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THE NOMADIC IDEA AND IDEAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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INTRODUCTION

IN the present lies the past; and in what is, what shall be." This significant quotation is taken from Professor Kuenen's *Religion of Israel* and is set down here as expressive of a truth that lies at the heart of the discussion which follows. It is equivalent to saying that in the history of a people no event or circumstance of any importance ever vanishes completely without leaving some trace, so that we cannot fully explain the life of a people within a given period without seeking the preparation for it in events which went before.

Conversely, when we consider the traditions of a people we must recognize the importance of taking into account also the succeeding history, in order that we may determine just how much of fact underlies the traditions. For the truth of the traditions is tested in large part by the marks which some of the events and circumstances described in them leave upon the history which follows.

Applying this test to the traditions and authentic history of the Hebrews, we may safely assert that the main claims of these traditions are not open to doubt. Their essential truth is attested by certain survivals in the later history of Israel.

The Old Testament traditions spring from two main sources, namely, Babylonian civilization and the early life of

the desert. Of these two, the former has been treated so fully by Old Testament scholars, and emphasized to such a degree by the so-called Pan-Babylonian School, as to obscure almost entirely the importance, even the very existence of the latter influence.

Now it cannot be denied that many elements in the life of Israel demand for their explanation Babylonian origin and influence. Even a cursory reading of the Old Testament shows this to be true. But if in contact with Babylonian civilization we recognize one taproot of Hebrew life, no less is it true that in the early nomadic life of the fathers of the Hebrew people we find another taproot. Not only is tradition consistent in claiming a nomadic origin for this people, but also unmistakable traces of that origin survive in the succeeding life of Israel. The nourishment which was furnished by this nomadic taproot has gone into the formation of certain characteristic traits which show themselves in all the later life and thought of Israel.

So complete a picture of nomadic life does the Old Testament give in its stories of the early Hebrews, and to such an extent has the desert survived in the life which followed, that had we no other sources of information concerning nomadic life, we should be able to reconstruct it from the Old Testament down to almost the last detail.

The history of the periods preceding the founding of the kingdom presents the free, independent life of liberty-loving nomads. The customs, institutions, social organization, religion, are all characteristic of this mode of life. In the stories of the patriarchs, the subjects discussed are tents and camels, flocks and herds, "sojourns" here and there.¹ The "sojourners" are compelled to buy a cave from the settled inhabitants of the land in which to bury their dead;² they build altars as they move about, and set up pillars in places where special events, of divine import to them, occur.³ The stories

¹ Gen. 12 6-11; 13 23; 20 11; 21 23-24, etc.

² Gen. 23.

³ Gen. 33 20; 35 1, 7, 14, 20, etc.

tell of the plundering of cities, in genuine Bedawi fashion, near which the nomads happen to encamp;⁴ of disputes over wells, which are so necessary to this kind of people with their flocks and herds;⁵ of famines, when the nomads must seek food by dwelling near a settled people until better times come;⁶ of the simple and beautiful hospitality which is a feature of nomadic life;⁷ of cattle-breeding on a large scale.⁸ Prosperity and wealth are measured by the possession of flocks and herds and tents.⁹ When Jacob comes to Egypt with his family, Joseph's brethren are known to the Pharaoh as shepherds.¹⁰ The tradition of the fathers' mode of life is later summed up in the phrase "a wandering Aramaean was my father".¹¹

As to the life after the deliverance from Egypt, the accounts in Exodus portray the essentially nomadic character. With flocks and herds they set out;¹² they travel in the desert where water is scarce;¹³ they engage in an encounter with Amalek, a predatory tribe which resents intrusion upon its territory;¹⁴ they stop at an oasis;¹⁵ they encamp by Sinai, while their flocks range over the surrounding territory;¹⁶ they build altars and erect pillars;¹⁷ Moses, as a man of recognized ability, "judges", or gives oracles in cases of dispute and question;¹⁸ when he goes up into the mount, he leaves this responsibility to the elders who are next best qualified.¹⁹ These elders bear a striking resemblance to the sheikhs of the modern Bedawin.

The law given at Sinai, in its probable original form,²⁰ is suited to nomadic life. Even the worship established there,²¹ with its ark, its holy objects, and many other features which characterized early Semitic religion, is just what we should

⁴ Gen. 34 27f. ⁵ Gen. 21 25-30; 26 30-33, etc. ⁶ Gen. 26 and 42.

⁷ Gen. 18 1-2. ⁸ Gen. 13 and 29-31; 37 12f., etc.

⁹ Said of Abram in Gen. 12 16; 13 2, —of Lot, 13 5, —of Isaac, 26 14, —of Jacob, 30 43; 32 6; 46 6, —of Esau, 36 6, etc.

¹⁰ Gen. 46 32, 34; 47 1-4. ¹¹ Deut. 26 5. ¹² Ex. 12 32, 33.

¹³ Ex. 15 22; 17 1, 2. ¹⁴ Ex. 17 8-13. ¹⁵ Ex. 15 27.

¹⁶ Ex. 18 5; 19 2; 34 5b. ¹⁷ Ex. 17 15; 24 4. ¹⁸ Ex. 18 12f.

¹⁹ Ex. 24 14. ²⁰ Cf. Driver, *Exodus*, pg. 415f. ²¹ Ex. 33 7f., *et al.*

expect to find in a nomadic society. More significant still, Yahweh, the God of Israel, is typically a God of the desert. He is thus first presented in His revelation of Himself to Moses.²² This we gather also from His command to be worshipped in the desert.²³ The consciousness of His connection with the desert was never lost.²⁴ More will be said of this later, but it is quite clear that there always remained a distinct memory of Yahweh as being originally a nomads' God, and of the preservation of the nation by Him in the desert.²⁵ Indeed, the importance attached in the Old Testament to the sojourn in the desert arose from the consciousness that those tribes which brought Yahweh with them made the greatest contribution to the life of the people.²⁶

The fact that the conquest of Canaan was effected by individual tribes taking possession of different districts shows that the tribal organization, peculiar to desert peoples, still prevailed in Israel.²⁷ The occupation of Canaan brought a transition to settled life, but the years passed in the desert still retained their power in molding the life of the people. Tribal consciousness was by no means wiped out when the Hebrews entered the new land, as is shown by many facts and circumstances which we shall have occasion to observe later. The very persistence of independence and tribal feeling threatened to undermine at many points the growing national organization. Many customs and conceptions which originated in the desert were carried over into settled life.

The religion of Israel cannot be appreciated fully without taking into account its nomadic elements. The work of Moses in laying the foundations of that religion, which was destined

²² Ex. 3 ff.; 3 13; 6 2, 5b.

²³ Ex. 5 2; 9 1, as Moses presented the case to the Pharaoh.

²⁴ Cf. Deut. 32 10, "Yahweh found Israel in a desert", and cf. Jud. 5 4; I Ki. 19 5b.

²⁵ Cf. Deut. 1 19; 2 7; 11 5; 29 5, etc.; Amos 2 10, 11; Hos. 13 4, 5; Jer. 2 2, 6, etc.

²⁶ Cf. H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, pg. 75.

²⁷ Cf. L. B. Paton, art., "Conquest of Canaan", in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 36, pg. 1 ff., and cf. Cornill, *Culture of Ancient Israel*, pg. 19 ff.

in time to draw the scattered tribes together into a nation, is of too great importance to be passed over lightly.

The prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries recognized the value of the best elements in that early religion to such an extent that they were led to honor the heritage of the desert and to remind the people constantly of that great formative period in the nation's historical and religious development. When the prophets sought for a standard whereby to gauge the apostasy of the nation, they found it in the pure and simple life and religion of the fathers. In the eyes of the prophets the time before the immigration into Canaan was the age of Israel's love to Yahweh, and the entrance into the cultivated land was the beginning of corruption.²⁸

The prophets, who recognized that "in the present lies the past", while the rest of the nation ignored this truth and gave itself up exclusively to the present and its evils, took up the "nomadic idea", and carried it over into what we may call the "nomadic ideal". In our final chapter of this study we will go more fully into an explanation of this "ideal". Suffice it here to say that the nomadic ideal existed before the time of the prophets and was championed by a small minority within the nation, but it remained for these great leaders and preachers to transform and purify it.

The progress of our thought in the course of this study will be somewhat as follows: First we will observe the evidences in the Old Testament which prove the nomadic origin of the Hebrews. Four sections will, accordingly, be devoted to a consideration of the evidence in the Old Testament relating to the occupations, foods, clothing and dwellings of the early Hebrews, so far as these will help us to reconstruct the life of the people. Two sections will then be given to a study of the social life and organization and the religion of the time before the settlement in Canaan, thus completing our reconstruction of the life and society of the period in which we are interested. Occasion will be taken now and

²⁸ Cf. Amos 5 15; Hos. 9 10; 10 1; Jer. 2 2, etc.

then to point out survivals in later times of some of the institutions discussed. The final section will take a slightly different turn, dealing with the "nomadic ideal". Thus, we shall move along from nomadic origins to nomadic survivals, and finally to the nomadic ideal.

I OCCUPATIONS

One of the methods of determining the stage of social development to which a primitive people had attained, is to consider the occupations in which it was engaged.

Our first concern, then, in determining the stage of culture of the early Hebrews, will be to gather from the Old Testament the evidence relating to their occupations.

Of hunting as an occupation practically nothing is said in the Old Testament. Aside from the mention of Esau as a hunter of venison, the few references to the killing of wild animals show this to have been carried on *only* as a measure of self-defense.²⁹ We may therefore conclude that hunting was no longer an occupation of this people in the earliest period described by the Old Testament.

As to fishing, an occupation of many primitive peoples, references are equally lacking in our early Hebrew sources. To anticipate a little, we may observe that amid the circumstances of desert life there would hardly be any opportunity for this pursuit.

(The chief occupations ascribed to the Hebrews before their entrance into Canaan, are cattle-breeding, sheep-raising and pastoral pursuits, which most naturally fit in with nomadic life.) The complete picture of the nomadic life of the Hebrew forefathers in the earlier stories of the Old Testament has already been referred to. This form of life is set forth almost as an ideal occupation, which fact, as Professor H. P. Smith observes: "is the more striking because the ideal of the Hebrew writers for themselves was agricultural".³⁰ Thus Jacob,

²⁹ Cf. Gen. 37 23; I Sam. 17 24; II Sam. 23 20, etc.

³⁰ *Religion of Israel*, pg. 12.

"the quiet man who dwelt in tents"³¹ is preferred above Esau the rough and ready hunter. Likewise in the story of Cain and Abel,³² at least in its probable original form, the nomadic life appears as more acceptable than the agricultural.³³

The stories of these earliest Hebrews are very strongly nomadic. The chief interest is centered upon the increase of flocks and herds, the search for pasture-lands and wells of water, for the possession of which bitter struggles are frequently necessary. Wealth is reckoned on the basis of the possession of flocks and herds. Camels, sheep and cattle are often mentioned. Journeyings across desert spaces, sojourns in various places, and struggles with hostile tribes are often described.

At the time of the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, their great leader, Moses, led his brethren back to the desert in the region of Sinai. The journey thither is described in terms of the desert, and when they arrived at the sacred mountain, "Israel encamped before the mount",³⁴ while the flocks and herds were not permitted to "feed before that mount",³⁵ but had to be pastured a little distance away. The life of the people during the sojourn at Sinai, and later at Kadesh, even in the fragmentary sources covering that period, is quite in keeping with what we should expect of a nomadic society. Even the religion of the people, as we shall see, was thoroughly adapted to this kind of existence.

It must be remarked here that while we are obliged to go back to the time before the so-called Mosaic period for specific references from which to reconstruct the nomadic life, this is mainly because the interest of our sources for the earlier period is chiefly in the *activities* of the people, while that of the Mosaic period is in their *religion* and *conduct*. But it cannot be doubted that, with a few differences, due perhaps to changed circumstances, the ordinary life of the people was much the same after as before the Exodus.

³¹ Gen. 25 27.

³² Gen. 4.

³³ Cf. Budde, *Urgeschichte*, Ch. VI.

³⁴ Ex. 19 2.

³⁵ Ex. 34 2.

Flocks constituted the main possessions of the Hebrew nomads, and the care of these flocks formed their chief occupation. The word commonly used for "possessions"³⁶ applies to other purchasable property as well as to flocks and herds, but in the majority of cases in the Old Testament it is applied to the latter.³⁷ It is interesting and enlightening to note that this word is practically a synonym for "cattle",³⁸ a circumstance which indicates that possessions, according to the Hebrew mind, consisted originally of the property peculiar to the nomad.

Among the possessions, the chief item is *šō'n*, which includes small cattle, sheep, goats and also flocks and herds. These are generally named first among lists of the nomads' possessions.³⁹ Moses kept the *šō'n* of Jethro in Midian.⁴⁰ Likewise Job is represented as the possessor of seven thousand *šō'n*.⁴¹ They are also mentioned as used in sacrifice.⁴² The unit of *šō'n* is *šēh*.⁴³

Along with *šō'n* are usually included 'izzim or goats, which judging from a reference in I Kings 20 27,⁴⁴ were kept in small flocks separate from the other animals. According to Jeremiah,⁴⁵ the he-goats (*attūdh*, singular) were in turn used as leaders of the flocks.

The camel (*gāmāl*) is of course frequently named, as common property and beast of burden.⁴⁶ Job, who is clearly represented as a nomad, is said to be the possessor of three thousand camels. The hair of the camel, as well as the wool of the

³⁶ *miqneh*, from *qanāh*, to get or acquire.

³⁷ Gen. 4 20; 47 16, 17; Ex. 9 3; 10 26; Deut. 3 19; Job 1 3; Isa. 30 22, etc.

³⁸ Cf. B. D. B., *ad loc.*

³⁹ Cf. Gen. 12 16; 13 5; 26 14; 30 43; 32 6; 46 22, etc.

⁴⁰ Ex. 3 1.

⁴¹ Job 1 2.

⁴² Gen. 4 14; Num. 22 40, etc.

⁴³ Gen. 22 7, 8; 30 22; Ex. 13 13, etc.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gen. 30 22; Ex. 12 2.

⁴⁵ Jer. 50 8; cf. Isa. 14 9; Prov. 30 21, etc.

⁴⁶ Gen. 12 16; 24 10, 19 f.; 30 43; 32 8, etc.; cf. later mention of the camels of neighboring nomads, Amalekites and Midianites, in Jud. 6 5; 7 12; I Sam. 15 3; cf. Jer. 49 28.

sheep and the hair of the goat, were employed in the weaving of tentcovers and rough garments.⁴⁷

Part of the care of sheep consisted in shearing them at a certain season of the year, and the occasion was marked by a festival to which guests were invited.⁴⁸

In our older sources there is no mention of weaving and spinning, which must have been done by the women, as among modern Bedawin. Nor is there reference to any of the common and ordinary tasks which must have been carried on by the men around the camp, such as the making of utensils of wood or stone, the making of leather bags from the skins of animals, and so on. The Hebrew nomad, like the modern Bedawi, was not a worker, and whatever trivial tasks he might perform about the camp would hardly be worth recording.

Along with nomadic life came a certain rough and brutal aggressiveness which is apparent in the stories of the Hebrew tribes. There is a whole group of words that express the pillaging, plundering habits of these rude nomads. Indeed, the later historians and law-givers, looking back over the course of Yahweh's leading of their ancestors, glory in their primitive brutality. For example, Deuteronomy 33 26, 27: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun,—He thrust out the enemy before thee, and said, Exterminate!" Again, Numbers 23 24 expresses it thus: "Behold a people that riseth up as a lioness and lifts itself as a lion; he shall not lie down till he has devoured his prey, and until he has drunk the blood of his victims".

These indefatigable nomads went forward attacking, raiding, plundering, destroying "with the edge of the sword" and exercising the *herem* against their enemies. Much of their time, at least at certain seasons of the year, must have been taken up with such encounters. They had to fight in order to maintain themselves in a land where food was not plentiful,

⁴⁷ Cf. below under "Clothing" and "Shelter".

⁴⁸ Gen. 31 10; 38 18; I Sam. 25 7, 11, 20; II Sam. 13 23; Deut. 15 10; cf. the figurative use made of this in Isa. 53 7.

and where pastures and wells of water were prizes to be gained through victory over weaker tribes.

