidently the combination of the cosmogonic myth with the socio-moral motif which led to the selection of Psalm 92 as a Sabbath hymn—so designated in the Bible.

The Sabbath and fulfillment in the manifestation of Yahweh's holiness

Psalm 136 presents a summary of the philosophy of history that dominates biblical thought. It is liturgical in form, and opens with a call to "give thanks to Yahweh because he is good," and "because his steadfast love endures through all time." Then follow three stanzas in which are celebrated three great acts of Yahweh: (1) the creation, (2) the deliverance from Egypt, and (3) the conquest of Canaan. All of these acts are revelations of Yahweh's "steadfast love" which "endures through all time." Thus they give meaning to the world and to human existence thereon. The poem closes with a summary expression of praise and thanksgiving—the appropriate response from man to

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688 Ibid., pp. 159 ff.
690 vv. 1-3.
691 vv. 4-9.
692 vv. 10-15.
693 vv. 16-22.
this manifestation of Yahweh's holiness.\textsuperscript{694}

Closing as it does with the settlement in Canaan, this psalm evidently comes from the heyday of Israel's historical existence—a time in which a firm establishment in Canaan seemed to be a realization of the fulfillment of Yahweh's purpose for Israel.

We have already seen how the first two great acts of Yahweh celebrated in this poem—the creation and the exodus—were translated into an experience of the ideal and durative in Sabbath observance. It would appear that the third act might well also have been incorporated into the Sabbath had it not been for the tragic outcome of Israel's historical experience in Canaan.

That the basis for an association of the establishment in Canaan with the Sabbath was developing in Israel is evident from the use of the idea of rest (especially the root \( \text{TI} \), which was used of Yahweh's rest on the seventh day in Exodus 20:11) in such passages as:

1. Exodus 33:14, where Yahweh says to Moses:

   My presence shall go with you, and I will cause you to rest (\( \text{TI} \)).

2. Deut. 12:9 f., where Moses, in one of his farewell addresses to Israel, says:

   You have not yet come to the rest (\( \text{TI} \)) and inheritance which Yahweh your God is giving you. But you shall cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which Yahweh your God causes you to inherit; and when

\textsuperscript{694} vv. 23-26.
he causes you to rest (יָנָּה) from all your enemies round about and ye dwell securely . . . 695

(3) In I Kings 5:18, Solomon says:

And now has Yahweh my God caused me to rest (יָנָּה) from all sides in that there is no enemy and no adversity.

(4) In I Kings 8:56, Solomon prays, at the dedication of the temple:

Blessed is Yahweh who has given rest (יָנָּה) to his people Israel according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promises. 696

(5) In Psalm 95:10 f., Yahweh reminisces of the wilderness wandering:

Forty years I was grieved with this generation . . . unto whom I swore in my anger that they should not enter into my rest (יָנָּה).

(6) In Psalm 132:13 f., Yahweh declares his intention to dwell in Zion; and make it his resting-place:

Yahweh has chosen Zion, He wishes to dwell in it. "This is my rest (יָנָּה) for all time, 697 Here will I dwell, Because I have desired it."

695 Cf. Deut. 3:20; 25:19; Josh. 1:13 ff.; 11:23; II Sam. 7:1, 11; Ruth 1:9, etc.

696 Cf. Ps. 23:2, "waters of rest."

697 Cf. RSV: "This is my resting place for ever."
The appropriateness of this development becomes especially evident
when it is observed that in all these passages, the word "rest" (root:
נָחַל) indicates the achievement of a purposed goal\(^698\)--not mere
temporary relief or refreshment.

The tragic course of the period of disillusionment, and the pro-
phetic solution (which in large measure created the Old Testament) is
too well known to require any detailed review here; it being only neces-
sary to observe that the catastrophe which enveloped Israel obviously
precluded building this theme, with this application, into the durative
Sabbath. The symbol "rest", however, is not lost, and it can be traced
completely through Israel's "time of trouble."

