

708TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 1928,

AT 4.30 P.M.

AVARY H. FORBES, ESQ., M.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the following elections:—As Associates: Dr. George Keppie Paterson, C.M., and Miss Gina L. Barbour.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Professor Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D., M.R.A.S., to read his paper on "The Influence of the Heathenism of the Canaanites upon the Hebrews."

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*THE INFLUENCE OF THE HEATHENISM OF  
THE CANAANITES UPON THE HEBREWS.*

By PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, LL.D., M.R.A.S.

WHEN the Hebrews, both the great and renowned "Man from Beyond" the Euphrates, and, later on, his descendants, led by Moses from the servitude of Egypt, entered the Holy Land of Palestine, they found themselves in the midst of a population possessing strange manners, customs and beliefs differing from those of the nations among whom the Hebrews had formerly dwelt, and still more from their own ways of thought. Around them were the Canaanites, a people consisting of many tribes and clans, one of them being the Jebusites, who inhabited Jerusalem and the district around it. To this important section of the population must be added the Edomites, the Moabites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, and last, but not least, the Amorites, who, in later days, had to give place to the Hittites—"the sons of Heth"—people seemingly speaking an Aryan language.

On the sea-coast were the important cities of Tyre, Sidon and Beyrout, with many others. The first two had acquired power on account of their extensive commerce overseas, and constant voyages had enabled them to learn something of the islands and the coast-lands of the Mediterranean, with their inhabitants.

But that which influenced the Hebrews most, in all probability, was the religious beliefs of the Canaanites, both the specially national, the tribal, and that of the clan or family. The Hebrews must also have learned from the Phœnician seafarers some of the beliefs, as well as the manners and customs, of the lands with which they traded, and they may even have become acquainted with Canaanitish beliefs inherited from prehistoric times—details of old gods and old legends which are lost to us in the mists of the ages.

As all Bible readers know, the influence of the heathenism which the incoming Hebrews found around them was naturally great, and it was probably impossible not to be affected by it. If all men in England, for instance, were alike unattracted by ritual and mystic ceremonies, it is safe to say that this country would be an impregnable stronghold of evangelism and plain divine worship. That the Hebrews were affected, and even attracted, by the beliefs, the rites and the ceremonies of the people around them is therefore not to be wondered at. Both in Babylonia and in Egypt the Hebrews had become acquainted with the religions of those lands, and also with their legends and their traditions. But they were far from being nationally sympathetic with either of these nations—they lived among the Babylonians because it was their interest to do so, and with the Egyptians because, being captives, they had no choice in the matter.

On arriving in the Holy Land as settlers, however, the Hebrews found themselves among people who were more or less akin to themselves. More than this, they spoke a language which could hardly be regarded as a separate dialect, and there is every probability that the Hebrews still retained a knowledge of the beliefs current among their forefathers before their entry either into Ur of the Chaldees or into Egypt.

#### HOW DID THE ISRAELITES BECOME ATTRACTED TO HEATHENISM ?

Upon this point we get more precise indications in the Book of Judges. From that remarkably noteworthy historical narrative we learn that it was due to the necessity of subjugating the

Canaanites, a task which was begun by Judah and Simeon. The various small nations, however, were not all killed off—indeed, it would have been difficult to do so, and many of them remained domiciled with the Hebrews, and naturally retained their old beliefs, though there must have been continual accessions from the aliens to the faith and the nationality of the Jews.

All the nations which were left were regarded as having been spared by Jehovah to prove and test the Israelites as to their faithfulness to the God of their fathers. Thus it happened that they came into contact with the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Sidonians, “and the Hivites which dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.”

These remnants of the Canaanites were “to prove Israel, so as to find out whether they were faithful to the words of Moses.” And to those already mentioned must be added the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. These, however, were probably not the nationalities which led the Israelites astray; like the Hittites and the Amorites, they probably worshipped their national gods, as did also the Assyrians. It is thus that we obtain the divine names Assur, Hattu and Amurrū (mispronounced by the Assyro-Babylonians “Awurrū”).

In addition to the adoption of the heathen worship there was the disadvantage of intermarriage, by which the Israelites lost not a few of their nationals, though of these some may have returned to them. Many other nationalities are mentioned in the Book of Judges as having subjugated Israel, but how far they adopted their heathen worship we can hardly realize. The influence which the alien beliefs of the surrounding nations must have had upon the Israelites can easily be estimated when we consider the history of Samson, and the intercourse between the various nationalities in his time.

But, previous to this, there had been the influence of the heathenism of Babylonia—the Accad of Gen. x, 10. According to the Talmud, Terah, the father of Abraham, was an idolater, but what the gods were whom he worshipped is doubtful—we are only told that they were twelve in number, one for every month of the year. We do not know whether what may be called “the Merodach-monotheism” was in existence already in his time or not, but, if it was, he may well have been influenced by it.

The fact that Terah and his family left Ur of the Chaldees, where the moon-god (Sin or Nannar) was adored, and went and

settled at Haran—the “Harran” of the Assyro-Babylonians—has been regarded as sufficient proof that the family-god of the Hebrews of that period was the moon. Without admitting that this is correct, it is to be noted that the double parentage of Ištar suggests how the Hebrews became familiarized with the worship of the queen of heaven, which they afterwards adopted. As an inhabitant of the sky, Ištar was regarded as the daughter of Anu, the god of the heavens, as stated in the *Descent of Ištar into Hades*, and, having phases similar to those of the moon, she seems to have been looked upon as belonging to the family of Sin, “brought forth in the likeness of her father and Nin-gal, the moon-goddess, her mother.”

It is only natural, that when at last in the Holy Land they should have recognized in Ashtoreth and Ashtoreth-Karnaim, the Queen of Heaven, Palestinian forms of Ištar (with the feminine ending attached, as was to be expected).