After the entrance of the Hebrew tribes into Canaan, where agricultural pursuits would be more possible than in the steppes or the desert, cattle-breeding and pastoral life were still carried on to some extent. The nomadic occupations were naturally retained longer by the transjordanic tribes of Gad and Reuben⁴⁹ and by the tribes of Judah and Simeon⁵⁰ because of their location. David appears first as a shepherd,⁵¹ and later, mention is made of cattle-breeding carried on by him and other kings.⁵² Nabal was a possessor of great herds,⁵³ and the prophet Amos was a cattle-breeder from the district of Tekoa in Judah.⁵⁴

When the Rechabites appear in the time of Jehu, reappearing in Jeremiah's day,⁵⁵ their nomadic character distinguishes them from those Israelites who have passed over to agricultural occupations, and indeed, we know that their purpose in clinging to this mode of life was to protest against culture and progress toward civilization, and to keep up the time-honored occupation of the fathers. Likewise the Kenites, moving northward from southern Judah, seem to represent this same tendency to preserve the customs of the fore-fathers and their nomadic life.⁵⁶

A further evidence of the nomadic life of the early Hebrews is to be seen in the survival of certain words and phrases which betray a nomadic origin, and which are found in nearly all the books of the Old Testament. These originated in the very time when the fathers of Israel expressed themselves in terms of daily life.

The nation is often referred to as a "flock", and as "sheep".⁵⁷ The leaders of the people are called "shepherds".⁵⁸ Another

⁴⁹ Num. 32 s f.; 32 40; Deut. 3 15 f., etc. ⁵⁰ I Chr. 4 34 ff. ⁵¹ I Sam. 16 11; 17 35 f.

⁵² I Sam. 21 8; II Sam. 13 28; I Chr. 27 28 f.; II Chr. 26 10, etc.

⁵³ I Sam. 25 10. ⁵⁴ Amos 1 1; 7 14. ⁵⁵ II Ki. 10 15 f.; cf. Jer. 35 5 f.

⁵⁶ Cf. II Chr. 2 55, where the Rechabites are Kenites.

⁵⁷ I Ki. 20 37; Jer. 13 17, 20; 23 2; 31 10; Ezek. 34 11; 12 17, 22; Mic. 2 12; and very frequently in the Psalms.

⁵⁸ II Sam. 5 2; 7 7; Jer. 23 2, 4; 50 6; Isa. 40 11; 44 28; Ezek. 34 2, 7 f.; Zech. 10 2, 3, etc.

interesting figure is found in Exodus 15 15,⁵⁹ where 'áyil, literally a "ram" as leader of a flock, is used figuratively for the chiefs of the people.

Again, Yahweh Himself, in the familiar Shepherd Psalm, is called the great and true shepherd of His people, and by implication the same figure is presented in such passages as Jeremiah 23 2 and Ezekiel 34 7 and others.

A study of the Psalms from this point of view discloses a wealth of such figurative words and phrases which grew out of the nomadic life of early Israel and were never lost from the language.

It is also important to note that in blessings and promises made to the people, both in early times and in the later life in Canaan, possessions of flocks and herds and increase of cattle are prominent considerations.⁶⁰

The term *šōn*, referred to above, is very often employed in similes for multitudes,⁶¹ and is applied metaphorically in several places to the same effect.⁶² This usage also occurs often in the Psalms.

II. FOODS

Our inquiry now leads us to a consideration of the foods upon which the early Israelites subsisted, as attested by the Old Testament references. Were we dealing with modern times or a modern people, it would manifestly be impossible to proceed upon the assumption that a study of this kind would furnish any indication of the people's stage of culture. For today, at least in civilized nations, transportation facilities and international trade and commerce draw food supplies from the ends of the earth. But with the early Israelites, the food of the people depended almost entirely upon environment and community effort, and thus witnesses to the mode of life and the stage of culture.

⁵⁹ Cf. Isa. 14 9.

⁶⁰ Cf. Deut. 7 14; 8 13; 28 4; Jer. 31 27; 33 13 f.; Ezek. 36 11 a, etc.

⁶¹ Num. 27 17; I Ki. 22 17, etc.

⁶² II Sam. 24 17; Isa. 63 11; Jer. 50 6, etc.

Concerning foods obtained by hunting, as concerning hunting itself as an occupation, the Old Testament offers us little definite information, except perhaps the mention of "venison" contained in the story of Esau, the hunter.⁶³ The word here used for "venison" (*sayidh*) is later employed in a loose sense to include provisions of food of various kinds,⁶⁴ or any game taken in the chase.⁶⁵

While it is true that Samson's fame rested partly upon his prowess as a hunter of wild beasts,⁶⁶ there appears here no intimation of his having carried on hunting as a livelihood. The only food mentioned in the story is the honey obtained from the carcass of the lion which he slew in self-defense.

There are also two passages (Deuteronomy 22^e and Isaiah 10 14), the former framed as a prohibition and the latter having a figurative meaning, which intimate that the eggs of wild fowl were sometimes sought for and eaten.

In Deuteronomy 32 13-14 we have an apparent attempt at naming, in their natural order, the different foods which the Israelites received from Yahweh in the successive stages of their national life. First come "increase of the hills"⁶⁷ and "honey from the crag"; which are fair representatives of the foods of a hunting people, stalking their game upon the mountains, and securing their sweets from honey-combs found in the crags of the rocks; next come "butter of the herd and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs and rams and goats" which appear to be a more or less true description of the sustenance of nomads, whose food supply is obtained from their flocks and herds; and finally, there are the provisions of a settled agricultural people, who raise wheat and other grains, cultivate vineyards and make wine.

In accordance with such a general classification, we find among the earlier references in the Old Testament frequent

⁶³ Gen. 27.

⁶⁴ Cf. Josh. 9 5, 14; Job 38 41; Ps. 132 15, etc.

⁶⁵ Lev. 17 15; Prov. 12 27, etc. Compare the general usage of *šēdihāh* in Gen. 42 25; Ex. 12 25; Josh. 1 11; Jud. 7 8; I Sam. 22 10, etc.

⁶⁶ Jud. 14 6; 15 4.

⁶⁷ Cf. the reading of G. A. Smith, *Deuteronomy*, Cambridge Bible, pg. 348.

mention of foods derived from the flocks and herds and of other nomad fare. Among the more common of these are milk, butter, cheese and flesh or meat. Milk and butter especially have their regular place in the diet of nomads, and these formed part of the meal which Abraham is said to have set before his guests.⁶⁸ Milk seems to have been drunk rather than water, which had to be saved for the flocks. When Sisera demanded a drink of water from Jael, she "opened a skin of milk" for him.⁶⁹

Milk (*helebh*) was one of the most important sources of nourishment for the nomadic Israelites, as it is today for the modern Bedawin, since it was the chief food which their herds produced. Deuteronomy 32:14a intimates that it was obtained from large as well as small cattle. And, as has been said, the mention of "milch camels" in Genesis 32:15 suggests that it was also yielded by camels. Proverbs 27:27 adds goats' milk to the list.

The cream of milk, or perhaps the curds (*hem'ah*), (sometimes the same word is used for "cheese") is regarded as a staple food.⁷⁰ Job 10:10 gives us another word for cheese (*gebhinah*).

The ideal picture of Canaan as a "land flowing with milk and honey" can hardly have been an ideal of the nomads themselves, for it is hard to conceive of nomads representing Utopia as a land in which the common fare of the desert is to be a special glory.⁷¹

Next to foods obtained as products of the flocks and herds, the nomad looked upon flesh or meat (*basar*) of animals as the most important food. It is generally admitted that sacrifice of animals was originally a meal of communion, in which the worshipper and the Deity were supposed to share; and that originally every meal of flesh was looked upon as

⁶⁸ Gen. 18 s.

⁶⁹ Cf. Jud. 4:19; 5:25.

⁷⁰ Gen. 18 s.; Deut. 32:14; Jud. 5:25; I Sam. 17:18; Prov. 30:25.

⁷¹ For the numerous O. T. passages in which this phrase occurs, see Z. A. T. W., vol. 22, article by Stade, pg. 821f., in which the theory of a mythological origin of the expression is advanced, and evidence submitted that this phrase occurs in passages which may all be considered late.

such a sacrifice.⁷² Such passages as Genesis 18 7, 8, Judges 6 18, 13 15 and others give evidence of the eating of the flesh of animals of the flocks.

The word *lehem*, though commonly rendered "bread" and later understood as meaning nothing else, has in Old Testament usage a wide and general meaning. It is the common term for "food" or nourishment of man⁷³ or of animals.⁷⁴ At other times it has approximately the sense which the Arabic *lahm* holds for the modern Bedawin, namely, "meat".⁷⁵ In later times, influenced by the fact that the people had passed over to agriculture, it was used in a limited sense to denote "bread" made of any grain.⁷⁶

Besides these ordinary foods which the nomads obtained from their flocks and herds, there were others, chiefly spices, which were commonly procured through barter, either from settled peoples near which they happened to encamp, or from travelling caravans which passed their way. The principal of these was salt, which was always indispensable for rendering roasted and cooked foods palatable.⁷⁷

In Ezra 4 14 we find a common Semitic idiom, "to eat a man's salt", which is equivalent to living with a man, or eating bread with him. Closely related to this is the "salt-covenant" mentioned in Numbers 18 19.⁷⁸ It is still a rule of the modern Arabs, that when one eats "bread and salt" with another, the two are thus bound in a lasting covenant with each other, a covenant which they dare not betray.⁷⁹

This accounts perhaps for the law in Leviticus 2 13, where salt is required in all foods offered to Yahweh, thus recognizing

⁷² Even I Sam. 2 12 f. shows this to be true.

⁷³ Jud. 13 18; II Sam. 9 7, etc.

⁷⁴ Job 24 5; Ps. 147 8, etc.

⁷⁵ Cf. Jud. 13 18-19, where it is equivalent to "kid" in v. 18. Cf. also Gen. 18 5, 7; Num. 28 24, etc.

⁷⁶ Gen. 27 17; Jud. 7 18; II Ki. 4 42; Ex. 29 2, etc.

⁷⁷ Job betrays the nomad's attitude towards unsalted food: "Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?" 6 a.

⁷⁸ Cf. II Chr. 13 a.

⁷⁹ Cf. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, vol. I, pg. 226, 254, etc., vol. II, pg. 249, 336, etc.

that an inviolable covenant is established between the worshipper and Yahweh.⁸⁰

Among the spices obtained by barter may possibly have been coriander,⁸¹ cummin,⁸² and fitches, which seems to be a variety of black cummin. Our records do not specifically mention these as having been used by the early nomads, and it is possible that they came into use only after the people had settled in Canaan.

Unleavened bread, the "bread of the desert", was a food peculiar to the nomads. There were frequently times on their journeys when leaven was not to be had; and at such times, their bread was of necessity unleavened.⁸³ The law in Exodus 23 18a,⁸⁴ that sacrifices to Yahweh must not be offered with leavened bread, shows that unleavened bread "had the sanction of antiquity".⁸⁵

The wheat and barley used for the making of bread by the nomads must either have been obtained by barter from settled peoples or caravan traders, or else raised in small quantities in fertile oases where it was possible for them to carry on slight cultivation while they halted between planting- and harvest-time.

For roasting, cooking and baking their foods, the nomads doubtless used hot stones placed in an oven fashioned by making a hole in the ground, just as the modern Bedawin are in the habit of doing.⁸⁶ Of such details not much can be said for certain, for like most records of the past, the Old Testament often fails to give precise details of those things which were so common-place as to seem unworthy of mention.

It is possible, to a certain extent, to ascertain the foods of the early Israelites by a consideration of the foods which

⁸⁰ Cf. Num. 18 19; II Chr. 13 5. ⁸¹ Ex. 16 31; Num. 11 7. ⁸² Isa. 28 25.

⁸³ Cf. Benzinger, *Archäologie*, pg. 64, "Bedouin eat mostly unleavened bread".

⁸⁴ Cf. Driver, *Exodus*, Cambridge Bible, pg. 245.

⁸⁵ Cf. article on "Leaven" in *E. B.*, vol. II, col. 2752, by Kennedy: "The use of leaven being a later refinement in the preparation of bread, it may be regarded as certain that offerings of bread to the Deity were from the first unleavened".

⁸⁶ Cf. Doughty, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 7, 86.

they offered to Yahweh, for it was the habit of primitive peoples to sacrifice to the Deity the foods which they themselves ate, and to prepare them preferably in the same manner in which they were prepared for human consumption. A late example of this may be seen in Leviticus 214, where the corn offered was roasted in the ear, in the same manner in which it was prepared for eating. The tradition of Cain's and Abel's offerings testifies to this practice; "Abel brought a firstling of the flock", while "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground". In this connection it is also interesting to note that among the Israelites, unlike other Semites, only domestic animals were sacrificed, and of these only those which were ritually clean and might be eaten by the people themselves.

III. CLOTHING.

After setting his hands to a definite occupation and obtaining from this his daily sustenance, the next logical step in man's development was probably the protection of his body against heat and cold. In dress we see exhibited a greater and more enduring subserviency to custom than in any other department of life. While it is true that climate, economic development and the influence of surrounding peoples with different customs play a great part in modifying styles of clothing, older garments still survive, even though these be worn in later times as under-garments, while the newer clothes do service as outer garments.

According to Genesis 37, Adam and Eve in their state of pristine innocence were naked. The Israelites' conception of the origin of clothing is found in Genesis 321, "And Yahweh made for the man and his wife coats of skins and clothed them". Even before this statement comes the mention (Genesis 37) of the "apron" of fig-leaves (*ḥagôr*), or more properly perhaps, the "loin-cloth" or "girdle" which was always remembered as a primitive garment.

The names of these most primitive garments or girdles are 'ēzôr, ḥagôr, and saq, which are derived from the respective verbs, 'āzar, ḥāgar, and sāqaq. The first of these appears to

be the most primitive, and signifies always a thing worn next to the skin.⁸⁷ This loin-cloth might be either of leather⁸⁸ or of linen.⁸⁹ In the later figurative use of this word 'ēzōr we see perhaps a memory of the nature of the thing itself.⁹⁰

It is difficult to distinguish between the exact nature of the 'ēzōr and the ḥagōr, for there are passages which seem to confuse the two.⁹¹ Broadly speaking, the ḥagōr appears to have been a sort of girdle or belt worn *outside* the dress, and in conformity with this usage warriors are said to wear it as a sword-belt.⁹²

In two passages,⁹³ figurative use is made of the words ḥāgar and 'āzar, in the Proverbs passage somewhat similarly to the usage in Isaiah 45 5 mentioned above, while in Psalms the figure is employed very broadly.

In general the verb ḥāgar was used in the literal sense of wearing a garment,⁹⁴ or putting on armor by a warrior.⁹⁵ This same verb is the one commonly applied to putting on of sack-cloth.⁹⁶

Šaq is the only term used to denote the loin-cloth of hairy substance, presumably of goats' or camels' hair, which was worn next to the skin, with or without any other garment over it, as a sign of mourning. There is but one place in which we find specific mention of an outer garment worn over the šaq, in II Kings 6 30, but there is reason for the apparent

⁸⁷ II Ki. 1 8; Isa. 11 5; Jer. 18 1, 11; Ezek. 23 15; Job 12 18, etc. Cf. article "GIRDLE", by G. A. Cook, in *E. B.*, col. 1734, and by W. R. Smith, in *Jewish Quarterly* of Jan. 1892, pg. 289 ff. Cf. also Dozy's *Dict. de Vêtements*, where reference is made to a modern derivative *ma'zar* which means "drawers".

⁸⁸ II Ki. 1 8.

⁸⁹ Jer. 18 1.

⁹⁰ Cf. Isa. 45 5 where it passes over into the idea of "strengthen" or "encourage", and Jer. 18 11 where it supplies a figure for the closeness of attachment between Yahweh and Israel. Cf. also I Sam. 24; II Sam. 22 40; Ps. 65 7; Job 38 2; 40 7, etc.

⁹¹ Gen. 8 7; Isa. 32 11; Ezek. 23 15.

⁹² II Sam. 20 8; II Ki. 3 28.

⁹³ Prov. 31 17; Ps. 65 12.

⁹⁴ Ex. 29 8; II Sam. 20 8; II Ki. 4 22, etc.