Micah, after berating his people for social injustices in their
society, declares in Yahweh's name:

You take away my honor continually--
Arise, and get out;
This is not your resting place! (נָחַל)
Because it is polluted, it shall destroy you.\(^699\)

And the author of Lamentations cries:

\(^698\) This may well have been the intent of the word in Ex. 20:11.
For summary of meanings of נָחַל, see BDB, pp. 628 ff. (Cf., also,
possible association of נָחַל with נִרְגָּד, "to lead, guide"; and Arabic,
닐, "go in direction of, turn toward"; see BDB, pp. 634 f.)

\(^699\) Micah 2:9 f. Cf. RSV:
... You take away my glory for ever.
Arise and go, for this is no place to rest;
because of uncleanness that destroys
with a grievous destruction.
Judah is gone into captivity. . .
She dwells among the nations,
She finds no rest (יִלְּכוֹן) 700

Confidence in the fulfillment of Yahweh's purposes prevails, nevertheless. According to the prophets, if that purpose has not been realized, it is not Yahweh's fault. Furthermore, in spite of all disappointments and delays, that purpose will be fulfilled; for Yahweh is the God who ultimately fulfills his purposes regardless of circumstances.

Thus eschatological hope is born—a hope secured by a deeper appreciation of the ontological significance of moral and ethical excellence; a hope, too, which is further strengthened by a deeper appreciation of the universality of its appeal and ultimate application. It is of interest to observe that Isaiah utilizes the symbol "rest" in giving expression to that hope: 701

A shoot will spring forth from the stem of Jesse,
A sprout will grow out of his roots. . .
He will judge the poor with righteousness,
And with fairness decide for the lowly of the land. . .
The wolf will lodge with the lamb,
And the leopard lie down with the kid. . .
They shall not hurt and they shall not destroy
In all my holy mountain.
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh
As the waters cover the sea.
And it shall be in that day that the root of Jesse,
Who stands for an ensign of the peoples,
Unto him will the nations seek,
And his resting-place (יִלְּכוֹן) will be glorious.

700 Lam. 1:3.
701 Isa. 11:1-10.
It is of the essence of the prophetic word of the Old Testament that Yahweh's holiness cannot be experienced through any primary orientation to place. It is rather to be experienced through attunement with him in moral and ethical excellence sustained in time. III Isaiah not only stresses the point, but strongly associates it with the Sabbath:

Thus speaks Yahweh:
Keep justice and do righteousness;
For my salvation is ready to come in,
And my righteousness is ready to be revealed.
Happy is the man who does this,
And the son of man who lays hold of it:
Who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it,
And keeps his hand from doing any evil. 702

The message is addressed not only to Israel, but to aliens as well:

The sons of the stranger
Who join themselves to Yahweh—
To serve him,
To love the name of Yahweh,
To be his servants—
All who keep the Sabbath from polluting it,
And take hold of my covenant;
I will bring them to my holy mountain,
And make them joyful in my house of prayer. . . .
For my house shall be called a house of prayer
For all the peoples. 703

Then, to Israel, the following is addressed:

Is not this the fast I have chosen?
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the thongs of the yoke, 704
To let the oppressed go free,
And to break every yoke?

702 Isa. 56:1 f.
703 Isa. 56:6 ff.
704 This line from RSV.
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry?
And to bring the homeless poor into your home?
If you see a naked person, to cover him?
Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
And your health will spring up quickly;
And your righteousness shall go before you,
And the glory of Yahweh shall follow after.
Then you shall call; Yahweh will answer.
If you turn your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your own business on my holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy of Yahweh, honorable,
And shall honor it;
Not doing your own ways,
Nor pursuing your own business, nor speaking of it;
Then shall you be delighted with Yahweh;
And I will cause you to ride upon the heights of the earth,
And I will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father,
For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

It is apparent that Sabbath observance is here considered the one essential cultic practice for translating the everyday passing experiences of life, lived under Yahweh as an expression of his righteousness, to the plane of durative significance. Furthermore, a universal human experience of such life is Yahweh's goal in history.