Sayce\* says that Ashtoreth was the name of the supreme goddess of Canaan and the female counterpart of Baal. Both the name and the worship, he adds, were derived from Babylonia. He also points out that she was a male as well as a female deity, owing to her character as a morning and an evening star. In connection with this, it is worthy of note—if only because it is curious—that the name of Ištar, 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎠, *d. Ištar*, appears, without the divine prefix, in monogram-form, namely, 𐎶𐎵𐎠, in the words expressing the names of demons or even personages, who were held to be one-third or two-thirds divine. This produced the characters 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎠, *utukku*, and 𐎶𐎵𐎠𐎺𐎠, *édimmu*, “spirit,” “shade,” or “ghost,” the former being two parts divine and the latter one part. Whether the Canaanites, and from them the Hebrews, knew of this derivation of the word *Ištar* or not is uncertain, but the Moabites seem to have regarded Ashtar (*Ištar*) as a god, and identified her (*e.g.* on the Moabite stone) with Chemosh.

There is no trace of the Semitic *y* in the Assyrian form of the word, nor does any equivalent of the *y* appear in the Assyrian transcription *Aštartu* (or *Ashtarthu*), also not in *Ištarēti*, one of the Assyro-Babylonian words for “goddesses.” This leads to the question, whether the Canaanites or their neighbours, the kindred nations around, may not have possessed a root capable of being identified, either owing to form, or to meaning,

\* *International Standard Bible Encyclopædia.*

or both, with the Assyrian Istar. As is well known, the Aramaic form is *Athtar*, but this may be due only to the ancient analogy of the change of *sh* into *th*, as is well shown in Arabic. The use of the word Ashtaroth in Hebrew for "ewes" or their young is regarded as being due to the fact that *Aštari* was goddess of fertility.

*Here we have, in the very language itself—the Hebrew of the Bible, used by the writer of Genesis—a word from a root derived apparently from a dialect used by the heathen around, and applied by them to the goddess of reproduction, with special reference to the flocks and herds, of which the Hebrews made use every day.*

The importance of this goddess, therefore, led to the popularity of her worship among the Canaanites, and also to her worship among the Hebrews as "the queen of heaven"—the planet Venus, with whom, in Babylonia and Assyria, she was identified. In the Mediterranean states, under the name of Ashtoreth, she came to be regarded as the female counterpart of Baal, the great sun-god of that tract. There, too, the legend of Istar and Tammuz must have made the people remember, that as the legends of the journey of Istar into Hades relate, she descended into the Underworld to seek the sun-god Tammuz, whom she had espoused in her youth. The legend is based upon the disappearance of the planet Venus in the sun's rays at the time of the autumn equinox, and her reappearance at the beginning of spring at what was practically the New Year, when the Babylonians saw the earth began to bring forth again. Even a monotheist could in those days hardly escape from the influence of heathen teaching in such a case as this, and we therefore find that it had a special attraction for the women of Jerusalem, who wept for Tammuz at the northern gate of the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, whilst priests, to the number of five-and-twenty, worshipped the sun towards the east. Ezekiel probably voices the opinion of all the more reasonable of the pious men of his time when he speaks of these things as abominations. The influence of the Canaanites, who had brought this worship into the land before the entry of the Jews, naturally continued for many centuries, and was probably not eliminated until the time of the Babylonian captivity, and perhaps not even then. A people brought into contact with the worshippers of "the merciful Merodach," and remembering, as the more learned of them must have done, the history (or, may we venture to say, "the Jewish legend" ?) of Rahab, the Dragon of the Deep—Tiawath—would

naturally be influenced by intercourse with the nations around. And were not Merodach and Tammuz both sun-gods ?

But quite apart from the philosophical and theological identifications of the more learned among the Hebrews, there were the poetical lamentations for the death of Tammuz, which Sir James Frazer has so well described in the following paragraph (I translate from the French edition of Lady Frazer, p. 306) :—

“The mourning for Tammuz seems to have taken place every year, accompanied by the shrill and strident tones of flutes, played by male and female mourners, at midsummer, during the month which bears his name. Around a statue of the divine defunct, they chanted funeral dirges ; with pure water they laved him and anointed him with oil. They then clothed him with a crimson robe, and incense, spreading abroad its perfume, mounted towards the sky, as though to awaken the sleeping senses of the defunct by its penetrating aroma which was to draw him from the sleep of death.”

The following are specimens of the *Hymns to Tammuz*, which the Babylonians have handed down to us :—

“Shepherd, Lord Tammuz, husband of Ištar ;  
 Lord of the Underworld, lord of the shepherd’s seat ;  
 Tamarisk which in the plantation has not absorbed water ;  
 Plant whose bud has not made a blossom in the meadow.  
 Sapling which has not been planted by the watercourse,  
 Sapling whose root has been removed.  
 Plant which in the furrow has not absorbed water.”

And there are many more verses in the same or a similar strain. At intervals come the rather long refrain of about nine lines, beginning “*A gurusš*,” “Alas, hero !”, and naming him with the other appellations applied to him—“lord physician,” “my god Damu,” “everlasting lord,” “lord of supplication,” “my prince of heaven,” “vine of heaven,” etc. These and his other names and descriptions are capable of many interesting and significant explanations, and render the name of Tammuz-Adonis worthy of the attention which has been devoted to it. In all probability he was one of the gods worshipped by the Jebusites, who preceded the Israelites, and was adopted by the latter as the ancient god of the city. If this was the case, it shows how the influence of a place may affect the religion and the beliefs of the people who come after. It is noteworthy that the name of El-elyon, the

Most High God of Salem, worshipped by Melchizedek, does not appear after the time of Abraham. Kuenen goes so far as to say, that the religion of Israel was originally polytheistic, and for this it may be said that he had some grounds, however unwelcome it may be regarded by believers. After quoting this opinion of Kuenen, Dr. Fried. Baethgen, in his *Beiträge zu Semitische Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1888), adds: "We may say further, that during the seventh century (and) until the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity (586 B.C.), no change took place." Without fear of contradiction, Jeremiah was able to proclaim to his contemporaries: "For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal" (Jer. xi, 13; *also* ii, 28). It may be regarded as certain, however, that the tendency to polytheism was a rather ingrained thing with the Semites. The family of Abraham, as we have seen, was by no means free from it, and though kept in abeyance whilst they were in Egypt—owing, perhaps, to its foreign form, costume, and teaching—when the Hebrews found themselves in the land of their forefathers again with its more familiar heathen worship, they were attracted to it once more. This would naturally be due to their having never lost the tradition of those gods whom, of old, their Canaanitish neighbours worshipped.