⁹⁵ I Sam. 17 26; 25 18; I Ki. 3 21; Ps. 45 4, etc.

⁹⁶ II Sam. 8 21; I Ki. 20 22; Isa. 15 2; 22 12; Jer. 4 8; Ezek. 27 21; Joel 1 8, 12, etc.

exception. Whether, as some commentators maintain, the *saq* was the primitive loin-cloth worn by the ancient Israelites; or whether the original loin-cloth was known as the '*asor*, the *saq* coming later as a mourning garb, must remain an open question. This much is certain, that the latter term is the only one applied to the loin-cloth used in time of mourning; and commentators are almost unanimous in declaring that the reason for this use is the return to the simplicity of olden times.⁹⁷

Another tendency to conserve primitive dress in religion is shown in the fact of Elijah's wearing a garment, or a "girdle", or kilt of skin,⁹⁸ which, according to W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 438, note 1, is "related to the primitive custom of dressing in the sacrificial skin of animals sacrificed, which when it ceased to be used in ordinary life, was still retained in holy functions". Similar to this is the case of Samuel, "girded with a linen ephod",⁹⁹ that of David,¹⁰⁰ as well as Saul.¹⁰¹

In process of time there developed from the loin-cloth an undergarment known as the *kuttōneth*, worn next to the person.¹⁰² It seems to have had many forms, sometimes having a collar, and thus being a sort of undershirt,¹⁰³ and again being a tunic with long skirts and sleeves.¹⁰⁴ In time it came to be an embroidered tunic worn by the priests.¹⁰⁵ This later usage of the *kuttōneth* appears to be another case of survival in religious functions of a primitive garment, parallel to that of the *saq* in mourning.

As an outer garment, the *simlāh* appears to have been the most common. It is defined by B. D. B. as a "square piece of cloth worn as an outer garment".¹⁰⁶ The later usage of the term *simlāh* was quite broad, since it was applied to clothing in general,¹⁰⁷ but originally it seems to have been a mantle

⁹⁷ Cf. Nowack, *Archäologie*, vol. I, pg. 120 and Benzinger, *Archäologie*, pg. 78.

⁹⁸ II Ki. 1 a.

⁹⁹ I Sam. 2 12.

¹⁰⁰ II Sam. 6 14.

¹⁰¹ I Sam. 19 24. Cf. Driver's *Notes on Samuel*, pg. 160.

¹⁰² Gen. 3 21; II Sam. 15 23, etc.

¹⁰³ Job 30 12.

¹⁰⁴ Gen. 37 27; II Sam. 13 18, etc.

¹⁰⁵ Ex. 16 4; Lev. 8 7, 13; 16 4, etc.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Benzinger, *op. cit.*, pg. 76, and Nowack, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 122, 124.

¹⁰⁷ Gen. 37 24; 41 14; Ex. 19 10, etc.

thrown over the *kuttōneth*. Benzinger¹⁰⁸ makes it the equivalent of the modern Bedawi *'abāye*, which serves as a protection from rain and cold and is used at night as a bed and cover, its ample folds being convenient to carry everything imaginable that is needed on a journey.¹⁰⁹ Psalm 104 2 gives us a beautiful figurative usage of the term.

A general term for clothing of all sorts is seen in the word *begedh*; as *B. D. B.* puts it, it was a term used for clothing of any kind, "from the filthy clothing of the leper to the holy robe of the priest, from the simplest covering for the poor to the costly raiment of the rich and noble." It is mentioned in nearly every book of the Old Testament, and thus seems always to have had a general meaning, somewhat like our word "things" as applied to articles of apparel. With it goes the word *l'bbūsh*, also a general term found in all Semitic languages, but not employed in the Old Testament as frequently as *begedh*.

The continued usage of the foregoing words from the earliest to the latest Old Testament times, the developing significations that they came to carry as time went on, in comparison with the root meanings of these words, and the primitive usages of the things for which the words stood, show that in spite of changes of climate, environment and improved economic conditions, the Israelites clung to conservatism in dress, especially in religious customs. If this appear to be claiming too much, we may at least state, that from the nomadic forms of dress, as worn for the most part still by the modern Bedawin, the chief garments of the Old Testament were developed.

Little is given us in the records concerning head-dress; and this is natural, since a head-covering is not so indispensable as a body-covering, even for a desert people, and consequently would not be considered an important article of dress. The one place where mention is found of head-dress is I Kings 20 31, where "ropes" (*hābhālīm*) are spoken of in connection with *saq*, the mourning dress. This curious juxtaposition seems to imply that the wearing of such a fillet was

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, pg. 77.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Ex. 12 34; 22 26; Deut. 24 18; Jud. 8 25; I Sam. 21 10, etc.

a survival from olden times employed in mourning, just as the *saq* was a survival. Benzinger¹¹⁰ assumes that the Israelites must have worn a head covering similar to the *kefiye* of the modern Bedawin; this is a square cloth folded diagonally and thrown over the head, sometimes secured by a ring of cord placed over it on the head. The post-exilic *ṣānif* may have been a development of this,¹¹¹ and possibly the "head-tires" of Exodus 29⁹ are related to it.

As to the care of the hair, the modern Bedawi pride in wearing the hair and beard long probably bears a relation to the earlier Israelite custom, for there are intimations in the Old Testament that long hair and beard were counted as marks of manhood. The permanent Nazirite vow (as distinguished from the temporary vow) never to let a razor come upon the head, is rooted manifestly in a desire to preserve an old custom of desert life.¹¹²

Some sort of foot-wear must have been necessary to people who lived in the desert, though the simplicity of primitive peoples might lead us to suppose that they did not use any covering for their feet. Doubtless very early men felt the need of protecting their feet from the heat of sands and rocks and from the sharpness of stones. The Old Testament takes it for granted that from the first sandals were worn upon the feet.¹¹³ From several references¹¹⁴ we learn that in worship shoes were removed, and the priests seem also to have been required to perform their service barefooted.¹¹⁵ There are no passages directly referring to this matter, but we may infer

¹¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pg. 80.

¹¹¹ Cf. Job 29 14.

¹¹² Jud. 13 5; I Sam. 1 11. Cf. also Lev. 19 27; 21 5, where priests are forbidden to trim hair or beards. Here appears again an example of primitive custom becoming associated with religion in a later time.

¹¹³ T. K. Cheyne, in *E. B.*, col. 4491, suggests that "from our knowledge of the earliest Hebrews we may suspect that they, at first, were unaccustomed to wear shoes save in travelling". Cf. Ex. 12 11; Deut. 29 5; Josh. 9 5, 12.

¹¹⁴ Notably Ex. 3 5; Josh. 5 12.

¹¹⁵ Both Benzinger, *op. cit.*, pg. 81, and Nowack, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 125 and vol. II, pg. 117, declare this to be true, but they do not substantiate their claim with any Old Testament references.

from such allusions as Exodus 3 5 and 29 20 that this was so. The complete silence of the Levitical law on the matter of the priests' shoes seems to indicate that it was taken for granted that he was to be barefoot while performing his offices. The putting-off of shoes was also a custom in time of mourning.¹¹⁶

We may safely assert that the last three customs named above (shoes removed in worship, and by priests when functioning, and in mourning) are all survivals of primitive simplicity of dress, and demonstrate again the operation of conservatism in religious custom, which maintains old customs long after their significance has been forgotten. We may therefore classify these customs as "nomadic survivals".¹¹⁷

IV. SHELTER

The dwellings in which a people finds its shelter furnish another indication of the nature of the life that they lived. If the early Hebrews were nomads, we should naturally suppose that they lived in tents, and in our search for evidence in the Old Testament we are not left in doubt on this point.

Of the most primitive dwellings of man, such as caves and clefts of rocks, the Old Testament gives us no word. These were used by the Hebrews only as places of refuge¹¹⁸ and as burial places.¹¹⁹ Only one instance is given, that of Elijah, of a cave used as a lodging.¹²⁰ More simple still is the "lodging" of Jacob at Bethel, where he is represented as sleeping out in the open, on the ground; but this is only a

¹¹⁶ Cf. II Sam. 15 30; Ezek. 24 17, 23.

¹¹⁷ W. M. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book*, vol. I, pg. 173, supposes that the removing of shoes in worship arose from the earlier practice of dropping shoes at the door of a house or tent when paying visits, simply as a matter of convenience and comfort. He suggests, therefore, that the first step was to extend the custom to every place entitled to respect, leading finally to the idea of defilement from the shoe. This sounds reasonable, but our supposition that this custom is a "nomadic survival" does not therefore forfeit its plausibility.

¹¹⁸ Jud. 6 3; I Sam. 13 6; 14 11; 24 4, etc.

¹¹⁹ Gen. 23 19.

¹²⁰ I Ki. 19 9.

rare case and cannot be pressed. We may note, however, that the word employed here, *lān*, meaning "to pass the night", is afterward used in connection with temporary shelters and inns, and in Jeremiah¹²¹ we have a figurative usage of the same word, applied with picturesque effect.¹²²

As has been stated¹²³ the stories of the patriarchs abound in references to tent-dwellings.¹²⁴

Certain terms, like *nāsa'*, "to pull up stakes", and *nāṭāh*, "to spread or pitch" a tent, words closely associated with nomadic life, come before us very often in the earlier Old Testament stories, and later these same words carry wider meanings which still retain a relation to their original import.¹²⁵

Similarly, *pēthah*, which later came to mean a door or entrance of any kind, originally stood simply for the opening of the nomad's tent.¹²⁶

There is no direct reference to tent-poles and cords in the earlier portions of the Old Testament, the only places in which the latter are mentioned being Exodus 35 18, 39 40, Numbers 3 26, 4 26, 32, where the cords of the Tabernacle are described. In Isaiah 33 20, 54 2 and Jeremiah 10 20 figurative usages of the word are found. Tent-pegs are likewise referred to in connection with the Tabernacle in Exodus 27 19, 35 18, Numbers 3 37, 4 32 and others.¹²⁷

We know from history that the Kenites, who had been allies of Israel and had shared the desert experiences, went back to the desert at the time when Israel was entering

¹²¹ Jer. 14 a.

¹²² Cf. Isa. 1 91.

¹²³ Introduction.

¹²⁴ Gen. 13 2; 26 25; 33 19, etc. It may be observed in passing that the term 'ohel occurs in the O. T. one hundred thirty-six times specifically with the meaning "tent-dwelling", and one hundred fifty-nine times in the sense of "tabernacle" or one special tent regarded as the dwelling-place of Deity.

¹²⁵ For *nāsa'*, cf. Gen. 33 17; 35 5; Num. 12 15; Jud. 16 5; II Ki. 3 27, etc., and for *nāṭāh*, cf. Gen. 12 5; 26 25; Jud. 4 11, and the interesting cases in Jer. 10 2 and Isa. 40 22, where it is applied to the heavens, conceived as "spread out" like a tent.

¹²⁶ Cf. Gen. 18 1, 2, 10; Ex. 38 8-10, etc. Cf. *B. D. B.* on this word.

¹²⁷ Cf. Jud. 4 21; 5 26; 16 14. Such passages as Isa. 22 23; 33 20; 54 3; Ezek. 15 3; Zech. 10 4; Ezra 9 8, etc. show figurative application of this term.

Canaan.¹²⁸ Some of the east Jordan tribes also continued to be tent-dwellers in the steppes and on the borders of the cultivated land.¹²⁹

Down to a late date, when the rest of Israel had long ceased to dwell in tents, the Rechabites still lived in tents, believing that they were remaining true to pure Yahwism by keeping up the very mode of life of the fathers.¹³⁰

Besides the numerous references to tents as the actual dwellings of the early Hebrews, and the survivals of this mode of life among some of the Hebrew population in Canaan after the conquest, there survive many expressions which without doubt originated in the nomadic times. Such for example is the phrase *hālak l'oh'lo*, "to go to one's tent" or to go home, which is found in use at a time long after the Hebrews ceased to dwell in tents.¹³¹ Likewise, as has been noted above, the phrase "to your tents, O Israel", which is equivalent to saying: "resume your old tribal independence", is still used in the period of the early kingdom.¹³²

Figurative uses of "tent" and of the things connected with it, are so numerous throughout the Old Testament as to be familiar to the reader.¹³³ In Lamentations 24 Jerusalem is referred to as "the tent of the daughter of Zion".

A marriage custom which is still maintained, in which the tent plays a conspicuous part, is alluded to in II Samuel 16 22.¹³⁴ It is no doubt a survival from nomadic times.

The tent-sanctuary, known as the "tent of meeting",¹³⁵ which tradition makes Moses set up at Sinai, is just the kind of sanctuary suitable to nomadic life. It is named very often in the stories of the Mosaic period,¹³⁶ and still persisted for a long time after the settlement in Canaan and the beginning

¹²⁸ Cf. Jud. 1 16; 4 11, 17; I Sam. 15 6.

¹²⁹ Ex. 32 1 f.; Jud. 5 16; I Sam. 25 2 f.; II Ki. 9 4; Amos 1 1, etc.

¹³⁰ Jer. 35 6.

¹³¹ Josh. 22 4 f.; Jud. 7 8; 19 9; I Ki. 12 16, etc.

¹³² II Sam. 20 1; I Ki. 12 16; *cf. al.*

¹³³ Cf. Isa. 16 5; 33 20; 38 12; Jer. 10 20; Job 4 21; 30 11, etc.

¹³⁴ Cf. Ps. 19 6 and also W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage*, n. e., pg. 199.

¹³⁵ Cf. Section on "Religion".

¹³⁶ Ex. 33 7-11; Num. 11 16; 12 4; Deut. 21 14, etc.

of the kingdom. The *D* writer makes no mention of such a tent-sanctuary, but in *P* it is an elaborate structure designated by three terms which by the time of *P* had become more or less technical: 'ohel, 'ohel mō'ēdh and 'ohel hā'ēdūth.¹³⁷

A concrete instance of the survival of this tent, altered somewhat to be sure, but still a reminder of the primitive Mosaic religion, is found in its presence at Gibeon.¹³⁸ A tent-sanctuary was erected by David on Mount Zion.¹³⁹ Joab is said to have fled for safety to the "tent of Yahweh",¹⁴⁰ and the oil for the anointing of Solomon was brought from "the tent".¹⁴¹ This tent was taken up into the temple by Solomon.¹⁴²

It remains for us to examine some of the evidence given in the Old Testament regarding the arrangement and equipment of tents, in order to get a more complete view of the tent life of the early Hebrews.

First of all comes the arrangement of tents in encampments. The encampment itself is called *širāh*.¹⁴³ In this word there is the suggestion of "surrounding, enclosing", and it thus gives a picture of a circle of tents, enclosing an open place in the center, and forming a sort of movable hamlet.¹⁴⁴

Another word employed for "camp" or encampment is *maḥāneh* (from *hānāh*) in which we have the idea of "inclining to" or "the goal of a day's march",¹⁴⁵ thus giving a distinct nomadic flavor.¹⁴⁶ This term came in time to be applied strictly to a military camp, presumably because such moving encampments suggested the roving of the nomads.¹⁴⁷

The tents were made, as are the Bedawi tents today, of

¹³⁷ Cf. Num. 9 15; 17 4; Ex. 25-31 *passim*, etc.

¹³⁸ II Chr. 1 3, 6, 12. ¹³⁹ II Sam. 6 17; I Chr. 15 1, etc.

¹⁴⁰ I Ki. 2 28-30. ¹⁴¹ I Ki. 1 28.

¹⁴² I Ki. 8 4; cf. II Sam. 7 8; I Chr. 17 5; Ps. 15 1; 27 5; 61 5, etc.

¹⁴³ Cf. *B. D. B.*

¹⁴⁴ Cf. the mention of *hāšār* in Gen. 25 18, which occurs also in compounds of town-names, cf. Num. 34 4, 9; Josh. 15 27; 19 5, etc. and Num. 31 10; Ezek. 25 4, and poetic use of the word in Ps. 69 28 for "habitations".

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *B. D. B.*, *ad loc.*

¹⁴⁶ Gen. 26 17; 32 23; Ex. 13 20; 16 13; 32 28, etc.

¹⁴⁷ Josh. 6 11; 8 13; I Sam. 17 1, 46, etc.