In the final chapter of III Isaiah, Yahweh asks:

Where is the house that you would build for me?
Where is the place of my rest? (JPS)

and immediately proceeds to answer his own question:

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705 So JPS.
706 Isa. 58:6-14.
707 Isa. 66:1.
708 Isa. 66:2.
All these things my hand has made,  
And so, all these things came to be, says Yahweh.  
But to this will I look:  
To the lowly and humble of spirit—  
The one who trembles at my word.

Then, in a final portrayal of a world in which this purpose has been realized, the central position of the Sabbath is once again affirmed:

For as the new heavens and the new earth  
Which I will make shall stand before my face, says Yahweh,  
So shall stand your seed and your name.  
And it shall be that from one new moon to another,  
And from one Sabbath to another,  
Shall all flesh come to worship before my face, says Yahweh.

Thus, as with history's beginning event, creation; and its central event, the deliverance and servantship of Israel; is the final event, the universal sway of Yahweh's holiness—ethical and moral excellence—in the lives of men; joined, in Israel's ideology, to the Sabbath.

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709 In this closing passage of the book Isaiah, the universal worship of Yahweh is pictured as being attuned both to the cyclic rhythms of nature, as in the cosmological form of order, and to the ongoing independent rhythm of the Sabbath, as in Israel's historical form of order.

710 Isa. 66:22 f.
IV. THE SABBATH AND ISRAEL'S SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM OF ORIENTATION TO TIME

Orientation to time and the future, Israel discovered, creates a problem of considerable magnitude: the problem of generating sufficient confidence in the future to make it possible for men actually to live for it and to find fulfillment in the venture.

The paradigmatic Abraham legend artfully analyzes the problem and masterfully presents Israel's distinctive solution, which recognized two basic aspects to the problem; one aspect being the problem of confidence in cosmic support.

Cosmological civilizations, we have seen, were oriented primarily to a mythological past, the potency of which they found in the existent spatial order of which they, in their societies, were a part. The things of space were there; they could be seen; they were known to outlast individual human lives. So long as their spatial order remained, the people had evidence sufficient to assure them of their attunement with the ultimate and of the efficacy of their traditional modes of maintaining that attunement.
When Abraham turned from the traditional mode of attunement with the ultimate through relationship to things of space, to venture into his untried quest for attunement and fulfillment through a primary orientation to time, he surrendered the evidences upon which "faith" had previously, in the experience of man, been grounded. Severing all his ties to place, Abraham staked significance for his life solely upon his vision of a future fulfillment under Yahweh.

When a few years had passed without the tangible evidence obviously necessary for the fulfillment of his dream, Abraham began to sense the basic weakness of his temporal orientation. He became deeply conscious of the gulf that separated between his vision of the future and its actual fulfillment in time. The legend tells us that in one of his meditations, as the old vision of greatness through future generations once more gripped his soul, Abraham blurted out (sarcastically?) to his unseen God: "And what (fulfillment) will you bring to me, as long as I go childless?"711

Abraham, at this moment, had become deeply aware of the ultimate unpredictability which attaches to the future; and he was afraid. 712 He saw, in its stark nakedness, the awe-ful truth of man's ultimate frailty in the face of ongoing time and its infinite possibilities for not fulfilling a mere dream.

711Gen. 15:2.
712Gen. 15:1.
According to the biblical story, Abraham now considered compromising his original aims for the fulfillment of his life, and almost decided to settle for a vicarious fulfillment through his trusted foreign slave, Eliezer. But Abraham, it turned out, was in the end too hardy for such a compromise, and, according to the story, in that hour conceived a solution which was to become a most fundamental conviction of Israel’s faith—certainly one of the most influential religious ideas ever to inspire the minds of men—the concept of covenant with the ultimate power of the universe.

In its essence, the covenant was originally a device for solving the problem of the unpredictability of the actions of men in relationship with one another. Covenants of different types were widely used in Abraham’s world for stabilizing relationships between social or political units, and between individuals.