It is to be feared that, for its development in later days, we must hold the wise Solomon partly responsible. In his wisdom, he thought that the best way to secure his numerous wives' contentment and favour would be to allow them the free exercise of their religion, whatever it may have been, and thus many foreign idolatrous faiths were introduced—Ashtoreth of the Sidonians, Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites, and mention is made of the daughter of Pharaoh, and women of the Moabites, Edomites, and Hittites. By these he was seduced, and went after the deities whom they worshipped (1 Kings xi). In this he may have imitated the Israelites of earlier days, when "many forsook the Lord, and went after Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges ii, 13), but the wise Solomon, the son of the faithful David, ought to have known better. (For other points concerning this period of Solomon's life, *see* Deut. xvii, 17, and Neh. xiii, 26.)

"Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and

for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, and likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."

### MOLOCH.

Of all the deities of the Canaanites and their neighbours which attracted the Hebrews, there can be no doubt that Moloch or Molech (also called Milkam or Melcam) held the first place. The reputation of this deity had spread far and wide, and may, indeed, have reached Babylonia, where his worship seems to have been unknown. The reason for this, if the question be asked, is easily explained—it was because the name Moloch means "king," and the king of heaven, with the Babylonians, was "the merciful Merodach," who naturally had, with them, no rival.

From the Old Testament the reputation of Moloch has come down to our own days, owing to the statements made therein that the people of the Hebrews of old time, in their unfaithfulness to their God Jehovah, turned to him as "the king of heaven," and even caused their children to "pass through the fire" as a sacrifice to that heathen deity. Though the horrors of this cruel sacrificial rite as described by the later Greek and Latin writers are generally discredited, the sacrificing of the children is regarded as a horrid reality, as is indicated in Mic. vi, 7: "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Not a few, besides Micah, among the Israelites of old, must have asked this question, but the worship of Moloch, and the dread sacrifice implied in these words, must have been offered by at least a few—perhaps many—of those who liked to think that they were performing a meritorious act by this terrible sacrifice. It was not done because the sacrificer of his offspring was callous and delighted in cruelty, but as an offering acceptable to the god whom, at the moment, he desired to propitiate. Did these idolaters identify Moloch with Jehovah? In some cases they did, for was not Jehovah the King of Heaven? It was probably under this impression that, as recorded by Ezekiel, men who had slain their children as a sacrifice to their idols went, the same day, into the Temple of the Lord to profane it. This was probably not their intention, but, in the eyes of all right-thinking men, this would be the effect of such acts. And were not these acts to be regarded as the very height of selfishness?



Moreover, God's favour on account of such sacrifices ought to have been too much to expect.

Severe in the extreme were the enactments of the Mosaic law against the rites accompanying the worship of Molech. They show that the leaders of the Israelites were fully alive to the effect which the worship of the heathen nations of Palestine were likely to have upon the people. "Thou shalt not give any of thy seed to make them pass through (the fire) to Molech," or, as the margin translates, "to set them apart to Molech" (Lev. xviii, 21). The enactments entailed death by stoning, not only for the Israelites who might perform such heathen rites, but also for the stranger visiting an Israelitish house or city. That "passing the seed through (the fire)" really meant sacrificing them as burnt-offerings is proved by Deut. xii, 31, which speaks of those "who burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods."

The warnings of the Mosaic law were clear, but, notwithstanding this, they allowed themselves to be seduced into the worship of the "king" which was the abomination of the Canaanites. He is regarded as having been identical with the Chemosh of the Moabites, the Milcom of the Ammonites, the Milk of the Carthagenians and the Phœnicians, and was identical with the brazen steer worshipped at Minos in Crete. In that same Phœnician colony, according to Baethgen, men were sacrificed to "Kronos-Moloch"—a fact which would identify Moloch with the Babylonian Enki or Êa, the god of the deep sea and of wisdom. This identification, however, I doubt, as the deity in question, in Babylonia, seems to have been regarded as of a mild temperament. On the other hand, we have to take into account the fact that Êa, as the god of time, was regarded as the deity who devoured his own children, the days of the week, and therefore also the men who had been born into the world from time immemorial, and whom time would go on devouring even to the end.

Was the idea of sacrificing their children to Moloch connected with the legend of Kronos? This is not the accepted explanation of the custom, but it might well be for this reason. "Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" the prophet asks; but the sacrificer of his children might well have put it in another way, and said, "May I not give the fruit of my body for the lengthening of my days?" We all know how anxious the Semites were to attain long life—indeed, it is a thing

greatly desired even now, but we do not wish for length of days at the expense of another, and, least of all, at the expense of the lives of our children.

In the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (edited by Cheyne), President G. F. Moore, the author of the article "Moloch," attributes the sacrifice of their first-born to the desire to offer the most precious thing which they possessed to the deity. It is probably not impossible that the command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac may have influenced them, notwithstanding the substitution of a lamb by the same divine command as had given the original order.









As to the chief place of these sacrifices of the first-born, that was—few are there, probably, who realize it—at Jerusalem, in the valley of Ben Hinnom, just outside the city-gate "Harsith" (Jer. xix, 2), not far from the Temple, at a place called "the Tophet" (*hattopheth*). In Greek it has various pronunciations—*thapheth*, *tapheth*, and *thaphpheth*—and in the Peshitta, *tappath*. This word is supposed to be of Aramaic origin, cognate with the Hebrew *shapath*, "to set (a pot) on the fire," in which case it would have the prosaic meaning of "fireplace." It is held that there is no contradiction in the words of Jeremiah, who states that the people of Judah had built "high places" of Tophet (vii, 31) or of Baal (xix, 5; xxxii, 35), as they mean no more than "heathen sanctuaries."



## THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN AT SIPPAR.

*Transcription.*

1. U-di-e ša êšu narkabtu ša ilu Šamaš ša ina qâtê awelu rêi  
îmeru ra (?) - . . .\*
  2. si-in-qu-ma a-na m. ilu Bêl-âhê-iddina âbli-šu ša m. ilu  
Nabû-âbla (?) - . . .
  3. na-ad-nu Sippar ki waraḥ Ayari yumu irbašerit šattu êsru-  
tešit
  4. m. ilu Nabû-âbla-ušur šar Bâb-îli ki
- 
5. Išten-it mul-ti ḥuraši a-(y-)a-ri-i-ti
  6. šitta (-ta) iš-pa-a-ta kaspi šitta (-ta) a-(y-) a-an-  
na-ta (?)
  7. išten (-en) da-aš-šu kaspi ša muḥ-ḥi êšu ma-  
ša-ta (?)
  8. šina bâb sap-pi-e kaspi šina sa-aḥ-ḥar-ra-nu
  9. šitta (-ta) îrtê (pl.) kaspi šina qu-ul-li-ta (?)
  10. šina nag-la-bi (pl.) kaspi šina nu-ur-mu-u
- 
11. šalšet ša-a-ri i-šid-di kaspi išten bit tal-la-ri-e
  12. ešret ni-ik-ka-zu-u kaspi ḥamšaa-šiššet ni-ik-ka-  
zu-u
  13. šina pi-rik-pa-ni kaspi-ša êli ta-bu-ga-ma . . .
  14. šalšet patrê (pl.) man-di-ti ḥuraši šina patrê man-di-[ti  
kaspi ?]
  15. ḥamšet ḥi-in-šu šina na-aš-rum (?) . . .
  16. išten (-en) ig-gal rabû kaspi šina bit . . . .
  17. tišet lab-ba-gar (pl.) siparri išten (-en) . . .
  18. irbet na-aš-ḥi-ip-ti parzilli šiššet . . . .
  19. ḥamšet îšu qâšâti (pl.) šiššet ri . . . .
  20. išten (-en) zir-mu-u siparri . . . .
- 

\* Possibly badly copied for    [   ], *anšu bur-ra-maš*, which would be read *šue*, "horses." The line probably ended   , *ša D. P. Šamaš*, "of Šamaš" (the sun-god).

*Translation.*

1. The furniture of the chariot of Šamaš which in the hands of the horse-keeper (?)
  2. is kept, and to Bêl-âhê-iddina, son of Nabû-ab[la-iddina]
  3. has been given. Sippar, month Iyyar, day 14th, year 19[th],
  4. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.

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  5. 1 golden guiding rein\* (?),
  6. 2 quivers of silver, 2 *ayannata*,
  7. 1 disc of silver which is upon the front of the *mašata* (?),
  8. 2 thresholds of silver, 2 retainers (? hand-rails),
  9. 2 breasts† of silver, 2 rods (?) (? fastenings),
  10. 2 razors of silver, 2 *nurmû* (staves of a tree with fruit dedicated to the sun).
  11. 3 side mats (?) of silver, one *bît-tallarê*,
  12. 10 *nikkazû* of silver, 56 *nikkazû* (of bronze ?), which are upon the *tabugama*,
  13. 2 screens (?) of silver.
  14. 2 dirks (with) sheaths (?) of gold, 2 dirks (with) sheaths (?) [of silver],
  15. 5 "fives," 2 *našrum* (?) . . . . .
  16. 1 great key of silver, 2 house(s) of . . . . .
  17. 9 *labbakars* (?) of bronze, one . . . . .
  18. 4 maces (?) of iron, 6 . . . . .
  19. 5 bows, 6 sp[ears ? ?],
  20. 1 *zirmû* of bronze, . . . . .
- 

There is no doubt that this is one of the most interesting of the Babylonian tablets from Sippar, owing to the many rare words which it contains.

\* The translation "rein" for *multi* is suggested by the adjective *ayarati*, which is apparently connected with the root of *Ayaru*, the month of the guiding bull.

† What the "breasts" were is difficult to say—they may have been ornamental bosses on the front of the chariot.

## "THE HOST OF HEAVEN."

This phrase is often employed in the Old Testament to denote the stars, especially as objects of worship, in which case they were identified with the heathen gods, as among the heathen nations around. It is in this sense that I refer to them here, and not as witnesses to the power and glory of Jehovah, which is also one of the aspects in which they appealed to the pious and orthodox Israelites.

As pointed out by the late Dr. James Orr, British editor of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopædia*, star-worship seems to have been an enticement to the Hebrews from the first, but attained special prominence in the days of the later kings of Judah. Manasseh built altars for "all the host of heaven" in the courts of the Temple (2 Kings xxi, 3, 5). These Josiah destroyed, together with the worship, by dismissing the priests and breaking up the vessels used in the worship.

The Hebrew for "Host of Heaven" is *šeba hashshamayim*, which is a translation, not of the Assyrian *šabê* (or *ummanat*) *šamê* or *šamame*, but of the Sumerian *An-šar*, "heaven-host," the counterpart of which was *Ki-šar*, "host of earth," both of them the names of deities. With the Sumerians and the Babylonians (or Akkadians) this expression took many forms, as is shown in the extract from a great list of Babylonian gods in the British Museum which I gave in my last paper, "The Completed Legend of Bel-Merodach and the Dragon," published in the *Journal* of this Institute last year (pp. 161-2). We there find that *Ana-ki* is explained as *Anu* and *Antu*<sup>m</sup>, "the god of the heavens and his spouse, the earth," whilst *Anšar-gal* was "the great host of heaven," and *Kišar-gal* "the great host of earth"; and these are immediately followed by the more usual and simpler forms *Anšar* and *Kišar*, already spoken of, *Anšar* being in some way connected with the Assyrian god Asshur. The Assyrians and Babylonians did not, therefore, use the Akkadian—*i.e.* Semitic—equivalent words for the Hebrew *Šabaoth hashshamayim*, but the Sumerian *Anšar*, with the same meaning.