"the mingled wool of sheep and camels' hair and goats' hair".¹⁴⁸ The black appearance of such material accounts for the expression found in Cant. 15, "black as the tents of Kedar".¹⁴⁹ The weaving of these tent coverings was most likely done by the women.¹⁵⁰

The tent was generally divided into two compartments, the second of which was for the women and children and was called *hedher*.¹⁵¹ It seems that sometimes a separate tent was pitched for the women.¹⁵² The women's quarters were ordinarily closed to men, and as Judges 4:17f. shows, only a fugitive might find refuge there.¹⁵³

The camel furniture and other incidentals, as Benzinger surmises,¹⁵⁴ were stored in the women's part of the tent.¹⁵⁵

The men's apartment, on the other hand, contained the hearth which was an open fire in the middle of the tent, often merely a hole in the ground with stones leaned against each other. The Old Testament word for hearth is *môqēdh*, from *yākadh*, "to be kindled", hence a "burning mass". A figurative use of the word is seen in Psalm 102:4 and Isaiah 33:14, and the special usage in Leviticus 6:2 is a technical term, standing for the altar-hearth, literally "the place of burning".

The tent furniture and utensils of the nomads must necessarily have been few and simple and easily transportable. This fact, coupled with the usual omission of mention of common and obvious things of everyday life, probably explains why so few references to such subjects are found in the Old Testament. There is enough material at hand, however, to enable us to sketch briefly the usual furnishings of the tents of the Hebrew nomads.

¹⁴⁸ Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, vol. I, pg. 226.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Benzinger, *op. cit.*, pg. 88, and Nowack, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 136.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. II Ki. 23:7.

¹⁵¹ Cf. perhaps Arabic *ḥidr*, women's quarters, and also cf. references in Jud. 15:1; Cant. 8:4.

¹⁵² Gen. 24:67; 31:35, the latter passage suggesting also a third tent for the servants.

¹⁵³ But see G. F. Moore's *Judges*, where this is denied. ¹⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, pg. 90.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Gen. 27:15; 31:24, etc., the latter passage making mention of the camel's saddle, *kar*; cf. *B. D. B.*, *ad. loc.*

The floor was doubtless partially covered with straw or reed mats upon which one could sit or lie. Possibly we have the name of this kind of mat in the *semikah* of Judges 4 18, though some have conjectured that this word stands for a mantle or robe used as a cover.

Upon the floor also was a skin or leather mat which served as a table, called a *shulhān*.¹⁵⁶ This word is generally regarded as derived from *shālah*, to "strip off" a skin, and the *shulhān* is thus supposed to have been originally like the *sufra* used by the Bedawin today. This *sufra* is a round piece of skin or hide with a string run through its edge which could be drawn, thus forming a bag to hold the provisions for subsequent meals.

Vessels of skin or leather are mentioned frequently, and we are led to suppose that the Hebrews used such vessels much as the modern Bedawin do, to hold both grain and liquids, to churn butter and to carry water.¹⁵⁷ The general term for "vessel", which is used also very broadly to designate anything that is made and used, is *k'î*.¹⁵⁸ *Dôdh* is another term which stands for a primitive vessel of some sort.¹⁵⁹

Besides these vessels were the kneading-troughs,¹⁶⁰ the hand-mill (*rēhayim*),¹⁶¹ the lamp (*nēr*),¹⁶² and other necessary utensils made of wood, metal or leather. Earthenware and clay vessels, though they may have been used, were probably too perishable to be of much value to nomads.

V. SOCIAL LIFE AND ORGANIZATION

In considering the social life and organization of the early Hebrews we find a wealth of material in the Old Testament

¹⁵⁶ Cf. *B. D. B. ad loc.*, and also Kennedy in *E. B.*, vol. III, col. 2991, sect. 3; also G. F. Moore's *Judges*, pg. 19. ¹⁵⁷ Cf. Jud. 4 18; I Sam. 16 20, etc.

¹⁵⁸ For special use as "vessel" cf. Gen. 43 11; I Sam. 9 7; 17 20, etc.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. I Sam. 2 14; II Ki. 10 7; Jer. 24 2, etc.

¹⁶⁰ Ex. 12 34. ¹⁶¹ Ex. 11 5; Num. 11 8.

¹⁶² Ex. 27 20, *et al.*; this word is used figuratively in such passages as Job 18 6; Prov. 13 9; 20 20. In the last-named passage there seems to be a reference to the nomads' custom of keeping a lamp burning always, both for convenience in keeping fire and as a measure of safety. Cf. Doughty, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 8.

to confirm the view that the forefathers of Israel were nomads. We do not need to confine ourselves in this study to the patriarchal period, though it is true that the origins of what we find in the succeeding periods lie back in the time of the patriarchs.

First of all, we are confronted in the earlier stories in the Old Testament with a people under tribal organization. The patriarchal stories, with perhaps one or two exceptions, represent tribal history, and the genealogies with which they are interwoven are tribal traditions cast into the form of personal narratives. The names of most of the patriarchs and their wives are names of tribes, and their marriages and births are alliances and combinations of tribes, and subdivisions of larger tribes into clans.

Such tribal organization is one of the marks of nomadic life, being well-nigh impossible in a settled society. Yet the persistence of this form of organization for a long time after the conquest shows how powerful and enduring an influence desert life had upon Israel. The bond which had held each separate tribe together had been religion, conceived as resting primarily upon a common esteem for the same ancestor (often there stood at the center of the tribal life the grave of an ancestor, as is indicated in Genesis 25 10-11; 35 20; Joshua 24 32, and other passages). Subsequently, the bond of religion, conceived in a higher sense as worship of the same God Yahweh, served to unite the tribes into a nation. This amalgamation of the tribes began with the founding of the Yahweh religion under Moses, but it was not until after the settlement in Canaan that a more advanced and permanent organization was attempted, when such appeared necessary if the Hebrew "tribes" were to become the "nation" of Israel.

It is hardly necessary to enter here into an exhaustive treatment of tribal organization in order to establish the fact that nomadic life went before the settlement in Canaan. Only a few outstanding features of this kind of organization need to be noted.

One of the most distinctive features of tribal life, often mentioned in the Old Testament, vestiges of which still remain

in the early period of the kingdom, is the law of blood-revenge. It is impossible to ascribe the origin of this institution to a settled people, but it lies at the very basis of the tribal system of nomads. The principle behind it is that the killing of any member of a tribe or clan must be atoned for by the life of any member of the tribe or clan to which the slayer belongs. "Our blood has been spilled" is the way in which the clan expressed its attitude toward the killing of any of its members by one outside the clan. According to Burckhardt,¹⁶³ the "self-acting law of blood-revenge" was a "salutary institution which has done more than anything else to preserve the Bedouin tribes from mutual extermination", since "the certainty of retaliation acted as a check upon the warlike tribesmen".¹⁶⁴

In the Old Testament we find this unwritten law at the basis of many passages, one of the earliest of which is Genesis 4 23-24, the Song of Lamech. Examples of it may also be seen in Judges 8 18-21, II Samuel 2 18-23, 3 27, 30, 14 7a, 11, I Kings 2 28f., and others. Even Deuteronomy recognizes it in Deuteronomy 19, 8, 12, and the Priestly Code¹⁶⁵ speaks of an altered form of it as practiced after the settlement in Canaan. It is to be noted, however, that in the latter cases, a distinction is made between accidental and intentional killing.

Blood-revenge was the "law of the desert"¹⁶⁶ and so long as this law continued to be recognized tribal consciousness remained strong. An interesting example of the tendency to supersede the old tribal custom by royal intervention may be seen in II Samuel 14 11, where King David swears to help a woman from Tekoa who represents herself as fearing the operation of the law of blood-revenge.

Another distinctive feature in the tribal system which is clearly indicated in the Old Testament is the lack of great inequalities of social rank and standing. There was no thought of "rulers" and "subjects" within the tribes, for it was characteristic of the nomad's conceptions of freedom to recognize

¹⁶³ *Bedouins and Wahabis*, pg. 84, 178.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Skinner, *Genesis, Int. Crit. Com.*, pg. 112.

¹⁶⁵ Num. 85 12, 10; cf. Josh. 20 2, 8.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pg. 272f.

no human lord over himself. Of course, there must be some sort of leadership, especially in time of danger from enemies, and the *nāsī*, "one lifted up", was probably at the head of the tribe for just such emergencies.¹⁶⁷ This leader was doubtless chosen from the number of "elders" (the *z̄q̄nim*) or clan leaders, or he might be an individual who because of superlative qualities of leadership naturally became "lifted up" to the chief place. Even such a leader must hold council with the elders before any important step was taken.¹⁶⁸ These tribal leaders were thus simply *primi inter pares* and had no power to command but only to advise, like the modern Bedawi sheikh.¹⁶⁹

Other marks of tribal organization among the early Hebrews also show themselves in the Old Testament records, for example, that fine old custom of hospitality, which is still observed today by the Bedawin as a sort of unwritten law.¹⁷⁰ To deny admittance to a stranger was unthinkable.¹⁷¹ The pictures in Genesis 18 and 19 show how inviolable the safety of a guest was regarded; every courtesy was shown him, his feet were washed, food was set before him, the host himself waited upon him,¹⁷² and at the end of the visit the host accompanied the visitor a little way on his journey.¹⁷³ In the parable of Nathan,¹⁷⁴ we see that a violation of this custom even in David's time was looked upon with anger.

Still another characteristic of nomadic life is seen in the identification of custom and law. With a nomadic people there is no highly organized system of justice and law, but what is custom is regarded as authoritative. It does not lie in the nature of independent, liberty-loving nomads to tolerate statutes, but an appeal to tribal custom is to them absolutely binding.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Gen. 23 6; 25 16; Ex. 16 23; 22 27; Josh. 9 15, 18. It is to be noted, however, that these passages, with the exception of Ex. 22 27, are all from P, which might indicate that this word is late; but the idea at least fits in with tribal life.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Ex. 4 29; 19 7, etc. ¹⁶⁹ Cf. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, pg. 66 f.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Gen. 18 2 f.; 19 4 f.; 24 21 f.; Jud. 19 23 f., etc.

¹⁷¹ Gen. 19 2; Ex. 2 20; Job 31 22.

¹⁷² Gen. 18 4, 7, 8; 19 2. ¹⁷³ Gen. 18 16; 31 27. ¹⁷⁴ II Sam. 12 4.

The story of Moses judging the people¹⁷⁵ appears to be a true representation of tribal life, governed simply by consultation of the divine oracle, whose decisions were handed down as precedents: That tribal custom was still appealed to as law even in the time of David is witnessed by the passage concerning Tamar, when in her protest against her brother's threat of violence she appeals not to law but to the fact that "it is not so done in Israel".¹⁷⁶

The marks of tribal consciousness are strong throughout the stories of the period of the Judges. Indeed, the first chapter of Judges represents the settlement of Canaan as taking place by tribes. The phrase, "there was no king as yet in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes", although a sort of apology inserted by an editor to explain some of the things that went on, expresses exactly the rude and free tribal life of the period.¹⁷⁷

In the Song of Deborah,¹⁷⁸ only tribes are mentioned. There is question of certain tribes which did not take part in the great struggle with the Canaanites. There appears also on the part of the tribe of Ephraim jealousy of other smaller tribes that assisted in the hostilities against the Midianites and Ammonites.¹⁷⁹ And as Buhl notes,¹⁸⁰ we find in the book of Judges the beginning of a "not too tempered rivalry between the tribes of Judah and Ephraim which later under David brought forth civil war,¹⁸¹ and finally led to the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon.¹⁸² From this time onward tribal differences were somewhat lost in the affairs of the two separated kingdoms, but they did not altogether disappear".¹⁸³

After Israel's transition to agricultural and settled life in Palestine, its social organization still preserved for a long time the form of the old desert life, even though in many respects this was not fitted to the conditions of the time.

¹⁷⁵ Ex. 18 13-27.

¹⁷⁶ II Sam. 13 12.

¹⁷⁷ Jud. 17 6; 18 1; 19 1; 21 25.

¹⁷⁸ Jud. 5.

¹⁷⁹ Jud. 8 1; 12 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Soziale Verhältnisse*, pg. 32.

¹⁸¹ II Sam. 19 10 f.; and Chapt. 20.

¹⁸² I Ki. 12.

¹⁸³ Cf. Isa. 8 23; 9 20.

Thus at the time of the choosing of Saul as king, the choice was by tribes, families and individuals, until Saul was selected.¹⁸⁴ Another significant case of the survival of clan-consciousness is found in David's departure from the table of Saul to attend a feast of his clan in Bethlehem.¹⁸⁵ The incident reported in II Kings 4 13 of the Shunammite woman who, when Elisha asked whether he might speak to the king or the captain of the host in her behalf, answered that she was not dependent upon the king's protection but was safe within her own clan, shows also the retention of clan government in the midst of settled life in Palestine.¹⁸⁶ Tribal distinctions within the villages of Palestine have not altogether disappeared down to the present day.¹⁸⁷

We may now consider the stages of tribal organization which appear in the Old Testament. The earliest form was the matriarchate. In this system the unit was not the family but the clan, and it is interesting to note that the same root underlies the Hebrew words for "maiden" and "clan" (*mishpāhāh*) showing the original association of the clan with the female head.¹⁸⁸ The genealogical scheme which traces descent through Sara, Bilhah and Zilpah, as well as the appearance of tribal heroines such as Leah, Rachel, Hagar and Keturah point to matronymic clans. Also the conceptions underlying certain passages in which kinship through the mother is counted as closer than that through the father, and in which descent from the mother is considered as standing in the way of marriage, are characteristic of the matriarchal clan.¹⁸⁹

Still further evidence of matriarchal custom appears in the adoption and naming of children by the mother, as well as in cases of inheritance based on descent from the mother.¹⁹⁰ A few cases of exogamous marriage indicate also that the matri-

¹⁸⁴ I Sam. 10 21.

¹⁸⁵ I Sam. 20 6.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Day, *Social Life of the Hebrews*, Ch. III.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Grant, *Peasantry of Palestine*, pg. 51 f., and cf. Day, *op. cit.*, pg. 138 f.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *B. D. B.* under *shāpāhāh*.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Gen. 20 13; II Sam. 13 12-13; also Gen. 43 20; 44 20; Jud. 8 12; 9 1, etc.

¹⁹⁰ Gen. 30 3; 29 23; 30 6, 24; 21 10, etc.

archal system at one time had its place in the tribal organization.¹⁹¹

With the matriarchate is connected the polyandrous family, evidences of which are found in the Old Testament. This was probably brought about by circumstances which caused the diminution of the number of women, possibly arising from the practice of female infanticide, which appears in some parts of Palestine down to a late date. Under this system the woman joined the man's clan permanently, and children were therefore counted as belonging to the father's clan. But since there were several husbands it was impossible to tell which was the real father in the group, so descent was still reckoned through the mother. The father or uncle of an individual was designated by the term *'am*, originally "maternal uncle" or "mother's polyandrous husband".¹⁹² Later appeared polygamy and finally monogamy, and the term *'am* came to mean first "kindred" and then "people".

The practice of the levirate marriage reflects this stage of organization.¹⁹³

In process of time, conditions gradually altered, making necessary another change in organization, and polygamy arose in place of polyandry, marking the purely patriarchal system. What is known as the *ba'al* marriage was a distinctive feature of the patriarchal tribe. In this the husband was called the *ba'al*, "proprietor", and the wife the *b'ālāh*, "chattel". The dowry (*mōhar*) paid to the father by the prospective husband (this sort of marriage by purchase succeeded the marriage by capture at an early time) represents the purchase-money (sometimes paid in flocks or camels, in labor, in war-service or in other ways¹⁹⁴) paid to the former proprietor, the father, by the new proprietor, the *ba'al* or husband.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Jud. 15 1; 8 31, etc. See also the treatment of this whole subject by W. R. Smith in *Kinship and Marriage*, Ch. I and III.

¹⁹² Cf. Gen. 19 38 where the people are called "children of Ammon" because their ancestor was *ben 'Ammi*, "son of my uncle".

¹⁹³ Cf. W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, pg. 159 f., and Cheyne's article in *E. B.* vol. II, col. 2675.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Gen. 29 20, 27; Josh. 15 16; Jud. 1 15; I Sam. 17 26, etc.