It is significant that Genesis 14 tells of various covenantal relationships between the peoples of Canaan among whom Abraham was living at the time, and informs us that Abraham himself was involved

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713 Gen. 15:3.
716 Ibid.
717 Gen. 14:1 ff.
in these relationships. 718 In some way (the text seems to suggest that it was in the practice of an ancient rite known to us as incubation) 719 Abraham conceived of his God as offering him a covenantal relationship guaranteeing the fulfillment he had sought. 720

As the peoples of ancient cosmological civilizations saw the ultimate power of the universe in a mythological past; and, through a ritual re-enactment of that past, thought to release that power into their lives and time; so Abraham saw ultimacy in the future, and, through the concept of a covenant with Yahweh, was able to release the power of that future into his present.

That hour marked the beginning of a new era in human history. Henceforth, for Israel, the "Word of Yahweh"—an inner conviction in the souls of men attuned to the ultimate through a commitment to the future—was "the order of existence in opposition to the world." 721

For Israel, the word of Yahweh, guaranteeing that future by solemn

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719 Gen. 15:8 ff. On incubation, see: Gaster, Thespis, pp. 270 f.

720 The basic idea of a covenantal relationship between a man and his god was not new. (Mendenhall, in IDB, A-D, p. 718). I use the Abraham narrative as a paradigm for Israel's experience, as, indeed, it may well have been intended, though the form is different from that of the covenant with the nation under Moses (Ibid., pp. 717 ff.) The Old Testament founds the nation's experience of the covenant in Ex. 24:1-11.

721 Voegelin, p. 195.
covenant, was the ultimate basis for her persistent continuation of the quest initiated by Abraham for fulfillment in the ongoing processes of time. 722 On the basis of the confidence so generated by the covenant concept, Israel was able to weather all the storms of her precarious existence in time; and, in so doing, discover also, along the way, such other fundamental concepts and experiences as have made her the primary religious teacher of western civilization.

History has thus demonstrated the practicality and effectiveness of the covenant idea as a solution to the first major aspect of the problem of orientation to time, that aspect being how to generate confidence in all those forces which impinge upon human life, but over which man has no control— in other words, how to overcome the unpredictability of future events.

We cannot measure the degree to which the Sabbath contributed toward Israel's achievement; but we can, in this light, perhaps better appreciate Israel's affinity for this day: for the Sabbath, in Israel, was made an evidence of the continuity of Yahweh's covenant with his people. 723

Israel saw the beginning of her historical existence under Yahweh in Abraham's vision of what might be in the future. 724 Here, she saw

723 Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Isa. 56:2-6.
724 Cf. above, pp. 83 ff., 90.
also the covenant concept, without other evidence, as the ultimate
ground of her faith in that vision. 725 But, while mere faith and
conviction do, indeed, constitute the logical basis for initiating an
orientation to the future, 726 this alone cannot forever sustain the
human spirit. In the course of time, there must also be evidence of
movement toward the desired goal.

Israel found the necessary evidence. She found it first in the
actual events of her history—above all, in the exodus from Egypt. 727
She found it also (and this was especially emphasized toward the close
of her history) in the creative power of her God. 728 In accordance
with established principles of myth-making, Israel fixed into the
creative activity of her God that principle of movement toward sig-
nificant fulfillment which was so important to her, and which she had
experienced in her own historical existence. 729 In this light, too, the
Old Testament's attributing both to creation 730 and to the exodus from

725 Gen. 15:6.

726 Cf., e.g., the scientific method, with its orientation to the future.

727 Cf. above, pp. 91 ff., 141 f., 161 ff., 172 f., 191 ff.

728 The idea is barely suggested in the Abraham legend (Gen. 14:22;
15:5; 18:25). For other passages in which the creation theme is used to
bolster confidence in fulfillment, see: Isa. 40:27 ff.; 42:5 ff.; 44:24 ff.;
45:12 ff.; Ps. 33:6 ff.; etc. Cf. B. D. Napier, "On Creation Faith in the

729 Cf. above, pp. 102 ff.

730 Ex. 20:8 ff.
Egypt\textsuperscript{731} the basis of Yahweh's original requirement of Sabbath observance is entirely consistent. Taken together, these events evidenced, for Israel, her own movement, under Yahweh, toward ultimate fulfillment. These events constituted Yahweh's guarantee of the ultimate realization of Israel's goals; they were the evidence which overcame all doubt in times of stress—matching, for Israel, in her orientation to time, the evidence of the visible omphalos in cosmological order.