With the Hebrews and the Canaanites, as with the Assyro-Babylonians, the "Host of Heaven" was the sun, the moon, the five planets, and the myriads of stars which the sharp-sighted Mesopotamian astrologers saw. It is noteworthy that the Babylonian for the planets, with the sun and the moon—*Igigi*, "the five-one-one"—does not seem to have been borrowed

by the Canaanites. To all appearance the "one-one" were the sun and the moon, who were thus mentioned separately, though last, so as to make a suitable word. It is thus that Moloch, the "king," was identified with the sun, and this reminds us of the Chariot of the Sun which was kept at Jerusalem.

#### THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN.

What this chariot was like, and how it was furnished, we are not informed, but in all probability it resembled in a measure that kept at Sippar of the sun-god in the time of Nabopolassar. The tablet describing it was in private hands when I copied it, and I do not know where the record is now. I give the text, from my old copy, made about forty years ago, followed by a transcription and translation, to the best of my ability, on pp. 11-13. From this it would appear that it was kept and cared for by an ass-keeper, who probably had also charge of the animals (horses or asses) which drew it in the processions which probably formed part of the worship of the deity. It is doubtful, however, whether this ass-keeper took part in the ceremonial processions, as he seems to have handed the vehicle to a certain Bêl-âhê-iddina, who probably held some position in the sun-god's temple.

I am obliged to give my rendering of this very interesting text with all reserve, owing to our ignorance of what the furniture of an Oriental sun-chariot really was. The first item, which was possibly the "guiding-rein," was of gold, as were also the sheaths of two of the dirks or short swords. All the other implements, however, were either of silver or bronze, the latter being employed as a substitute for gold, which it closely resembled in colour. Edouard Naville, the well-known Egyptologist, in one of his last papers, argued that copper (or an alloy of copper) was actually called "gold" by the Egyptians and Semites. Probably there was something symbolical in the metals chosen and their proportions, the silver objects being emblematic of the lengthy whiteness of the rays of the god of day, and the comparatively short period when he shows the golden rays of sunrise and sunset. His quivers, two in number, were of silver, as were also the "razors" with which, possibly, the tonsures of the priests of the sun-god were made—that is, if the usual rendering of the word *naglabu* be the right one here. The mention of quivers presupposes bows and arrows as part of the chariot's furniture, and from line 19 we learn that the former were five in

number. In all probability the chariot was entered from the rear. It is unfortunate that the inscription is imperfect, as the lost words might give the clue to the doubtful words which are undamaged but incomprehensible.

### THE GODS OF THE MONTHS.

On p. 124, I have mentioned the twelve gods whom Terah, according to the Talmud, is said to have worshipped—one for every month. These are given by certain tablet-fragments in the British Museum, and are also quoted in the *Hemerologies*, which have been described as tablets of saints' days, though those saints were, in reality, the Babylonian gods.

Nisan (March–April) was dedicated to Anu, “the god of the heavens,” and Enlil, “the god of the earth and the air.”

Iyyar (April–May) was the month of Ēa as “lord of mankind.”

Sivan (May–June) was the month of Sin, “the moon-god as the first-born son of Enlil.”

Tammuz (June–July) was the month of the hero (*quradu*) En-urta, who was seemingly identical with Tammuz-Adonis.

Ab (July–August) was the month of Nin-giš-zida, “the lord of the everlasting tree,” “the lord of . . .”

Elul (August–September) was the month dedicated to Ištar, “lady of . . .” This was the month of her “errand,” when she went down to the Underworld to seek Tammuz, “the husband of her youth.”

Tisri (September–October) was the month of Šamaš, “the warrior” (*quradu*).

Marcheswan, “the eighth month” (October–November), was dedicated to “the wise one of the gods,” Merodach.

Chisleu or Chislev (November–December) was the month of the hero (*Ur-Sag-edlu* or *quradu*) Nergal, the god of Cuthah.

Tebet (December–January) was the month of Pap-sukal, “the minister elder,” the minister of Anu and Ištar.

Sebat (January–February) was dedicated to Rammanu (Rimmon, “the thunderer”) or Hadad, the great governor of heaven and earth.

Adar (February–March), the last month of the year, was that of the seven great gods, typified by the sun, the moon, and the five most visible planets.



The additional Adar, added when the year had a sufficient number of days, was allotted (by the Assyrians) to Aššur, "the father of the gods."

It seems probable that the twelve gods worshipped by Terah whilst still "an idolater" may have been those of the twelve months of the Babylonians, as contained in the above list. The additional Adar would naturally be omitted. A great deal more might be said upon the astrological identifications of the Babylonians, but this is not the subject of this paper, as we do not know how far Babylonian astrological symbolism was adopted by the Canaanites, and, after them, by the Hebrews.

#### IDOLATRY.

Idolatry, the word which we use to express the idea of the worship of false gods, comes from the Greek, and is said to have been first used by St. Paul, who probably coined it from the word *idolon*, meaning "a false god, or his image." The Hebrews seem to have had no single word for the expression "idolatry," but used the phrase *'abōdāh zārāh* (עַבְדוּת זָרָה) "foreign worship," to indicate it. That the Hebrew prophets intended a certain amount of contempt to be expressed in the word "foreign" there can be no doubt, though there must have been many who said, either in their ignorance or in their liberal-mindedness "why should not their beliefs and their worship be as correct as ours?"