In the patriarchal system the relationships, tribal membership and inheritance were traced through the father. This is the form of tribal organization most generally found in the Old Testament, the previous stage, the matriarchate, appearing only as a survival from more primitive times. W. R. Smith¹⁹⁵ considers it probable that the patriarchate goes back to primitive Semitic times, and Wellhausen¹⁹⁶ offers proof of this view.¹⁹⁷ Buhl points out that the predominance of the patriarchate in the Old Testament may be seen by the fact that only terms for agnate relatives are fixed, while relationships on the mother's side require circumlocutory expressions.¹⁹⁸ It may also be noted that, since all the Semitic languages have practically the same word for "father",¹⁹⁹ the patriarchal system must have been in vogue before the Semites separated.

The tribe (*shēbhet*; being the older term, while *maṭṭeh* was the later one)²⁰⁰ was made up of a number of clans (*mishpeḥōth*).²⁰¹ Over the clan presided elders (*zēqēnīm*) who formed a sort of council to adjust the affairs of the clans, advise with the tribal head, especially in time of war, and to give counsel in all matters pertaining to the relations of the clans.²⁰²

The clan in turn was formed of a number of families (*bayith*). The "fathers' houses" (*bēth ābhōth*) appear to have been a subdivision or group lying between clan and family, and consisting of the families of several brothers presided over by their common father. The *bēth ābh* was regarded in various ways, as is shown by a number of passages in which this term is used.²⁰³

¹⁹⁵ *Kinship and Marriage*, pg. 209. ¹⁹⁶ *Ehe bei den Arabern*, pg. 479.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *E. B.*, vol. II, col. 2675. ¹⁹⁸ Cf. Buhl, *op. cit.*, pg. 29.

¹⁹⁹ Hebrew and Phoenician, 'āb; Aramaic, 'abbā; Babylonian and Assyrian, *abu*; Arabic, 'ab.

²⁰⁰ For comparison of these terms see Driver's article in *Journal of Philology*, vol. II, pg. 213f.

²⁰¹ Gen. 24 28, 40, 41; I Sam. 9 21, etc. and cf. Jud. 13 2; 17 7, etc. show a loose usage in which the *mishpāḥāh* is practically identical with the *shēbhet*; cf. Josh. 19 46.

²⁰² Cf. Num. 11 16, 24; Jud. 11 4f., etc.

²⁰³ Cf. Num. 8 15 and 1 2, 18, 20, etc., and other uses of the term as identical with the family, Ex. 12 3; Josh. 7 14, or with the clan, Num. 3 24, 30, 32, or with the tribe, Num. 17 17; Josh. 22 14.

The family, the smallest unit within the tribal organization, the father ruled. The authority of the father and strict obedience to him were insisted upon.²⁰⁴ The father was considered the owner of his wife²⁰⁵ and of his children. He had the power of life and death over them, as is attested by the proposed sacrifice of Isaac, the case of Jephthah's daughter, and the custom of sacrificing children to Molech. He had the right to sell them as slaves²⁰⁶ and to punish them even with death.²⁰⁷ The custom of the *môhar*, mentioned above, shows also that the daughter was regarded as the property of her father; she was thought of as one of the workers in her father's household, and when she was taken out of it to become the worker in the household of her husband, it was necessary to recompense the father for the loss of her service. Marriage was thus an affair of the family, involving only private rights. The home-bringing of the bride from the tent of her father to the tent of her husband was the chief act of the marriage ceremony, and constituted the recognition of the transfer. The tent, which always played a part in the marriage ceremony may be traced to this early home-bringing custom.²⁰⁸

The father of a large family was looked upon as being signally blessed by Yahweh; indeed the influence of a man was measured more by the number of his children than by his real property or his flocks and herds. He was especially formidable in the eyes of his neighbors and enemies if he had a large number of sons who would help him in his work or defend him in case of attack.²⁰⁹ Slaves also formed a part of the family, living with the family, working with it, and having a place in the family's religious life.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Ex. 20 12; Deut. 5 16; Mic. 7 a.

²⁰⁵ Cf. *ba'al* and *b'âlâh* above.

²⁰⁶ Ex. 21 7, only not to strangers, v. 8.

²⁰⁷ Gen. 38 24; cf. the change made in this respect in Deut. 22 21, where the elders and men of the city are the ones who put the guilty child to death; cf. also Deut. 21 18 f.

²⁰⁸ Cf. II Sam. 16 22; Pa. 19 a, etc.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Pa. 127 2-a.

²¹⁰ Cf. Gen. 17 12; Ex. 12 44; Deut. 12 16; 16 11, etc.

The family was also a religious unit, and certain religious rites never quite passed out of its control. The chief instance of this is the Passover celebration, at which the father was master of ceremonies, a custom still surviving among pious Jews.²¹¹ That the family was considered a religious unit is evidenced further by the expression "thou, thy son and thy daughter, thy servants, — —"²¹² found in connection with the commandment to keep certain feasts.

The family was the corner stone of the social organization down to the latest times. This is seen in the matter of inheritances, which, if possible, must remain within the family. It is seen also in the disgrace that was felt if one were buried in other than the family tomb.²¹³

As a matter of fact, no important development in the family is to be noted from the time when it became fixed in the tribal scheme, for "its character and principles were as permanent as social institutions mostly are in the East".²¹⁴

Besides tribal organization, certain primitive customs and practices of the tribe also survived after the settlement in Palestine. It was remarked above that the nomads left no contemporary written records, but only oral traditions, and that these traditions arose from the very nature of their social life. One of the chief diversions of the Hebrew nomads, as of the modern Bedawin, must have been gatherings about camp-fires in the long evenings when work was done. Then tales were told and songs sung in praise of the feats of heroes, history was passed on, in story form, to be treasured by coming generations. Thus oral tradition, long before writing was common, gathered up and preserved much of the dim past for us.²¹⁵

Such combined amusement and instruction must have played a great part in the social life of the people. It is highly

²¹¹ Ex. 12 ff.; 18 14 f.

²¹² Deut. 12 10; cf. I Sam. 1 s, 4.

²¹³ Cf. II Sam. 19 37; I Ki. 21 s; Jer. 20 s, etc.

²¹⁴ Bennett in *Hastings Dictionary*, vol. I, pg. 850.

²¹⁵ Cf. Ex. 10 s; 13 ff.; Jud. 5 11, etc. Cf. also Doughty, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pg. 228, 268 for a description of the Bedawi songs, poems and stories which went round at the campfires in the evenings.

probable that the books of "Jashar"²¹⁶ and of "The Wars of Yahweh"²¹⁷ represent later written collections which included just such celebrated and popular old songs and tales of the past. We see examples of this type also in the secular songs of Lamech,²¹⁸ the blessing of Jacob,²¹⁹ the song of triumph over the defeat of the Pharaoh,²²⁰ the fragment of a song regarding Israel's advance into Amorite territory,²²¹ the Song of the Well,²²² the Song of Victory over Sihon,²²³ and the Song of Deborah.²²⁴

We can well imagine the Hebrew nomads, "fathers, sons and sons' sons",²²⁵ gathering together in the evening after the day's tasks were finished, and rehearsing the great events in the past history of the tribes. Little else could have formed the subjects discussed in their meetings, by a people to whom tribal tradition meant so much.

Many passages in the Old Testament contain references to the passing on of tradition to coming generations, and lead us to infer that these stories were told not simply for the sake of diversion but as a part of the education of the growing sons.²²⁶

The material in Genesis represents only part of a great mass of this sort of tradition, and the contents of these stories are just what we should expect to find in such tradition. Among these were etiological stories, which seem to have been the common property of all the Semites, and which the Hebrews adapted to their own mode of thought and their conditions of life. There were also stories which aimed at explaining natural phenomena, such as Genesis 19, which appears to be an attempt to account for the desolation of the Dead Sea region by the destruction of its cities because of their wickedness. Other stories speculated upon the origin and meaning of place- and personalnames,²²⁷ and closely related to these were ethnological legends which were de-

²¹⁶ II Sam. 1 18.

²¹⁷ Num. 21 14.

²¹⁸ Gen. 4 23 f.

²¹⁹ Gen. 49.

²²⁰ Ex. 15 1 ff.

²²¹ Num. 21 14 f.

²²² Num. 21 17 f.

²²³ Num. 21 27-30.

²²⁴ Jud. 5.

²²⁵ Ex. 10 2.

²²⁶ Cf. Gen. 18 19; Ex. 18 8; Deut. 8 9 f.; Josh. 4 21 f.; cf. also Ps. 78.

²²⁷ Gen. 10 25; 16 11; 17 17, 20; 18 12; 32 20, etc.

signed to answer questions concerning racial origins and relations.²²⁸ Besides we must not forget the numerous herostories which make interesting reading for us today and enable us to realize how stirring they must have been to those who told and heard them first.

The riddles which we find in the stories of Samson in Judges 14 suggest that these may represent a common type of folk-riddles which also had their place along with the stories mentioned above. In the case of Samson the riddles are connected with wedding festivities, and may possibly have formed part of similar rejoicings even before this time.

If poetry and song entered into the telling of these tales of the past, as was probably the case, then we may suppose that some primitive musical instruments were known and used as an accompaniment by the Hebrew nomads, as among the modern Bedawin. Though references to music are scattered and isolated in the Old Testament, still we have enough evidence to convince us that the Hebrews were a people of musical temperament. We have already mentioned certain songs which show a very early origin. Song and dance had their place on festal occasions, such as marriages, religious celebrations and victories, and on all other important occasions in the life of the people. Hebrew tradition assumes that music began in the earliest times, with Jubal the "father of such as handle the lyre and pipe".²²⁹

Three classes of instruments are mentioned in the Old Testament, percussive, wind and stringed. All these, in their primitive forms, were probably known to the early Hebrews, for we find them pictured upon Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian monuments of a time long before the Hebrews ceased to be nomads; and these instruments survive also in their simplest forms among modern Bedawin.²³⁰

The identity of the various instruments mentioned in the Old Testament, especially of the more highly developed forms,

²²⁸ Gen. 25 23 f.; 31 44 f.; 16 19, etc.

²²⁹ Gen. 4 21.

²³⁰ Cf. Benzinger, *op. cit.*, pg. 237 f.; Doughty, *op. cit.*, pg. 263; cf. also *Biblical Antiquities*, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, 1898, pg. 973 f.

must always remain conjectural, but we may safely assume that the simplest forms of the three classes of instruments named above were known to the Hebrew nomads.

The more complicated forms of instruments later used by the Hebrews, chiefly in the religious worship of the Temple, can hardly have been of foreign origin, but must have been developments of instruments which had the sanction of antiquity, having been passed on from the earlier nomadic times. In this, as in nearly everything connected with religion, the Hebrews are known to have been extremely conservative.

Percussive instruments are most likely the earliest. The *tōph* (R. V., "timbrel") or hand-drum, made of a ring of wood covered with a tightly-drawn skin, appears in the Old Testament. It was played mostly by women, and was used as an accompaniment to song and dance, and possibly to the recitation of the poems and stories mentioned above.²³¹ Its use was probably secular only, for it does not find mention among the instruments used in the religious services of the Tabernacle or Temple.

The simplest of the wind instruments was the *ḥālāl*, the flute or pipe, nature's own gift to man. This was originally made of reed or hollow wood. Such pipes were doubtless used by the shepherds,²³² and are still in use by the shepherds of Palestine. Like the *tōph*, the pipe does not appear among the musical instruments of the Temple, but was used on festal occasions of various sorts.²³³ We also meet the *'ūgābh* as a very early wind instrument, ascribed to Jubal.²³⁴ Its exact nature is not known, but the fact that it is mentioned twice in Job²³⁵ in special connections, seems to put it into the class of wind instruments.²³⁶ We find also the *shōphār*, which according to Joshua 6 5, was a simple ram's horn. The first mention of it in the Old Testament is in the *E* account of

²³¹ Gen. 31 27; Ex. 15 20; Jud. 11 34; cf. Ps. 81 2.

²³² Jud. 5 14, emended text, cf. Moore's *Judges*.

²³³ Cf. I Ki. 1 40; I Sam. 10 5; Jer. 48 26, etc.

²³⁴ Gen. 4 21.

²³⁵ Job 21 12; 30 21.

²³⁶ But cf. *B. D. B. ad loc.*

the giving of the Law at Sinai,²³⁷ where it is used as a signal for the assembling of the people.²³⁸ It was employed also for the giving of battle alarms.²³⁹

Stringed instruments were not unknown to the earliest Hebrews, though at first they were necessarily simple, with strings of gut, not of metal. The *kinnôr* (R. V. "harp") is ascribed to Jubal,²⁴⁰ and an old Egyptian monument dating back to approximately 2300 B. C., in a procession of Semitic nomads shows one man playing a *kinnôr*.²⁴¹ Just what relation it bore to the *nēbhel* is not known,²⁴² but the latter seems from the Old Testament references to have been a later and more highly developed instrument. The *kinnôr* was the instrument of David, which as a shepherd boy he learned to play.²⁴³ It is one of the instruments most frequently mentioned in the Old Testament,²⁴⁴ from the earliest to the latest times, and it came to have a most important place in the Temple orchestra.²⁴⁵

VI. RELIGION -

Religion is the greatest conserving force in the society of all times. The religion of the Hebrew nomads and its many survivals in the later life of Israel present the largest and most fruitful, and therefore the most difficult field for our inquiry. So large, in fact, is this side of our subject, that valuable as a thorough study of the nomadic religion would be, we can only notice some of the outstanding features of that religion, pausing occasionally to point out its chief survivals in the course of Israel's later religious development.

Our sources, we must remember, are not contemporary documents, but consist of records written long after the events described; for nomads do not have a literature, and leave no

²³⁷ Ex. 19 16; 20 18.

²³⁸ Cf. I Sam. 13 sf.

²³⁹ Jud. 3 27.

²⁴⁰ Gen. 4 21.

²⁴¹ Cf. Cornill, *Culture of Ancient Israel*, pg. 113.

²⁴² Cf. *E. B.*, article by Price on "MUSIC", sect. 4.

²⁴³ I Sam. 16 23.

²⁴⁴ Gen. 31 27; Isa. 23 16; Ps. 83 2; 53 4; Job 21 12; 30 21, etc.

²⁴⁵ Cf. I Chr. 15 16; II Chr. 29 25, etc.

written documents behind them. Consequently in the literature which we study, we find religious convictions that are quite in advance of the times concerning which the authors write, and often the viewpoints of the writers are read back into the past. Nevertheless, the basis of their stories was tradition which originated at a time near the period described. This latter fact permits a reasonable expectation of finding in the written records some traces of past reality.

There is much evidence that the religion of the Hebrew nomads was greatly influenced by polydemonism, the common Semitic nomad religion. In considering the Hebrew nomad religion we can not start further back than the time of Moses, for he was the founder of the desert religion of Yahweh. The stories in Genesis present the older type of common Semitic religion after it had passed through the crucible of the Mosaic religion and had been transformed.

During the sojourn at Sinai and Kadesh certain elements appeared in the religion of Israel which made it different from the common Semitic nomad type. The chief of these was monolatry, or the exclusive worship of Yahweh. Monolatry was a great advance over polytheism, and contained the germ which in time could develop into monotheism, but true monotheism did not yet exist in this period.

This Mosaic religion exerted a great influence upon all subsequent religious development in Israel. It proved too strong to be obliterated by the entrance into Canaan, the development of civilization and culture, the contact with other peoples and other religions, and it actually reasserted itself in some of the salutary movements of thought which occurred at critical points in Israel's history. This was due to its inherent capacity for growth and adaptation, while at the same time it preserved the fundamentals upon which it was established.