On this basis, the logic of the Sabbath as the token of the covenant, and its inclusion in the covenantal law known as the decalogue, becomes clear. The Sabbath, through its identification with the evidence—the creation and the exodus—was itself, to Israel, the durative evidence that Yahweh would fulfill his covenant pledge and that Israel would attain the ontological fulfillment she sought.

Surely my Sabbaths ye shall keep for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I, Yahweh, do sanctify you.\textsuperscript{732}

In Eliade's words:\textsuperscript{733}

Symbolism effects a permanent solidarity between man and the sacred.\textsuperscript{734}

\textsuperscript{731}Deut. 5:12 ff.
\textsuperscript{732}Ex. 31:13; Cf. Eze. 20:12, 20.
\textsuperscript{733}Eliade, \textit{Patterns}, p. 447.
\textsuperscript{734}The ancients, apparently, did not, as we do, distinguish between the symbol and the reality symbolized. On this basis, the infliction of the death penalty for Sabbath desecration (Ex. 31:14; 35:2; Num.
Ultimate fulfillment for Israel, however, was not a fate decreed
by her God. It could never be realized solely through divine action.

Basic to Old Testament thought, as we have seen, are the principles
of (1) man's dominion and capacity for significant action and achieve-
ment under God; \(735\) and (2) the necessity for man's action if he is to
attain any significant end. \(736\)

While the primitive Abrahamic covenant \(737\) fails to specify ob-
ligations on Abraham's part, the idea of obligation on Abraham's part
is emphasized in the narrative. The necessity of action is first im-
plied in Yahweh's call. \(738\) Later, after a period of discouragement
on Abraham's part, the mere fact of Abraham's reconfirmation of
confidence in his venture appears to satisfy some kind of demand on
Yahweh's part. \(739\)

In what is now termed P's account of the making of the covenant
with Abraham, \(740\) "an attitude is demanded of Abraham toward God's
act, an attitude which he is to make explicit by circumcising every male

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\(736\) Cf. above, esp. pp. 150 ff., 172 ff.
\(738\) Gen. 12:1 ff.
\(739\) Gen. 15:6.
\(740\) Gen. 17.
That Yahweh expects a certain kind of response from Abraham is again indicated in Genesis 18:19 ff. The crowning symbol, however, of obligation on Abraham's part, is the legend of the offering of Isaac. 742 Here it is distinctly stated that "God did test Abraham"; and, after the test, Yahweh said: 743

Now I know that thou fearest God. . . . Because thou hast done this thing, and not withheld thy son, thine only son, therefore in blessing I will bless thee. . . . because thou hast hearkened to my voice. 744

It is thus obvious that the Abraham narrative emphasizes that while the fulfillment Abraham sought was dependent upon Yahweh's providence, it was also, in large measure, dependent upon Abraham himself. It is a major theme of the Old Testament that attunement with the divine, and security in time, require confidence not only in divine providence, but also in the sustained fidelity of man himself in responding to divine will. 745 In the Mosaic covenant, 746 this

742 Gen. 22.
743 Gen. 22:1, 12 ff.
744 That the "test" principle, though stated in terms of satisfying Yahweh, was understood as meeting man's need, is shown in Deut. 8:3 ff.
745 Cf. above, esp. pp. 172 ff.
746 Ex. 19:1--24:18.
element of responsibility on the human side is spelled out in definitive terms. With the prophets, this responsibility becomes the basis of an interpretation of history in which catastrophe was attributed to Israel's failure to fulfill her covenantal obligation. 747 This deep sense of human responsibility both for trust in divine providence, and for action in harmony therewith, is frequently expressed in narratives in which events or situations are described or interpreted as tests. Frequently temporal security is associated with these tests.