There is more than one phase of idolatry, however, which can hardly be called "foreign," and that is, the veneration of sacred mountains and woods, streams and fountains, hills, and high places. These sacred and divine things are generally inherited from the earlier inhabitants of a country, and are of the nature of such things as lucky and unlucky days, to which many people attach faith even among ourselves. Many things of interest might be written about Mounts Tabor, Nebo, and Sinai, En-Mishpat, and En-Dor, the oak at Sechem, etc. Among what are called the "artificial sanctuaries" is the sacred stone known as the *massebah*, and also the rough altar of stone found in every place of worship. As seems to have been the case in Babylonia and Assyria, these were anointed with oil, and victims were sacrificed. The rites attending these acts of worship were supposed to bring the worshipper into direct communication

with the deity whom he worshipped, winning his favour and the chance of everlasting life with him in the world to come. These stones are regarded as having been sacred because a deity had consented to dwell therein, as in the case of the meteorites and similar objects, which (coming, as they did, from the sky) were believed to be inhabited by the deity in a still more pronounced way than the natural stones of the earth—indeed, they were called by the very characteristic name of *beth-el*, “house of god,” and even the national God of the Hebrews, Jehovah, possessed these emblematic abodes. After the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, Jehovah was worshipped in the great sanctuary there, but idolatry ultimately entered even the Holy City, as we have seen, and the names of her streets were as many as the gods of the nations around.

But we have also to recognize that there were remains of heathenism in the land which may have come down from Patriarchal times, when their families worshipped teraphim and put their trust in the (more or less roughly) graven images by which the spirits supposed to inhabit them were represented. Upon the sacred trees offerings were hung in the shape of strips of cloth or the like. These, however, were of little importance, and may be met with even now among the Christians and the Moslems of the East as remnants of the superstitions of ancient times. Ceremonies connected with the sacred post or pole are not met with in the Old Testament, but are shown, perhaps, on Assyro-Babylonian reliefs and seals, though the nature of the worship connected with them is uncertain.

More certain are other idolatrous rites. Burnt offerings, libations, tithes, and first-fruits, and tables with offerings of food were not uncommon (Isa. lvii, 6; Jer. vii, 8; Hos. ii, 8; Isa. lxxv, 11). Idols were kissed, or kisses were thrown to them or to the heavenly bodies with which they were identified, hands were stretched out to them in prayer, or, as in Babylonia, the hands raised with the finger-tips nearly touching as a gesture of adoration. To the idols, also, the worshipper knelt or prostrated himself. When an answer to a prayer was desired and a burnt-offering made to that end, the prophets of Baal leaped upon and around about the altar, calling upon the god and gashing themselves with knives. Yes, the Hebrews had either inherited or adopted all the idolatrous practices of the heathen around them (1 Kings xix, 18; Hos. xiii, 2; Job xxxi, 27; Isa. xlv, 20; 1 Kings xviii, 26, 28).

Concerning what were regarded as acts of idolatry we are instructed by the Mishna. Idolatry was not only manifested by worship, sacrifices, and libations, but also by embracing the idol, acknowledging it to be one's god, kissing it, sweeping or sprinkling water before it, washing, anointing, or dressing it, or putting on its shoes (*Sanhedrin*, vii, 6; cp. Maimonides, *Abodah Zarah*, iii, 6).

With regard to harlotry—and there were prostitutes of both sexes—in all probability these were not orthodox Jews, but always men and women of heathen creed. Except to say that persons of this class were indicated by a word showing that they were sacred (in Babylonia also), there is no need here to speak further upon this aspect of the old Semitic heathen worship.

I quote from Cheyne's *Encyclopædia Biblica* the further details, showing how even the minutest details from the heathen around were imitated. Thus we learn from the Old Testament that the priests of Dagon would not set foot on the sacred threshold (1 Sam. v, 5; cp. Zeph. i, 9); the worshippers of the sun stood (as might be expected) with their faces to the east (Ezek. viii, 16); besides the mourning for Tammuz at Jerusalem there were also gardens of Adonis (Isa. xvii, 10 f.); altars to the Host of Heaven were built on the roofs of the houses (Jer. xix, 23; i, 5, etc.); cakes of a certain form were offered to the Queen of Heaven (Jer. vii, 18); lectisternia to Gad and Meni, the gods of chance or fortune (Isa. lxxv, 11 and margin), were spread; and all the devices to obtain favour which the heathen adopted in their worship were resorted to.

A great deal more could be written upon this section of the subject, but enough has been given to show, with the preceding pages, how, in ancient Israel, the matter stood. As has been well recognized, this idolatry was due to the influence of the nations around, and foreseen by their great lawgiver. As they wished to have a king, like their neighbours, so they—or many of them—wished to honour many gods, as those nations did. If they feared that they might offend the one deity of their race, it was unlikely, in worshipping many gods, that they would offend them all: they would still have at least a few—and they might even have many—on their side. Alas, they were not affrighted by the hideousness of Moloch nor the uncouth appearance of the statues of Hadad; they saw not the incongruity

of Dagon, with his merman-form. The Babylonians were moderate, but the Egyptians had monstrosities far worse than these.

### THE IMAGES.

These, in heathen countries—as, indeed, also in Christian lands—are very numerous, and varied in their nature. They consist of representations of various supernatural or divine beings or personages, emblems, sacred objects, and mystic signs. Properly speaking, there should be no representations of gods in Christianity, as we have not the slightest conception as to what the great Creator of the Universe is like; and, even if we knew, we may be certain that any representation of the All-highest and All-holiest would be beyond the power of any man to reproduce. With the heathen, however, things are otherwise, and he has in all ages given free rein to his imagination. With the Canaanites the simplest divine emblems were the *massebah* or “pillar,” the *asherah* or “grove” (as it is rendered in the Authorised Version), and the *amman* or “sun-image.” To these must be added the *ephod*, a garment of many colours over which the mystic *urim* and *thummim*, “lights and perfections,” were placed. Among animals were the golden calf, introduced after the captivity in Egypt, Jeroboam’s calves, and the brazen serpent. In human form, more or less, were the *teraphim*, the images of jealousy, and the figures shown in the chambers of Imagery.