NOMADIC CHARACTER OF YAHWEH

The distinctive feature of this religion is the character of the God to whom the people felt themselves bound by a covenant. Yahweh was a nomads' God; He "found them in

the wilderness".²⁴⁶ He was a God of the desert. Whatever we may think concerning the ultimate origin of Yahweh, whether He had been the God of the Kenites and Midianites before He became the God of Israel, whether He was first conceived as a God of storm, thunder and lightning, or as a volcanic deity, it is beyond question that, in the thought of the Hebrew nomads, He was closely associated with the desert around Sinai, and with the nomadic life of Israel's beginnings. Even later, in the Song of Deborah,²⁴⁷ in the so-called Song of Moses,²⁴⁸ and in the story of Elijah's journey to Horeb to find Yahweh,²⁴⁹ there are survivals of a tradition which connected Yahweh with the desert.²⁵⁰

Moses, as tradition continually asserts, was the founder of the Yahweh religion. His experience at Sinai, and the revelation to him there of a God who would deliver His people from the tyranny of Egypt,²⁵¹ were the starting-points of the Yahweh religion.²⁵²

It is reasonable to suppose that one of the motives for the adoption of Yahweh as God of the tribes that came out of Egypt was an alliance of Israel and Midian for defense, and even for offense, against their common enemies.²⁵³ This would certainly be consistent with the warlike necessities of a nomad people, and it is confirmed by numerous references to Yahweh as a God of war.²⁵⁴ Warriors were consecrated to Yahweh when they went forth to battle, and so completely were Israel's wars identified with Yahweh's, that we read of the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh".²⁵⁵ At the outset of each day's march when the ark set forward, Israel said: "Rise, Yahweh, and let Thine enemies be scattered".²⁵⁶ This conception of Yahweh as a God of war was not lost even down

²⁴⁶ Deut. 32 10. ²⁴⁷ Jud. 5 4 f. ²⁴⁸ Deut. 32 2. ²⁴⁹ I Ki. 19 8.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Ex. 19 4: "I brought you unto myself"—to Sinai.

²⁵¹ Ex. 3 1-23, J and E.

²⁵² Cf. H. P. Smith, *Religion of Israel*, Ch. III;—Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit*, p. 21 ff.;—Ed. Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, p. 3 ff.

²⁵³ Cf. H. P. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Ex. 15 8; Num. 82 20-21; II Sam. 22 35; Ps. 18 34, etc.

²⁵⁵ Num. 21 14.

²⁵⁶ Num. 10 25.

to the period of the early monarchy, when the ark, conceived as the abode of Yahweh, was carried into battle in order to insure the presence and help of the battle-god.

• Even after allegiance was given to Yahweh as the God of Israel, and Israel regarded itself as the people of Yahweh, for a long time He was regarded as simply the chief divinity, and belief in other powers and divinities still continued. A complete and sudden disappearance of the polytheistic conceptions of the earlier nomadic religion was not to be expected. In course of time the former multitude of divinities and demons came to be regarded as only manifestations of Yahweh, and their names finally passed over into epithets of Yahweh. That the more primitive conceptions persisted in the popular mind long after the settlement in Canaan is shown by the prophets' denunciations.²⁵⁷

It is almost impossible to single out the precise elements which entered into the conceptions of Yahweh before the settlement in Canaan, both because of the fragmentary nature of the sources and because the later views of writers and compilers have obscured many features of the earlier religion. This much may be said, however, that the people's loyalty to Yahweh was based primarily upon His free choice of them when they were bondmen in Egypt, and that because of this the Yahweh religion was from the first an ethical religion. This view is confirmed by the fact that when the prophets insist upon the ethical requirement of Yahweh, they do not lay claim to originality, but consider their teaching to be merely a continuation of the original religion of Israel.

This emphasis upon the free moral choice of Israel by Yahweh, with its consequent ethical implication, finds no parallel in any of the contemporary religions. Thus Yahweh was regarded as better and greater than the divinities of the other nomads, as for instance the tribal gods of Moab and Ammon.

This also, no doubt, encouraged the thought of a certain arbitrariness of Yahweh which seems to be taken more or

²⁵⁷ Cf. esp. Isa. 1 29; Jer. 2 27; 3 4, etc.

less for granted. This appears at the beginning of Moses' acquaintance with Yahweh²⁵⁸ when, for some reason unknown at first, Yahweh is ready to slay Moses; and Yahweh's anger is stayed only when the rite of circumcision is performed. Throughout the story of the sojourns at Sinai and Kadesh the people feel that Yahweh is to be feared because of the vengeance that He will inflict upon the slightest violation of His holiness.

Further examples of this arbitrariness of Yahweh are seen in the fate of the men of Beth-shemesh because of their lack of reverence for the ark, and in Uzzah's death because he touched the ark.²⁵⁹

Anthropomorphic ideas entered into the conception of Yahweh in the nomadic period, and these lasted for a long time after the Hebrews settled in the cultivated land. Thus we read of Yahweh's face, His ears, eyes, mouth, hands, feet—in fact, all the features of the human form are assigned to Him.²⁶⁰ Yahweh was considered to possess human form, even by the latest Pentateuchal writers, as is shown by the statement of the *P* document in the account of the Creation, that man was created "in the image of God and after His likeness".²⁶¹ Possibly we may refer also to the ephod which Gideon made of gold taken from the enemy and set up as an object of worship, in case this was an image;²⁶² and to Micah's silver image.²⁶³

HOLY PLACES AND HOLY OBJECTS

In the old Semitic nomad religion worship and sacrifice were performed at "high places" (*bāmôth*), and many passages refer to such places of worship.²⁶⁴ The sacred rock, or tree, or other object was usually surrounded with a wall or line of stones, and was thus set apart as a sacred place.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁸ Ex. 4 24.

²⁵⁹ I Sam. 6 19; II Sam. 6 6-7.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Ex. 7 4-5; 9 8, 15; 24 9-11; 33 11a, 19-18, 20-23; Num. 11 11, 18; 22 24; 24 13, etc.

²⁶¹ Gen. 1 27.

²⁶² Jud. 8 24 ff.

²⁶³ Jud. 18 20.

²⁶⁴ Cf. esp. in Genesis.

²⁶⁵ Cf. W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 172, 490.

In the Mosaic religion these sacred places and objects were retained, as we see in the older accounts of the period. Worship of Yahweh was carried on at Sinai the "mount of God"; the sacred place of Kadesh was called En-miahpat, "spring of judgment".²⁶⁶ Moses is said to have set up twelve stones (*massëbhôth*) at Sinai, which recalls the patriarchs' custom of setting up pillars at places where theophanies occurred.²⁶⁷

One of the original commands of the Mosaic Decalog prohibits only molten images.²⁶⁸ The practice of the people bears out the view that other images were permitted, for we often meet instances of images that were regarded as animated by Yahweh. These indicate that Yahwism was not altogether free from idolatry. In the Mosaic period the conception of the ark did not differ greatly from that of an idol, for it secured Yahweh's presence.²⁶⁹ Moreover, it became the chief cult-object in the worship in Solomon's temple.²⁷⁰ Since family gods (*trāphim*) are found both in the primitive Semitic period and in the time of the prophets, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they had a place also in the Mosaic period. Little as we know of the exact nature of the ephod, it appears in many passages in the Old Testament as an object of worship along with images of various kinds.²⁷¹

This brings us to a consideration of two specific holy objects of the Mosaic religion, the tent of meeting and the ark. It is conceivable that the latter of these was not new at this period, but that something of the sort existed previously to secure the presence of the divinity during the journeyings of the nomads.

We find mention of a tent, called the tent of meeting, which was placed outside the camp,²⁷² and over which Joshua is said to have watched.²⁷³ It seems evident that it was the place where oracles were given, where Yahweh was "met"; and it is likely that it owed its importance to some sacred object

²⁶⁶ Num. 20 18; cf. Gen. 14 7.

²⁶⁷ Ex. 24 4; cf. Josh. 4 8, 9 f., 20, for later occurrences of the same practice.

²⁶⁸ Ex. 34 17. ²⁶⁹ Num. 10 28; 14 44 f., etc. ²⁷⁰ I Ki. 8 a.

²⁷¹ Cf. Jud. 8 27; 17 4 f.; I Sam. 21 8, etc.

²⁷² Ex. 33 7; Num. 11 28. ²⁷³ Ex. 33 11.

which it contained. Hence we feel the necessity of placing the tent and the ark together, i. e. the tent was the shelter for the ark. This would give Joshua something to guard, besides possibly explaining the later tradition that the ark contained the tables of the law.²⁷⁴ The tent never appears as a place of sacrifice, but rather as a place of revelation of the will of Yahweh.

The ark is mentioned as accompanying the people on their journey from Sinai, and as a pledge of Yahweh's presence with them.²⁷⁵ We may infer from these passages that the thought was that Yahweh remained at Sinai while His "presence" attended them in the ark.

The later fortunes of the ark are described in the books of Samuel, where it is known as the "ark of Yahweh".²⁷⁶ It goes out to battle with the Israelites, and fills the Philistines with terror because they believe it to embody the presence of Israel's mighty God. When the Philistines capture the ark, calamity is brought upon them and humiliation to their god Dagon. It stands for the presence of Yahweh, as is clearly shown by the passage which states that David, dancing before the ark is "dancing before Yahweh".²⁷⁷ Finally, after one unsuccessful attempt, the ark is brought up to the house of God by David.²⁷⁸ In Solomon's temple it occupied the holiest place as an object of worship. In David's act of bringing the ark to Jerusalem, we may recognize the intention of returning to Mosaic Yahwism by restoring its chief cult-object to the center of worship.²⁷⁹ Just how much David may have been influenced by advisors in making this move is not known, but it seems reasonable to suppose that some sort of pressure

²⁷⁴ The conjecture is made by some scholars that this late tradition arose from the fact that originally the ark contained some meteoric or holy stones which were used, by the method of the sacred lot, for the giving of oracles.

²⁷⁵ Ex. 33 14; Num. 10 25f., etc.

²⁷⁶ I Sam. 4 1 b-7 1; II Sam. 11 11; 15 25f., etc.

²⁷⁷ II Sam. 6 14, 16. ²⁷⁸ II Sam. 6.

²⁷⁹ Cf. II Sam. 6 17, where the ark is placed in the tent that David had pitched for it, and the two most primitive sacrifices, the burnt offering and peace offering, are offered.

was brought to bear. Certainly his action must have affected favorably the conservative religious element within the nation.

SACRIFICE 4

The old ideas of primitive Semitic religion concerning sacrifice must have been carried over into the Mosaic religion, as were the holy objects and holy places. In the nomadic religion sacrifices were numerous. Every killing of an animal for food was also a sacrifice, as is attested by the word *sābah*, which was used to denote both "slaughter" and "sacrifice".²⁸⁰ Sacrifice was not abolished by Moses, though instances of sacrifice are not numerous in the accounts of the Mosaic period. The infrequent mention is doubtless due to the fact that ordinary sacrifices were hardly considered worthy of specific mention, and consequently the few notices in this period refer only to great and memorable occasions.²⁸¹

Moreover, certain laws contained in the Decalog of Exodus 34, especially the one demanding that "none shall appear before me empty", reflect the common Semitic idea that one could not approach the divinity without some kind of offering.²⁸²

The earliest meaning attached to sacrifice seems to have been that it established a blood-covenant between the worshipper and his God; or in some cases, between individuals in the presence of the divinity, who was regarded as also a party to the transaction. This conception of sacrifice remained in the Mosaic period, and it is a significant fact that all of the references given above which record sacrifices in this period contain the covenant idea. Most striking is the one in Exodus 12 21 f., where a survival of the ancient "threshold covenant" seems apparent.²⁸³ The rite of circumcision, apparently also a survival from pre-Mosaic times, is to be explained in the same manner, as a form of blood-covenant.²⁸⁴ It was a custom which came down from most ancient times, and it was never

²⁸⁰ Cf. W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 222.

²⁸¹ Ex. 10 25; 12 21; 18 12 f.; 18 13; 24 5.

²⁸² Cf. Ex. 34 15, 25 a, 25 b, 26 a, 26 b.

²⁸³ Cf. W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 337, 344, etc.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Ex. 4 24-26.

lost from the Hebrew religion. In course of time it became the badge of membership in Israel.

There were two kinds of animal sacrifice known to the Hebrew nomads, the "burnt offering" (*'ôlah*), in which the victim was completely consumed as a gift to Yahweh, and the "peace offering" (*shelem*), which was eaten either in part or wholly by the worshipper. Both appear as the principal sacrifices until a late time.²⁸⁵ The Book of the Covenant mentions them with the significant addition: "in all places where I record my name, I (Yahweh) will come to thee",²⁸⁶ implying that these sacrifices might be made at any place where a theophany occurred. The further condition, that the altar must be built "of earth" or of "unhewn stone" has a distinctly nomadic flavor. The repetition of the injunction in Deuteronomy 275, that no tool be used in the building of stone altars shows a survival of the nomadic altar down to a late pre-exilic time.

It is questionable whether human sacrifice had a place in the nomadic religion of the Hebrews, but since it was a primitive Semitic practice, it may well have been known to ancient Israel. Instances occur in the case of Abraham's proposed sacrifice of Isaac,²⁸⁷ in Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter,²⁸⁸ and in the sacrifice by Hiel the Bethelite of his first-born son, Abiram, on the occasion of laying the foundations of Jericho, and of his youngest son, Segub, when the gates of the city were set up.²⁸⁹ Infant-sacrifice, apparently learned from the Canaanites, was practised for a long time after the settlement in Canaan. This was denounced by the prophets as abominable in the eyes of Yahweh,²⁹⁰ but it was still in existence in Ezekiel's time.²⁹¹

²⁸⁵ Ex. 1025; 2812; Jud. 1310b, 22; I Sam. 614, 15; Lev. 11f.; 34, etc.

²⁸⁶ Ex. 2034.

²⁸⁷ Gen. 22—though the writer evidently believed it to be unacceptable to Yahweh.

²⁸⁸ Jud. 1131f., 39.

²⁸⁹ I Ki. 1634.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Micah 67; Jer. 751; 1926, etc.

²⁹¹ Ezek. 2029, 51.

PRIESTHOOD

Tradition makes Moses the great prophet of Yahweh.²⁹² As a prophet he delivered his people from Egypt and laid the foundations for the Yahweh religion; but he appears also as a priest of Yahweh, in the original priestly function of consulting the oracle, not of offering sacrifice.²⁹³ There seems, however, to have been some thought of the priest as sacrificing agent even in the beginning of the Mosaic period. This occurs in at least two of the instances of sacrifice mentioned above;²⁹⁴ first, Jethro, the Midianite priest of Yahweh,²⁹⁵ and second, Moses, who officiates at the offering of sacrifice. The tradition which later traced priestly descent from Moses (and Aaron) must have had some basis of fact.

In primitive Semitic religion, in which sacrifice was offered by anyone in any holy place, an order of priests was not needed to perform this function. This remained true in the Mosaic period. The sacrifice performed by the young men of the clans points in this direction.²⁹⁶ In course of time, possibly from the beginning through the influence of Midianite custom, a sacrificing priesthood became necessary, and the office tended constantly to become limited, until finally the priest was solely the sacrificing agent of the people and the overseer of the ritual. In the so-called Blessing of Moses²⁹⁷ the Levites appear presiding over the sacred lot of Urim and Thummim, but also as burning incense and offering sacrifice.

The primary function of the priest as consulter of the oracle survived down to the time of the early kingdom. Both Saul and David took priests with them on their campaigns in order that they might ascertain the will of Yahweh whenever a decision became necessary.²⁹⁸ The story of Micah the Ephraimite²⁹⁹ is also enlightening. The young Levite, tracing

²⁹² Deut. 34 10; Hos. 12 14, etc.

²⁹³ Ex. 33 7f.; Cf. I Sam. 9 8.

²⁹⁴ Ex. 24 6, 8; 18 12.

²⁹⁵ Apparently Jethro is to be thought of here as initiating Moses into the office.

²⁹⁶ Ex. 24 5.

²⁹⁷ Deut. 33 8-10.

²⁹⁸ I Sam. 14 2, 27; 28 2, 4, 6, 9f.; 30 8; II Sam. 5 10, 22; 21 1, etc.

²⁹⁹ Jud. 17.

his descent from Moses, who came to Micah and became his "father and priest", exercised the original function of the priest as the guardian of the ephod and teraphim.

Since nomads are not inclined to tolerate rulers and authorities over themselves, it must have been that tribal custom still remained the law or standard of action for the most part. Minor cases were taken care of by the elders, but the more important ones which concerned the community at large were brought to Moses.³⁰⁰ In connection with Moses' priestly function of consulting the sacred oracle stands his reputation as the great law-giver of Israel. This accounts in part for the claim that the laws were of divine origin, for the decisions of the oracle were believed to be controlled by Yahweh. In Exodus 18 13ff. Moses sits to "judge the people. This must have been done by consulting the oracle, the decisions of which passed down into more or less fixed form, becoming the "instructions" and judgments employed as precedents to settle cases.