This theme in the Abraham legend has already been traced. Other typical examples are: (1) Gen. 3 (Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge); (2) I Sam. 13:8 ff.; 15 (Samuel and Saul); (3) Job 1 ff. (The Job legend); (4) Deut. 8:2 ff. (The hardships of the wilderness wandering are interpreted as tests); (5) Isa. 7:1-9 (Isaiah and Ahaz: "If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established."); (6) Dan. 1, 3 (The Hebrew captives in Babylon).

In view of the importance attached to this concept of "test", it can scarcely be without significance that this theme, too, is associated with the Sabbath. Actually, the Sabbath as "test" is a major theme of the legend with which the Sabbath is first introduced into the historical experience of Israel. 748

747 E.g., Hos. 8.
748 Ex. 16.
Regardless of whether any factual event may have suggested the manna story; from a rational perspective, that story, in its present form, is obviously a fiction in so far as its historicity is concerned. Its very creation, therefore, and its inclusion in the Bible, are facts which witness to its "truth" in the sense of giving expression to religious experience. Of the nature of that experience we need not speculate, for the narrative itself tells us that when, after being informed that there would be no manna on the seventh day, and instructed to gather a two-days' supply on the sixth day, "some of the people" nevertheless "went out on the seventh day to gather, and found none,

Yahweh said to Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See for yourselves that Yahweh has given you the Sabbath. Therefore he gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out from his place on the seventh day.\textsuperscript{749}

Clearly the intent of the narrative is to give expression to Israel's experience of the Sabbath as a "test" of confidence in and loyalty to her God.

This aspect of Sabbath observance seems also to be definitely implied in Ex. 31:13 ff., where the mutual reciprocity of the covenant obligation is indicated.

\textsuperscript{749}Ex. 16:28 ff. Cf. Deut. 8:2, where the giving of the manna is clearly associated with the "test" theme; and Neh. 9:13 ff., where Ezra specifically mentions the Sabbath and the "bread from heaven" in citing the past failure of his people to attune with Yahweh.
Sabbath observance in biblical Israel, then, was experienced as a witness to a faithful discharge of the obligations of the covenant on the part of both its parties. In this way did Sabbath observance function in developing, through providing practical evidence, the confidence essential for the success of Israel's distinctive orientation to time.
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Studies of primitive and ancient societies have shown that the observance of periodic days of restriction constitutes a well-nigh universal feature of human social order. Basic categories of motivation for such days are two in number: (1) the practical motivation of providing set times for community markets; and (2) various motivations of a religious nature.

Religiously motivated days of restriction express man's various ways of dealing with the problem of encounter with time. In primitive and ancient cultures, time appears to be experienced in segments identified by their quality, rather than as a continuous dimension of existence, such as we know. One aspect of the quality of a segment of time is determined by associated circumstances and events, among the most influential of which are: (1) periods of transition in the life of the community, such as death, catastrophes, changes of the seasons

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750 Above, p. 7, with many illustrations in chap. i.
751 Above, pp. 7 ff.
752 Esp. pp. 43 ff.
and of seasonal occupations; \(^{753}\) (2) phases of the moon and the movement of other heavenly bodies, \(^{754}\) and (3) episodes in the mythical lives of the gods. \(^{755}\) Two other supremely important aspects of the experience of time are: its punctual and passing aspect; its durative or lasting aspect. \(^{756}\) There is a tendency to account rationally for days of restriction, and thus the development of these days parallels the development of religious experience. \(^{757}\)

At the more primitive levels, days of restriction appear to consist almost altogether in attempts to avoid the dangers of powers associated with passing but ever-recurring moments of time. \(^{758}\) At more advanced levels, days of restriction tend to become times of religious renewal and recreation. They are frequently dedicated to the various gods, and their observance is considered to be pleasing to these gods. \(^{759}\)