It is doubtful how far the heathen nations which the Hebrews imitated regarded the idols which they worshipped as the images of the invisible deities of their pantheon. Those which had no human form they must frankly have thought of as merely emblems, like the Babylonian carved stones in the form of the sun’s disc and the crescent moon, which represented the deities identified therewith. With regard to the brazen serpent set up by Moses to cure the people who looked upon it in faith of the plague, there is no doubt that this had a deep symbolical meaning. The wisdom of the serpent was firmly believed in, and they were well acquainted with its power of swiftly striking and suddenly wounding even unto death. If it could thus kill, why should it not also cure with equal speed? As to the golden calf, that was undoubtedly borrowed from what the Israelites had learned during their stay in Egypt.

The *teraphim* are generally thought to have been household

gods, and some think that, in addition, they were images of ancestors. This, however, seems improbable. It is true that ancestor-worship seems to have existed in Babylonia about 2300 B.C., and perhaps at other times, but the deified personages—for such they were—were the renowned kings of the land, thus honoured, apparently, because much esteemed and beloved of the people. The “household god” from Gezer figured in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopædia*, p. 1455, is far from being an attractive object, and unacceptable as even the rudest labourer’s forebear.

The writer of the article in the above-named *Encyclopædia*, speaking of the Image of Jealousy, called *Semel*, says that that was not the name of the idol. It was, perhaps, an image of the Asherah, and bore the name given to it because its worship provoked Jehovah to jealousy. That jealousy was one of the attributes of Jehovah was certainly a fixed belief among the orthodox Israelites. At the present time it is difficult to imagine the great Father of all things as possessing this peculiarly human defect (if it may be so called). It must have been non-existent in the pantheons of Canaanites and the other heathen tribes and nations around them.

Strange and puzzling are the “Chambers of Imagery” mentioned by Ezekiel (viii, 11, 12). It is not impossible that men had chambers in their houses where the images of heathen deities and symbols, either idolatrous or otherwise, were to be found, and also there may have been similar chambers in the Temple at Jerusalem, where perfectly legitimate symbols could be inspected and studied, but where other heathen symbols afterwards found a place. They were possibly like Terah’s idols, already referred to, but each worshipper of later days would naturally have the deities and the symbols which most appealed to him. These were evidently suggested by the wall-paintings of Babylonia and Assyria, but there is no reason to suppose that other nations had not adopted similar aids to devotion. The “Chambers of Imagery” may, therefore, have passed from the Canaanites to the Hebrews, along with the “abominable beasts and creeping things” mentioned in Ezek. viii, 10, where “all the idols of the House of Israel” are also referred to.

“All the idols of the House of Israel!” It goes against the grain to regard them as really belonging to God’s chosen people—surely they weré borrowed, as has already been said, from the nations around, by whom the Israelites had been led astray!

## DISCUSSION.

Mr. AVARY H. FORBES (Chairman) asked: How did the idea of worshipping a female deity originate? In, I suppose, every pagan religion, we find, not only "gods many and lords many," but also goddesses many. The Egyptians had their Isis, the Canaanites their Astarte, the Hindus their Sasthi, the Greeks their Hera, the Romans their Juno—to mention a few out of very many.

Now, in God's revelation to Adam, and in that to Noah, there certainly could have been no hint of a goddess. When and where, therefore, did the idea of a goddess arise? Was it that the sons of Noah, or their descendants, as they wandered afar over the earth, corrupted the teaching they had received, and became so anthropomorphic as to conclude that their chief god must have a wife? Or was the notion begotten and encouraged by the fact that men are more selfish, hard, and cruel than women; and that there is more pity, compassion, and mercy in the female than in the male mind? Probably both factors were at work.

Rev. J. J. B. COLES said: We have had many excellent papers from Professor Pinches. The one just read is specially interesting, inasmuch as it deals with the religious history of the Hebrews.

Sir James Frazer, in his *Gorgon's Head and other Literary Pieces*, writes: "The proof that a belief is false can never be complete or final, because it is always possible to allege that excellent reasons for it may exist which have hitherto eluded the scrutiny of our limited intelligence."

The Chairman's question, as to the introduction of the idea of a goddess into pagan mythology, may be answered by a reference to the Virgo and Cassiopeia of the ancient constellations.

Sir CHARLES MARSTON expressed great appreciation of Professor Pinches' paper. He thought that in order to estimate heathen influence upon the Hebrews more ought to be known concerning their pre-Mosaic religious beliefs.

It was clear from the Old Testament that, while Moses utilized and developed the Passover ceremonial and the observance of the Sabbath, he was not the actual originator.

He understood that archæologists were still doubtful about the original home of the Hebrew race. Many years ago it was thought

we should one day discover traces of a little kingdom on the eastern shores of the Persian Gulf whence Abram's ancestry was derived. More recently it had been suggested that the home of the race was between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon.

The author of the paper did not appear to attach much importance to Egyptian influence, but surely the worship of the golden calf was derived very decidedly from that source.

Lieut.-Col. T. C. SKINNER said: I desire to ask a question and clear up an ambiguity. The lecturer cites Kuenen as saying that the religion of Israel was originally polytheistic, adding that "for this it may be said he had some grounds." What does "originally" mean? Israel was Jacob, and the Children of Israel were Jacob's seed. Does it suggest that Jacob and his sons were polytheists before they went down to Egypt? or that they became such in Egypt? or on return to Palestine? or does it imply that the religion of Abraham or of his ancestors was polytheistic? The point is not unimportant, and, perhaps, Dr. Pinches will be so kind as to make it clear.

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF: Arising out of the learned paper, there are two questions which I desire to ask Professor Pinches, and one observation I wish to make.

The questions are: (1) Does not history show that the influence of the religious and other beliefs of the Canaanites upon the Hebrews varied immensely at different periods—sometimes it was powerful, at other times weak? (2) When were the Hebrews first known by this name—prior or subsequent to Abraham's leaving Ur of the Chaldees? What is known of the beliefs current among their forefathers before their entry into Ur (p. 123, par. 4)?