FEASTS AND HOLY SEASONS

Just as there were holy places where Yahweh was especially to be sought, and holy objects which were closely associated with His worship, so there were holy seasons when the Hebrews felt it specially necessary to draw near to Yahweh.

The pastoral and astronomical holy days observed in Israel certainly came from the nomadic period.

The Passover, being a family, not a national feast, is distinctly a pastoral festival that came down from the nomadic period. It was associated with the Exodus from Egypt, just as all the great feasts were made anniversaries of outstanding events in the people's history, but it probably did not originate at the time of the Exodus, for it is mentioned before that time. It is possible that Moses brought it from Midian, and made it known for the first time to his brethren in Egypt, as an excuse for escaping from the country.³⁰¹ Some of the directions relating to the Passover observance, *e. g.* that the

³⁰⁰ Ex. 18 15-26.

³⁰¹ Ex. 8 15b.; 5 3, 5b.; 8 1, 20-25; 12 21-28; 34 25; Deut. 16 1ff., etc.

Passover lamb must not be left over until the next morning,³⁰² and that the lambs be brought "according to families",³⁰³ have a distinctly nomadic character. It is possible that originally this feast was associated with the sacrifice of the firstlings which also took place in the spring of the year. Its connection with the feast of unleavened bread is late.³⁰⁴

The feast of sheep-shearing also belongs in the class of pastoral holy days.³⁰⁵ This festival was of a more private character than the others, for Absalom gave special invitations to those who were to attend it.³⁰⁶ It had no historical significance and was therefore forgotten when agricultural life was taken up.

The three annual pilgrimage-feasts which are enjoined in the Book of the Covenant: "three times in the year shall all thy males appear before Yahweh-Elohim"³⁰⁷ were doubtless originally nomadic festivals, since they appear in old legislation. It would be natural for nomads living in the region of a holy place, such as Sinai, to journey thrice in the year to the sacred spot, there to keep a feast before Yahweh, and perhaps to bring their firstlings to dedicate in recognition of His goodness. These were times of rejoicing, as is suggested by the term *hag* which was applied to them.³⁰⁸

After the settlement in Canaan, the pilgrimage feasts were transformed into agricultural festivals, which coincided with the three stages of the harvest: the barley harvest in spring, the wheat harvest seven weeks later, and the ingathering of grapes and other fruits in autumn.

From an early time the first of the three pilgrimage festivals was connected with the Passover, and included the sacrifice of firstlings as well as agricultural offerings.³⁰⁹ This suggests a transformation of all these festivals from old nomadic pilgrimage feasts, one of which may have been the Passover.³¹⁰ The later connection of these feasts with important historical

³⁰² Ex. 34 26, *et. al.* ³⁰³ Ex. 12 21, 22, etc.

³⁰⁴ Deut. 16 seems to be the first place where this combination is made.

³⁰⁵ I Sam. 26 2ff.; II Sam. 18 25ff. ³⁰⁶ II Sam. 13 23 b.

³⁰⁷ Ex. 34 22. ³⁰⁸ Cf. B. D. B., *ad loc.*

³⁰⁹ Ex. 12 17, 18, 21 f. ³¹⁰ Ex. 34 18 f.

events, *e. g.*, the Passover with the Exodus from Egypt, shows the Hebrew conception of Yahweh as a God who revealed Himself through acts in the nation's history. It served also, at least in the case cited, to keep alive the memory of that redemptive act which stood at the beginning of the national history, and it called to mind the continued goodness of Yahweh which showed itself in the fortunes of the nation.

The New Moon and Sabbath, which are usually mentioned together in the Old Testament, probably belonged to the nomadic period.³¹¹ From I Samuel 20 5, 18, 24, 29, it appears that in David's time new moons were celebrated with family gatherings.

We know that in Babylonia Sabbaths were observed in very ancient times, and were taboo days falling upon the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the lunar month. Certain things were not done in them, not because they were days of rest but because they were "unlucky" days. The fact that the Babylonian "Sabbaths" coincided with the phases of the moon suggests strongly that the Sabbath originally was a lunar day which was raised to a new significance by the Hebrews and given a moral and religious value.

The earlier codes command only a cessation from field labor on the Sabbath;³¹² and it is unreasonable to suppose that nomads could drop the care of their flocks for one day in seven. The law in Exodus 20 8: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy" comes nearest perhaps to the original idea of the day as a propitiation of the deity, when certain acts were prohibited. This is the Babylonian idea of the *shabattum*, from which the Hebrew Sabbath is probably derived.³¹³

At the beginning of this section it was observed that religion in all times is one of the most powerful conservative forces in society. We have seen how strongly it operated in the ancient religion of Israel, and one need only glance at modern orthodox Judaism to be convinced that survivals of desert elements are still numerous because of this conservative tendency.

To this day pious Jews feel that a bit of soil from Palestine

³¹¹ Cf. Amos 4 5; Hos. 2 11; Isa. 1 13; II Ki. 4 23, etc.

³¹² Ex. 23 12; 34 21.

³¹³ Cf. Driver, *Exodus*, p. 196; and article in *D. B.* on "Sabbath".

is sacred, and this is only a faint reflection of the original feeling of the Hebrews that somehow their God was bound, first to the Sinai region, then to the "Holy Land". The idea that He was bound to Sinai took a long time to disappear, and to its persistence is due much of the corruption of the religion of Israel when the nation entered Canaan. The obvious inference in the popular mind was that, if Yahweh was a desert God, then homage must be rendered in Canaan to the gods who bestowed the fruits of the cultivated land.

When the Hebrew prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries contemplated this corruption of religion and defection of the people from Yahweh, they discerned that the old simplicity of the Mosaic age must return, if the nation were to be saved, even though the restoration might come through a catastrophe. No higher construction could have been put upon the disaster which was imminent at the time when those great and fearless preachers proclaimed their fiery messages. Therefore, they said that the impending destruction, towards which all the signs of the times pointed, must sweep away the temptations of Canaan that had drawn away the heart of the nation from Yahweh. Yahweh would accomplish this and thus would vindicate His power over *all* things in the land. Then the "remnant" of the people, recognizing Yahweh as the Giver of *all* bounties (of the cultivated land as well as of the desert) would be docile and disposed to keep the faith of Yahweh pure, "as in the beginning". Then they would render to Him, and to Him alone, the homage due to Him.

The prophets' faith in Yahweh remained unshaken in spite of circumstances, and the faithlessness of Israel only served to enhance the abiding faithfulness of Yahweh. How these prophets came to embrace this belief, and the ways in which they supported and advocated the "nomadic ideal", as we shall call it, will be treated in the following section.

、VII. THE NOMADIC IDEAL

Thus far we have considered the historical nomadic elements in the life and religion of Israel. The original nomadic

life we have reconstructed by a reasonably complete study of the sources in the Old Testament. Its abiding influence has been noted in some of its chief survivals in social and religious life down to a time considerably after the settlement in Palestine. As has been observed more than once in the foregoing pages, religion plays the greatest rôle in the conservation of ideas and customs. In such a natively religious and tradition-loving people as Israel these conserving forces were all the more prominent and powerful.

As time went on and life in Palestine became really formidable in the eyes of the higher spirits, it was inevitable that a reaction should come against the civilization of Canaan, and a consequent desire to call the nation back to its "first love". Those who knew the pure faith of Yahwism felt that it would be easier to give exclusive worship to Yahweh in the simple life of the desert. Thus the nomadic idea came into its own again as an ideal. The past was idealized and projected into the future.

Accordingly we shall find a consideration of the more important currents of thought in the pre-exilic religion of Israel fruitful for a determination of the "nomadic ideal".

Before embarking upon this examination, it will be necessary to define what is meant by the term "nomadic ideal". This phrase was first employed by Budde in an article in the *New World*,³¹⁴ entitled *THE NOMADIC IDEAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT*. His point of departure is the appearance of Jonadab ben Rechab in II Kings 10 15f. as a champion for pure Yahwism, and the re-appearance of the Rechabites fully two hundred and fifty years later as a sect which continued faithful to the commands of Jonadab,³¹⁵ who prohibited building houses, sowing seed and planting of vineyards. Budde points out that "the nomadic ideal meets us not only in the Rechabites but also, in another form, in the prophets of Israel".³¹⁶ He goes on to show some traces of it in Jeremiah, Hosea and Isaiah.

³¹⁴ Vol. 4, Dec. 1895, pp. 726-745, shortly after appearing in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 1896.

³¹⁵ Jer. 35. ³¹⁶ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 780 f.

The conclusions of Budde are accepted by Ed. Meyer,³¹⁷ who makes the suggestion that Budde's theory is capable of still wider application. It seems unaccountable that so fruitful a theme has thus far not received the specific attention of Old Testament scholars.³¹⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that König in a somewhat cursory note discounts Ed. Meyer's *Bedawi Ideal* (without, however, any reference to Budde's fuller treatment of the subject), the evidence, as we shall see, is strongly in favor of the existence of such an ideal.

From Budde's article it appears that the "nomadic ideal" of the prophets Jeremiah, Hosea and Isaiah is for him the conception that the grave social and religious problems of Israel are to find their solution in a reduction of the land of Palestine by Yahweh to a condition which will permit only a nomadic existence similar to that of Israel's beginnings. The Rechabites advocated and practised this sort of existence, believing that this was the only sure way of guaranteeing a pure Yahwism; but their conception rested on the false assumption that Yahweh was God of the desert only, and therefore could not sanction any other mode of life than the nomadic for the people who claimed His blessings. In the prophets, as Budde makes clear, the ideal becomes broader in that it implies a forced return to nomadic life, as a measure of discipline visited upon the people in order that, under conditions like those in which Yahwism was first nurtured in the forefathers of Israel, it might again be established; and after this chastening, a "remnant" might grow into a faithful people who would give their undivided loyalty to Yahweh.

This conception, applied more widely and interpreted even more broadly than by Budde, we propose to consider here. In the prophets this idea finally comes to be a hope for the return of the people to the spiritual simplicities of Israel's

³¹⁷ *Israeliten*, p. 132 f.

³¹⁸ Brief mention of the nomadic ideal is found in a little book by Fr. Kähler, *Hebräische Volkswunde*, p. 5; in an article by Ant. Causse in the *Revue de Théologie et Philosophie*, for Nov. 1919, p. 287 ff.; and in the article on "Prophecy" by König in Hasting's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

past. The distinction which we must bear in mind between the narrower and broader conceptions of the nomadic ideal, is the distinction between a *return to primitiveness* and a *return to simplicity*. The development of the "ideal" tends away from the former and toward the latter conception.

In Israel, as among other peoples, the "golden age" was conceived as lying in the past. Consequently, even though religious leaders often portrayed "a good time coming", they nevertheless also cast their glance backward. This is strikingly true of the great writing prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries, who possessed a wide knowledge of the history of their people.

Even farther back than these seventh and eighth century prophets we note the beginnings of the broader conception of the nomadic ideal. These beginnings cannot be said to stand on the same level with the teachings of the later prophets, but nevertheless they distinguish themselves from the narrow and fanatical view of the Rechabites. As soon as the social and religious problems of settled life began to manifest themselves, men of God arose who sensed the dangers of foreign elements intruding themselves into what they conceived to be pure Yahwism, and who let their voices be heard in the interest of conservatism.

Thus Nathan the prophet tells David that Yahweh was content to dwell in a "tent" ever since He brought Israel from Egypt;³¹⁹ He never asked to have a "house of cedar" (v. 7), does not require David to build a "house" for Him; but on the other hand, He will build a "house" for David.³²⁰ It would have been a departure from the old simplicity had David constructed a permanent dwelling for Yahweh. Later also, in Nathan's rebuke of the king,³²¹ the point is made (v. 14a) that David's evil deed is a violation of the religion of Yahweh, a corruption which lays Yahweh open to ridicule by His enemies.

³¹⁹ II Sam. 7 a.

³²⁰ Here with the meaning of "family, posterity", cf. Driver, *Notes on Samuel*, pp. 276f.

³²¹ II Sam. 12.

Similarly, Ahijah the Shilonite, because Solomon in his ostentatious rule and his practice of idolatry did not adhere strictly to Yahwism, supported Jeroboam's revolt against the king.³²² Subsequently, the same Ahijah pronounced judgment against Jeroboam on the ground of unfaithfulness to Yahweh³²³ and because he "made other gods". Every compromise of the Yahweh religion with heathenism roused these men of God to protest.

Elijah also, who came dressed in the rough, hairy garb and leather girdle of the nomad,³²⁴ voiced his opposition to Ahab's defection from the faith of Yahweh³²⁵ and to the apostasy of all the people.³²⁶ Elijah's statement that he was "jealous for Yahweh" reveals the chief reason for the recurrence of the nomadic ideal in its many forms, i. e., the fear lest Israel, and with it the religion of Yahweh, by mingling with other peoples and adopting elements from other religions, should lose its identity.³²⁷

Before passing to a consideration of the nomadic ideal in the prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries, it will be profitable to note how greatly this ideal influenced the historians of both kingdoms, the so-called Jahwists and the Elohist. It has already been observed that *J* and *E* in their stories of the patriarchs represent them as nomads who, passing by the kingdoms and cities of the land, kept themselves aloof from contact with these impure places.

The *J* document is the first to picture the nomadic life of the fathers of Israel as the "golden age" of the past. In *J* especially there appears almost an elation over the patriarchs' opposition to civilization. The building of the first cities and the invention of the first arts are attributed to the cursed race of Cain.³²⁸ The Flood story has as its motive the de-

³²² I Ki. 11 23f., esp. verse 23.

³²³ I Ki. 14 1ff., esp. v. 8-9.

³²⁴ The prophets adopted this habit, according to Zech. 13 4.

³²⁵ I Ki. 18 18.

³²⁶ It is significant that Elijah was a Tishbite from Gilead, a district close to the desert, and that he was consequently a qualified representative of the life and faith of the nomads.

³²⁷ Ps. 106 34-40.

³²⁸ Gen. 4 17.

struction of the proud works of civilization in order that man may start again in simplicity to live a life of complete trust in Yahweh.³²⁹ In many other ways the *J* writer exhibits his support of the idea that the nomadic life was the ideal life in the golden age of Israel's past. The *E* document concurs in this presentation, and is even more complete than *J* in its depiction of this phase of the early life of Israel.³³⁰

The historical starting-point of the concrete form of the nomadic ideal we must find, as does Budde, in the advent of the Rechabite sect in II Kings 10 15f. These Rechabites were the first open and obstinate adherents of desert customs and religion. It may be true, as suggested by Budde, that this attitude did not start as a religious ideal with the Rechabites, but simply as a hereditary vow binding the descendants of Jonadab to remain true to the primitive customs of the desert. Still the fact that II Kings 10 15 makes Jonadab speak of his "zeal for Yahweh", coupled with the other appearance of the Rechabites in Jeremiah's time, seems to indicate a religious ideal in these enthusiasts. 3

When the Rechabites emerge from obscurity in Jeremiah's day, this prophet makes pedagogic use of their fidelity to the commands of Jonadab their forefather. In so doing, Jeremiah does not commit himself unequivocally to the exact *form* in which the Rechabites' zeal for the nomadic ideal manifested itself; nevertheless he shows himself a supporter of the ideal itself. The point he tries to make clear is that these enthusiasts stand in sharp contrast to the defection of Judah from Yahweh.

These two appearances of the Rechabites, with so long a period intervening, show most certainly that in the interval a continual reminder of simple pastoral life was held up before the nation in the example of representatives of this sect. The fact that the other prophets before Jeremiah make no direct allusions to the Rechabites, and do not use their fidelity to bring home a lesson to the people, does not necessarily mean

³²⁹ Gen. 6-7.

³³⁰ For a fairly complete and convincing treatment of these facts see Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 132f.

that these prophets were not in sympathy with the Rechabites as conservers of the past. It was merely accidental that circumstances brought this sect strikingly before the public in Jeremiah's time, and he therefore naturally laid hold of the opportunity for illustrative purposes.

Amos' allusion to the Nazirites²³¹ is almost a parallel case. In forcing the Nazirites to partake of wine their fidelity to their vows was shaken, and this is used by Amos to illustrate the whole people's unfaithfulness to Yahweh in spite of His goodness. (v. 10.)