Seasonal festivals (especially the annual festivals), identified

\(^{753}\)Pp. 10 ff.  
\(^{754}\)Pp. 15 ff., 20 ff.  
\(^{756}\)Pp. 44 ff., 56 f.  
\(^{757}\)Pp. 12 ff., 18 f., 26 f., 45 ff., \textit{et passim}.  
\(^{758}\)Pp. 15 ff., 26 ff.; the principle pointed out on p. 45.  
\(^{759}\)Pp. 12 ff., 19, 54 ff., 61 ff., \textit{et passim}. 
with the pattern of seeming death and renewal observed in nature's cycles, serve to translate the experience of punctual time into terms of the durative, the power and holiness of which are thus also released back into the ongoing experience of the community. 760 A major feature of such festivals is the mimic ritual re-enactment of the creation by which the cult center and the comprehensive order of society and nature is re-established. An essential aspect of such ritual is the recital of creation myths which set forth the ideal pattern of divine action through which the established order first came into existence. 761

It is in this light that the biblical Sabbath was studied. It was found that while there are some few hints of a primitive motivation of fear possibly associated with the dangerous power of the Sabbath's passing moment, there are no statements of ideology relating Sabbath observance to such motives. In the light of these few possible hints, but more especially in the light of what appears to be the case universally; since the Bible is conspicuously silent about the original introduction of Sabbath observance into human practice, it was concluded that its original motivation was, in all probability, essentially the same as that of other days of restriction. 762

760 Pp. 54, 65 ff.
761 Pp. 60 ff., 115 f.
762 Pp. 130 ff.; cf. pp. 48 f. The existence of ancient near-eastern seven-day periods in religious calendars would also strengthen the presumption of a primitive origin to the Sabbath. See pp. 26 ff.
It is also evident that the creators of the Bible were diligent in eliminating such primitive motivations from Sabbath observance, and in associating the developed religious experience of Israel with the day. 763 This developed religious experience is, to a large extent, distinguished from the religion of Israel's surrounding culture by being primarily oriented to the manifestation of the divine in the continued sequence of passing events in the experience of man and to the future end toward which these events were considered to be leading. 764 In the cultures surrounding Israel, the primary orientation was to the cyclic processes of nature, the mythical past as the permanent ideal (ever possible of renewal), and to things of space which were considered to embody that ideal in the present experience of man. 765

This difference in orientation is well illustrated in a comparison of the most prominent creation myth of Mesopotamia, Enuma elish, with the first creation narrative of Genesis. In Enuma elish, the climax of creation is the establishment of Babylon and its sacred tower and temple as the sacred abode of the gods. 766 In the first creation narrative of Genesis, the crowning act of creation is the establishment

763 Pp. 96 ff., 180 ff., et passim.
765 Pp. 54 ff., 73 ff., 82.
of the week with its seventh-day Sabbath, made holy by the arbitrary act and will of God. 767

Throughout the Old Testament, the ideology of the Sabbath is consistently grounded in its being the holy day of Israel's holy God, and its ideological development clearly parallels Israel's developing experience of the holy in Yahweh as manifested in the events of her historical experience. 768 Major aspects of Israel's experience of her holy God are: (1) a realization of durative significance in the punctual and passing events of human experience through their identification with the purposes of Yahweh, toward the certain fulfillment of which, all events move in a continuous sequence which makes them an expression of divine order; 769 (2) a realization of Yahweh's purpose as embracing self-determination—the dignity of "dominion—for all men; and, concomitant with that, a moral and ethical excellence in man that matches the divine holy nature; 770 (3) a realization by Israel that possessed special significance as the medium through which the divine purpose is both revealed and accomplished; 771 (4) a realization of absolute confidence in Yahweh, moment by moment, and