The observation is this: It appears to be a fact that, notwithstanding all the varied and veteran forces—religious, social, political, and those of customs—there never at any period in the history of the Hebrews were forces of any or all of these so strong that they became embodied in the revelation from God which the Hebrews guarded. The standard was kept pure, and there never had afterwards to be eliminated from their sacred Scriptures any corrupt teaching or practice such as prevailed amongst the nations which surrounded

the Hebrews. Whenever such corrupting things are referred to in the Scriptures they are always the subject of unsparing condemnation.

Mr. HOSIE thanked Dr. Pinches for his suggestive paper, and ventured to ask for further enlightenment on a few points. For example, what ground is there for saying (on p. 123) that the Hebrews were more or less akin to the Canaanites? From Gen. x, 15-17, we learn that these latter were of Hamite stock. Had they become assimilated to Semites by surrounding influences? Is it strictly correct to say (as on p. 128) that "the ingrained polytheism of the Semites . . . was kept in abeyance in the descendants of Abraham while they were in Egypt," in view of Joshua's exhortation to Israel, "to put away the gods which their fathers served on the other side of the flood *and in Egypt*" (Joshua xxiv, 14)? Laban also had teraphim stolen by Rachel (Gen. xxx, 19). Were the golden calf at Horeb, and Jeroboam's calves, a survival of this idolatry? Would the "originally" (top of p. 128) go back to Ur or Egypt? In either case, I do not quite see why Kuenen's remark should be "unwelcome to believers," as the learned lecturer seems to imply.

Dr. Pinches (on p. 124) refers to the testimony of the Talmud as to Terah being an idolater. The Talmud, it may be added, is no doubt correct here, for it only follows the testimony just quoted from the Book of Joshua. May I ask Dr. Pinches whether a cuneiform word in combination may lose its "personality," so to speak, for I notice that Ištar (p. 125) loses itself altogether in *utukku* and *édimmu*?

#### AUTHOR'S REMARKS.

The Chairman has answered his own question as to the origin of female deities. It is exceedingly difficult to escape from an anthropomorphic conception of the Deity, as many a Christian sculpture shows us. In fact, to a human being a female divine nature or element seems quite natural; and this is so much the case that the late Benjamin Webb, Vicar of St. Andrew, Wells Street, once told me that the motherhood, as well as the Fatherhood, of God had already been discussed by the Church Fathers. As to the true reason, that will always be a mystery, but it may be noted that the Assyro-Babylonians, in their pantheon, always thought of



triads of gods—father, mother, and son (or sons) ; likewise servants or ministers. Each god was, in fact, as a king in his own domain.

I agree with Sir Charles Marston in the matter of the Israelites' pre-Mosaic beliefs. There seems to be no doubt that they had been much influenced by the untaught peoples around them. The worship of the golden calf, I agree, was derived from Egypt, and may have been accompanied by other rites from the same source ; but, if so, they have been lost in the mists of antiquity. Was the name of *Miriam* Egyptian—*Meri-Ammon*, “ the Beloved of Ammon ” ? This seems to have been the opinion of Dr. Binion, the well-known missionary, who died in America a few years ago : he was an accomplished Hebraist and a deep student of Hebrew names. This would imply that the Hebrews of the Exodus-period had no more objection to a daughter being called “ the beloved of Ammon ” than they had to a son being regarded as “ the Mero-dachite ” in the days of Esther. The original home of the Hebrew race would seem to have been, as suggested, the shores of the Persian Gulf, where dwelt their kinsmen, the Babylonians and the Elamites.

Lieut.-Col. Skinner's question would be best answered by Kuenen or one of his school. I take it, however, that that scholar was led to say that the religion of Israel was originally polytheistic by the statements of the Talmud (*see* pp. 124–126). They were influenced by polytheism, at Ur of the Chaldees, in Egypt, and in Palestine, where they were surrounded by their heathen kinsmen.

In answer to Mr. Ruoff, it seems to be quite reasonable to suppose that heathen influence did vary from time to time, but to define the cause of this would require study. It may have been political, or a demand for uniformity. Abraham is generally explained as “ the man from beyond the Euphrates.” The beliefs of the ancient Hebrews are only known, I believe, from the early chapters of Genesis. The family to which Abraham belonged seems to have been native of Babylonia. They lived, as is known, at Ur (𒌦𒍪 𒌦𒍪 𒌦𒍪, *Uriwa* in Sumerian), of which we have heard very much of late, consequent upon the discoveries which have been made there. This was an important city of southern Babylonia, and one of the great centres of the worship of the moon-god Sin or Nannar. The polytheism of the Israelites was therefore (if it existed in Abraham's time) Babylonian, but the

family probably adopted Babylonian monotheism, changing it later to their own Jahwist faith.

I am much obliged for Mr. Hoste's appreciative remarks. With regard to the parentage of the nations of the ethnic table in Genesis, it is generally thought that that parentage implies an indication of the suzerainty under which the nation lived, and the power by which it was protected—like the non-Semitic-speaking Elamites. As we know from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, Canaan was under the protection of the Hamitic Egyptians. With regard to the faithfulness of the Israelites while they were in Egypt, the desire to escape from their bondage there would keep in abeyance any polytheistic tendencies they might have had. They were told to “put away the gods which their fathers served on the other side of the flood,” but may they not have kept the images as curiosities? When they found themselves in Palestine once more, they would naturally be tempted to serve them again—they were the gods of the land, and were probably regarded as having considerable influence therein. I should say that Kuenen's remark went back to whatever period may have been regarded as the beginning of the Israelitish nation, and as a working theory we might accept the period between Ur and Egypt. Mr. Hoste is a keen questioner, and therefore difficult to answer. Does *Ilū* lose its “personality,” so to say, when it becomes *Ilū* by attaching the feminine ending *-tu* to it, or is Ashtoreth not connected with Ištar for the same reason?

I thank the Rev. J. J. B. Coles and all those who have taken part in the discussion for their kind remarks. The subject is one to which I ought to have devoted months instead of weeks. Should I be spared, I hope to make an effort to fill up the gaps and set right my errors.