These two instances taken from the first of the great writing prophets of the eighth century and from the last but one of those of the seventh century, show the difference between the Nazirite-Rechabite way of adhering to the nomadic ideal and the way of the prophets. Here appears the wider and more spiritual interpretation of that ideal by the prophets. If we defined the nomadic ideal of the prophets as merely a protest against civilization and idolatry, we should only call old ideas by a new name; but protest formed only a part of the prophets' support of that ideal. To realize all that the ideal meant to them we must notice in their writings the evidences of a tendency to look back with a sort of longing to the "golden age" when simplicity of faith in Yahweh was easy under the ideal conditions of nomadic life. In their longing for old times the prophets go so far as to voice the conviction that a return to such conditions is the only thing that can bring the nation back to Yahweh.

There are chiefly three ways in which the nomadic ideal presents itself in the prophets' writings: 1) in their frequent references to the "time of Israel's youth" and to the wilderness journey (the nomadic life) as a time when the people were close to Yahweh; 2) in their opposition to sacrifice and ritual and to the evils of civilization as not belonging to the nomadic religion and life; and 3) in the nomadic figures which they employ to depict the "good time coming", in the restoration

²³¹ Cf. Amos 2:11 f.; cf. also Harper's *Amos and Hosea, Int. Crit. Com.* p. 56 f. for the relation of Rechabites and Nazirites.

of the people to Yahweh's favor. We shall endeavor to place these three forms of the ideal before ourselves and to estimate their meaning and importance in the prophets' teachings.

1) Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah speak frequently of that wonderful time when Yahweh took His chosen people and led them out of Egypt. The bondage under the Pharaohs was always remembered as a hard and cruel experience of servitude; but the thought of the deliverance served to mitigate the bitterness of the bondage. It furnished the occasion for Yahweh's goodness and men could glory in the supreme fact of Yahweh's free, moral choice of Israel as His people. Except for the pitiful and helpless condition of the unfortunate Hebrews in Egypt, Yahweh could not have come to deliver them. That act of redemption at the beginning of the nation's history stood ever as a testimony to the character and moral quality of their God, and the prophets never tired of picturing it before the minds of their hearers to arouse their gratitude, and also to furnish a standard whereby to measure how far the people had wandered from a simple trust in Yahweh.

Thus Hosea (11 1) tenderly reminds his auditors of Yahweh's choice of Israel, and of Israel's nearness to His heart: "When Israel was a child I loved him and called my son out of Egypt". That was an ideal time in the prophet's estimation—a time of felicity and high endeavor—but how far the nation had fallen from it! Hosea again makes mention of Yahweh's goodness (12 13), this time naming the "prophet" (Moses) whom Yahweh used to accomplish His loving purpose for Israel; and in 13 4f. he still dwells upon the love of Yahweh: "I shepherded thee in the wilderness".³³² So full is Hosea of the thought of that blissful day that whenever he comes to the point of the people's sin in turning away from Yahweh, he breaks out anew in praise of that time when there were none of the troublesome allurements to glaring social and moral evils such as had come to exist in his own day.

In somewhat similar terms Amos appeals to the time of the wilderness journey as the season of Yahweh's special favor³³³

³³² Cf. Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 897.

³³³ Cf. Amos 2 10, 11b.

before Israel lost her "virgin purity" (52). After rehearsing the deeds of wickedness which the ungrateful people have committed, Amos turns back to that event whose memory ought to have kept gratitude alive: "And yet it was I who brought you up out of Egypt and went with you in the wilderness" (210). The same thought recurs in a slightly different context in Amos 3 1, 2a: "You only have I known (= "loved") of all the families of the earth". It is interesting, and perhaps of greater significance than most commentators have admitted, that when Amos (5 6a), after singing the dirge of Israel, says: "*Seek* Yahweh and live", he employs the phrase ("to inquire of Yahweh") which in the olden times was applied to consulting the oracle of Yahweh.³³⁴ Has this any connection in the prophet's mind with the early days when Moses was the mediator between Yahweh and the people in consulting the sacred oracle? If so, this utterance of Amos pleads strongly for his support of the nomadic ideal, for it urges a conception of religion like that of the Mosaic period.

We are not in the realm of conjecture when we find in Isaiah certain passages that refer to the early desert days as a time of close attachment to Yahweh, whose return is highly to be desired in the prophet's own time when there are such disgusting manifestations of disloyalty. He does not look for a unique and miraculous future to solve the perplexing problem, but rather for a return to a former ideal condition—"as in former times" (1 26). He anticipates a restoration, "as in the day when Israel came up from Egypt" (11 16b).

In Jeremiah's prophecies we meet again allusions to the glorious past much like those that we have noted in the writings of his three predecessors. Thus, for instance, he begins one of his earliest prophecies: "I remember the kindness of thy youth, how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness unto Yahweh" (2 2-3a). Jeremiah, accordingly, believed that in those old nomadic days Israel was loyal to Yahweh, and the inference is (v. 7) that, since Israel became estranged after entering the "plentiful

³³⁴ Ex. 18 16; 1 Sam. 9 9.

land", therefore (31) there must be a "return" to recognition of Yahweh as the "guide of her youth" (34), and a realization of the calamity which the civilization of Canaan had brought. Israel is urged to "know her sin" through which "the labor, and the flocks and the herds of the fathers have been devoured" (313, 24). The logical consequence is expressed in 420-27: the whole land must be reduced to desolation so that by this discipline Israel may be brought back to Yahweh.

By citing the central precept of the Mosaic religion: "I will be your God and ye shall be my people" (722f.), Jeremiah refers once more to that ideally close attachment and allegiance to Yahweh which existed at the time of the nation's beginnings.

Not again do we meet the nomadic ideal in Jeremiah until the incident of the Rechabites.³³⁵ This silence may be explained by the fact that the changing situation led the prophet to expect, not a reduced existence within the borders of the land, but captivity and exile.³³⁶ At the close of the Rechabite incident he turns to these followers of Jonadab and promises them continuance (3518f.); as if to say to the rest of the people: "Had you remained loyal to Yahweh, as these have to the commands of Jonadab, and not allowed the life in this land to turn you away from the simple faith of your fathers, it might be well with you also".

2) Another evidence of the prophets' support of the nomadic ideal lies in their consistent opposition to formalism in religion, to sacrifice and ritual, and to the evils that come in the wake of civilization. Many scholars hold that this indicates no more than that these prophets were not acquainted with the early Pentateuchal codes and therefore were not in a position to know all the facts in the case. Admitting this, the fact still remains that the *way* in which they oppose the evils, usually implies that things were better in the desert so far as loyalty to Yahweh and purity of religion were concerned. This pleads strongly in favor of the presence of the nomadic ideal in their thinking. After all, it is equally reasonable to suppose that they claimed that Yahweh gave no explicit commands for

³³⁵ Ch. 35.

³³⁶ Cf. Jer. 18 17; 16 10; 20 4; 22 22, etc.

sacrifice in the desert because they recognized that offerings and ritual afforded the surest temptation to heathenism. Therefore the prophets were led to claim that *all* offerings and ritual were not only indifferent to Yahweh but even hated by Him.

Amos declares quite frankly that the people sacrifice simply because they like to do so, "for this pleaseth you" (44f), while in reality it is "multiplying transgression" and therefore is not desired by Yahweh. "Yahweh hates, despises the feasts and solemn assemblies"; He cares not for the "noise of the songs"; the sacred instrumental music with which they have embellished their worship avails not to win His favor.³³⁷ This prophet puts into the form of a question the proposition which Jeremiah later affirms outright, that Yahweh commanded no sacrifice at the time of the Exodus.³³⁸ If Israel hopes once more to please Yahweh, she must abandon these rites, which are foreign to pure Yahwism, and return to ancient simplicity of worship.

In the same denunciatory tone Hosea proclaims that "Yahweh desires goodness and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (6 6); and again: "As for sacrifices, Yahweh accepteth them not" (8 13). Even Micah, who does not openly reveal belief in a return to nomadic life as the discipline which Yahweh will administer, repeats the common conviction of his predecessors that Yahweh does not desire sacrifice and burnt offerings.³³⁹

The prophets' opposition to the conditions of life in Palestine is shown by their denunciations of these conditions as evils that have worked havoc and enticed Israel away from Yahweh. "Israel hath cast off that which is good" cries Hosea; the splendor of a royal establishment, the silver and gold and idols have come between her and Yahweh.³⁴⁰ "Their land is full of silver and gold, of treasures and idols", says Isaiah, but a day is coming when "Yahweh alone shall be exalted".³⁴¹

³³⁷ Amos 5 21-22; 6 5; 8 2a.

³³⁸ Amos 5 25; cf. Jer. 7 22.

³³⁹ Micah 6 6f.

³⁴⁰ Hos. 8 2-5; cf. 13 2.

³⁴¹ Isa. 27 f.

The wealth and glamor of settled life have taken possession of the people, and caused them completely to forget Yahweh. The very land in which they dwell and all that pertains to it have wrought confusion and trouble. As Budde suggests,³⁴² the false conclusion drawn by the people, which the prophets try to correct, is that the gifts of the land are given by the gods of the land, who in return demand homage.

Hosea alone of the prophets faces this belief, and claims in answer to it that Yahweh is not limited to power over the gifts of the desert only, but He is also the giver of blessings in the land of Palestine.³⁴³ Nevertheless, the stiff-necked people must be deprived of these latter gifts for a time before in their extremity they will be led to acknowledge Yahweh's supremacy over *all* good things.

3) More significant than either of the foregoing indications of the nomadic ideal in the prophets is a third evidence which we must now consider. The prophets show a great fondness for nomadic figures of speech, which they use to describe conditions past, present and future.³⁴⁴ The instances in which these are employed to represent the coming redemption of Israel are numerous enough to warrant the conclusion that they spring from a longing that things may again be as they once were. The clearest passages of this sort are found in Hosea and Isaiah, but they are not wanting in the other prophets of the same period.

As a solution of the problem mentioned above, how shall Israel be saved from the conditions of settled life which have drawn her away from Yahweh and caused her to serve the *ba'als* as the providers of the bounties of the land?—Hosea comes out boldly with the statement: "I will make thee to dwell in tents as in the days of thy youth".³⁴⁵ He goes on to say that, after this chastening, Yahweh will restore to Israel the grain, the wine and the oil (2 21f.), then she will acknowledge Yahweh and not the *ba'als* as the source of these blessings;

³⁴² *New World*, vol. 4, p. 732.

³⁴³ Hos. 2 5.

³⁴⁴ Amos 1 2b; 3 12; Hos. 5 6; 12 9; 13 6; Isa. 5 17a; 13 20b; 14 9, 20a; Jer. 4 20; 10 20; 13 17; 23 2-4; 31 10; 33 12; 50 6; Zeph. 2 6; 3 12, etc.

³⁴⁵ Hos. 12 9.

but this does not materially change the main point of his argument. He expects the nation to come to itself through the experience of a temporary return to desert conditions. Hosea pictures this return quite completely when he says: "I will bring her back to the wilderness, and there will I speak to her heart, . . . and she shall make answer there (that is, she shall reciprocate Yahweh's love) as in the days of her youth when she came up from Egypt".³⁴⁶ Even the kingdom shall disappear for a while, for "Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice", (34) and "they shall go with their flocks and their herds and seek Yahweh" (56). Closely parallel to this, Jeremiah speaks of the discipline with which Yahweh will visit His people: "Shepherds with their flocks shall come to her (i. e., Zion); they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place",³⁴⁷ "again in this place . . . shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down".³⁴⁸

Zephaniah also conceives of the redemption of Israel as coming through a return to nomadic life: "The sea-coast shall be pastures, with caves for shepherds and folds for flocks".³⁴⁹ The purified remnant shall "feed their flocks upon the border land",³⁵⁰ "they shall feed and lie down and none shall make them afraid".³⁵¹

The earlier chapters of Isaiah yield a number of passages which indicate this prophet's belief, at least in his younger days, that Israel would be restored to the old order of things. Budde has pointed out that Isaiah's oldest predictions, especially those contained in his inaugural vision in Chapter 6, are echoes of the teachings of his older contemporary Hosea. "How long, O Lord?" the prophet asks; and he is told: "Until cities be wasted, and the land become utterly desolate, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land", and only a remnant be left.³⁵²

In the much-discussed seventh chapter of Isaiah also, we see the nomadic ideal. Without entering into the unfinished

³⁴⁶ Hos. 2 14 f.³⁴⁷ Jer. 6 2.³⁴⁸ Jer. 33 12.³⁴⁹ Zeph. 2 6.³⁵⁰ Zeph. 2 7.³⁵¹ Zeph. 3 13 b.³⁵² Isa. 6 11 f.

controversy concerning this chapter, we may note one or two predictions of a reduction to the conditions of nomadic life. Of Immanuel it is said: "Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good". This verse surely describes the diet of a nomad. The picture is completed in verses 21 and 25: "In that day each shall keep a young cow and two sheep, and from the abundance of milk which they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat who is left in the midst of the land". The whole land is to become a wilderness suited only to a nomadic existence. To be sure, this experience will not be exactly "ideal" for those who have grown accustomed to the tastes and habits of settled or urban life; on the contrary, as is shown farther on (8 21-22) it will be bitter indeed. Its virtue lies in the fact that this discipline will awaken again the old faith in Yahweh.

In Chapter 32 the lingering thought flashes up once again that the conversion of the land into a wilderness will be necessary to convert the people to their God. Here the prophet pictures a veritable desert, but "justice shall dwell in the wilderness" (32 16). Yet the darker side remains in "smiting the breasts for the pleasant fields and the fruitful vine" (v. 12); "thorns and briers shall come up in the land, and the palace shall be forsaken, and the populous city deserted", becoming "a pasture for flocks" (vv. 12-14).

It is clear, therefore, that the prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries held the nomadic ideal. At a certain point in their preaching, however, it seems that each perceived that the nation had remained obdurate too long to permit the working-out of this ideal in the exact way in which they had first presented it. Consequently they introduced a new and sterner note into their preaching, and predicted, not a reduction of the land, but speedy destruction and banishment from the land. Always, however, there remained hope of the ultimate saving of a remnant.

Even with this change of emphasis, the essential element in the nomadic ideal did not disappear. The prophets now saw that the return to nomadic life was only incidental to the

fundamental message which they proclaimed. They had been trained to think of the nomadic life of the fathers as the golden age of Israel's history, and consequently their minds turned naturally toward a return of that happy state as the only possible hopeful explanation of the doom that seemed inevitable on account of the nation's sin; but now they began to see that Yahweh had other purposes, and accordingly, their conception of the nomadic ideal became broader. It became so broad indeed that it seems almost arbitrary to persist in calling it a "nomadic" ideal. The essential element, however, in the prophets' later hope was identical with the hope which they had previously embodied under the form of the nomadic ideal, i. e., that Israel would be brought back to the simple and uncorrupted faith of the fathers; only now they saw the deeper meaning of their hope and could still cling to it though they were certain of the exile and of the destruction of the holy city and the temple. In this sense we may say that the nomadic ideal was never lost by the prophets.

It was a long process through which the nomadic ideal passed from its first narrow form in the practice of the Rechabites to its purification and transformation by the prophets!

But the highest reaches of this ideal were not apprehended even by the prophets. It remained for Jesus to spiritualize it completely. When He came "in the fulness of time", His mission was to discover for men the deep underlying spiritual realities of life, to relate them to the Father who is the giver of life and all its blessings, and to win the loyalty of men to eternal values, that they might not lose themselves amid the allurements of a world that is dead to higher truths. He raised the nomadic ideal to its sublimest heights by pointing men to the glorious simplicities of faith and love.

Since we stand constantly in need of an ideal of this sort, we may learn a lesson from the history of its development in ancient Israel. We have still those among us today who, like the Rechabites, think the way to please God and to enjoy His blessings lies in a return to primitiveness. For them the *form* counts supremely. The danger of such a course is just as grave as that of perverting and misappropriating the

highest gifts of life by surrendering one's self to the evil of the world.

The note which needs to be struck in Christianity today is one which corresponds fundamentally to that which the prophets sounded in their day when they advocated a return to the nomadic ideal in its broadest sense. It is a call back to the essential spiritual simplicities of faith and life which God has revealed in the person and work of His Son Jesus Christ.

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¹ Abbreviations: I. C., International Critical Commentary; C. B., Cambridge Bible; N. Cent., New Century Bible.

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