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767 P. 101.
768 Chap. iii.
770 Pp. 97, 100, 178 ff., 194 ff., 201 ff.
771 Pp. 90 ff., 151 ff., 201, 211 f.
in his bringing fulfillment, ultimately, to his purposes, despite present appearances (which are, in turn, interpreted in harmony with this faith);\(^{772}\) (5) a realization of Israel's responsibility to match the absolute dependability of Yahweh with an absolute commitment to the fulfillment of his demands.\(^{773}\)

The Sabbath is identified with all of these themes. In Genesis I, it was associated with the primacy of time over space, as a manifestation of Yahweh's holiness and power, with a notion of time as a continuous succession of different but unrepeatable and significant events, with the activity of God as movement toward the certain fulfillment of his purposes, and, indirectly, with the concept of human dignity and freedom under God as an aspect of man's endowment in the creation. Genesis I also makes the week, consisting of six days of labor followed by a day of rest, a divine paradigm for human life which embraces all of man's time.\(^{774}\)

In accordance with the principles of primitive and ancient logic, duplication of this paradigm, in ancient Israel, doubtless functioned ideologically much as did the seasonal festivals of cosmologically-oriented societies. Serving Israel as a center for her orientation to the divine, as ancient cult-sites (e.g., Babylon) served as centers for the orientation of cosmological societies, the Sabbath was, essentially,

\(^{772}\)Pp. 172 ff., 168 ff., 197 ff., 201, 208 ff.


\(^{774}\)Pp. 88 ff. (to end of chap.), 183 ff., 186 ff., 194 ff., \textit{et passim}. 

an "omphalos" for Israel, through which divine holiness and power were mediated to her community, and through which, she, in turn, could translate the everyday passing experience of life, on its punctual level, to the level of the durative and significant. 775

The association of the Sabbath with the Exodus provided a basis for further developing the significance of the day as an expression of the divine will for man's dignity, freedom (the exercise of "dominion"), and the discharge of social obligations. The Exodus also associates the Sabbath with historical event as manifestation of the divine nature and purpose. 776

Association of the Sabbath with the covenant makes the institution a perpetual symbol of Yahweh's pledge to Israel, and its observance by Israel an expression of her confidence in the fulfillment of Yahweh's purposes and promises; hence, also, an expression of confidence in her own ontological fulfillment. Sabbath observance by Israel also expressed her loyalty to the covenant and her perpetual commitment to its obligations. 777

As Israel's understanding both of Yahweh's holiness and his ultimate purpose for human life came to signify moral and ethical

776 Pp. 191 ff., 194 ff.
777 Chap. iv (pp. 205 ff.)
excellence, so also was Sabbath observance associated with the realization of this ideal as the goal both of history and of man's ontological quest. 778

Thus was the Sabbath, in the Old Testament, conceived as a major symbol of, and as a major vehicle for, the experience, expression, and preservation of biblical Israel's distinctive experience of time and holiness, under Yahweh; who, through the manifestation of his distinctive holiness, in temporal events, was conceived as bringing all mankind, in freedom, under his dominion--attunement with this process and this end being also the way to ontological fulfillment for man.

Two distinct advantages of the sacred day over the sacred site as an omphalos are: its universal presence, and its permanence. 779

This study tends to confirm Webster's conclusion that the practice of periodic abstinence is an instinctive reaction of the human species to the conditions of his existence. 780 That reaction, this study concludes, is grounded in the tension of awareness of a dual experience of time: one aspect being the passing, punctual, and seemingly insignificant; the other aspect being the durative or lasting, and genuinely

778 Pp. 197 ff.
779 Pp. 186, 211.
780 Pp. 7, 47 f.
significant. It is ultimately the ideology through which this tension is relieved which determines the character of religious days of restriction. Thus the observance and ideology of its days of restriction would constitute an excellent source of information concerning the motivation of any society's religious experience. That this is true for biblical Israel has been shown by demonstrating that the ideas which she associated with the Sabbath articulate major themes of a religious ideology which also found expression in other contexts.

781 Pp. 44 ff., 54 ff.
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