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THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE  
PRIESTHOOD IN ISRAEL FROM EARLIEST  
TIMES TO THE HASMONEAN REVOLT

by

BRUCE K. COLE

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
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## THE DIGEST

When the Biblical story begins with the patriarchs, we find no established formalized priesthood, rather, the patriarch, himself, as head of the family, takes charge of all religious obligations. In fact, Moses is not the founder of the priesthood, even though a cursory reading of the Pentateuch might lead one to think so. The priesthood formalized itself and came into its own only at the beginning of the monarchy, when centralization of everything in the community became the main theme of life. The reason Moses appears to be the founder of the priesthood is perhaps because both the Levites and the Aaronides felt that he would lend the needed backing by which they could cement themselves as priests over the people. They cleverly presented Moses as their "founder" by brilliantly interpolating their material around the sage of Moses. As scholarship has shown, however, the Levites formalized the priesthood and themselves into it around 621 B.C.E., and the Aaronides wrested the power of the priesthood from them following the Babylonian exile.

The religious life of the people infused itself into all the areas of daily life, therefore the priests became very important in expiating the community's sins. Because the priests helped to create a society which was guilt-ridden, and since the priests convinced the people that they, alone, could expiate their sins, we can see how the priests became the most powerful members of the entire society. When the concept of a formalized priesthood came into vogue, at the beginning of the monarchy, the Levites felt that it was their role to be the priests over all the people, so by attacking the multiple altar system of the pre-liter-

ary prophets, thereby establishing the Temple in Jerusalem over which the Levites had control, they became recognized as the true priests. And, by giving Moses a farewell speech, the Book of Deuteronomy, the Levites felt they had ensured their hold on the priesthood. However, the Aaronides, by cleverly denouncing Korach and by adding an enormous amount of material, via interpolation, to the first four books of the Bible, and through a clever treatment of the calendar, dethroned the Levites, and became the "true" priests of Israel, a position they held until the beginning of the Polis Culture and the advent of the Hasmoneans and the Hasmonean Revolt.

The Aaronides were so successful in the establishing of themselves as the only priests of Israel, even books such as Malachi, a polemic for the Levites, against, from what we can conclude, the Aaronides, were not able to cast the Aaronides in a bad light as far as the populace was concerned.

Thus, we see, from very unstructured beginnings when the head of the family was the religious functionary, there developed an extremely complex machine known as the Aaronide priesthood which had total and virtually absolute control over the entire Israelite society, a machine which was so powerful, it could only have been destroyed by changing the entire pattern of the Israelite society, an event which did at length happen, but which was not discussed in the paper as it was beyond the scope of this work.

This, then, is a digest of the material to be found in this paper.



## THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter One:

Opening Remarks .....	P. 1
-----------------------	------

### Chapter Two:

The Formalization of the Priesthood .....	P. 3
---	------

### Chapter Three:

The Duties of the Priests .....	P. 18
---------------------------------	-------

### Chapter Four:

Aaronide Supremacy .....	P. 34
--------------------------	-------

### Chapter Five:

Concluding Remarks .....	P. 66
--------------------------	-------

### Appendix A:

List of Biblical, Apochryphal, and Rabbinic References..	
	P. 68

### Appendix B:

List of High Priests from Seder Olam Zuta and Josephus..	
	P. 73

The Table of Contents (Continued):

Appendix C:

Expiation .....P. 74

Appendix D:

Canonization .....P. 76

Appendix E:

The Relationship of King and Priest .....P. 78

Footnotes .....P. 80

Bibliography .....P. 86

## CHAPTER ONE

### OPENING REMARKS

In this paper, there will be an attempt to examine in depth the evolution of the Israelitic Priesthood from its beginnings to the Hasmonean Revolt. Due to the great complexity of the events surrounding the Hasmonean Revolt, and the great amount of confusion concerning what did and did not happen, it was felt by the author that the topic of the priesthood at the time of the Hasmonean Revolt be left for another paper at another time, hopefully in the not too distant future.

It is necessary at the outset of this paper to clarify one item, and that is the word "Israel". I am using the word "Israel" in its broadest sense, referring to the whole of the people of Israel, from Abraham onward. I am not limiting the term to refer only to that area of Canaan called the Northern Kingdom, Israel, as opposed to the Southern Kingdom, Judah.

This paper will concentrate mainly on the material derived from its major primary source, the Bible. However, other works will be cited to back up any conjectures the author states. We will view the formalization of the priesthood as a special segment of the society, the duties of the priests, and the ultimate development of the priesthood culminating with the supremacy of the Aaronides. In fact, were one chapter of this paper to be singled out as perhaps the most important, it would be chapter four which deals with Aaronide supremacy in as many facets as I was able to discern.

The author has taken the liberty to offer many theories regarding the development of the priesthood. However, none of

these theories should be considered as the final say in the matter, since this is a rather complex topic with many possible ways of treatment.

Criticism is welcome and encouraged, as only through intelligent criticism can a paper of this nature establish its theories even more clearly and flawlessly than it has already attempted to do.

Following the body of this paper, one will find a listing of all the Biblical passages referred to in this work, and a partial listing of the high priests of the first temple compiled by the Seder Olam Zuta and also Josephus, and the footnotes which are not found on the page of the paper where special reference is made. This will involve a few footnotes from chapters two and three, and the majority of footnotes from chapter four.

Certainly much study is involved in a paper of this nature, and hopefully some insightful remarks have been made. However, due to the complexities of this topic, the paper's ultimate success will, of course, have to be determined by the reader.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FORMALIZATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

I am now ready, the opening remarks having been concluded, to begin a scrutiny of the Bible. As an introductory note to this study, rather than having an enormous amount of footnotes referring to the passages quoted, and as a help to the reader, I shall list each passage following its own quotation.

When the people of Israel were in their formative stages during the period of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there was very little reference to any sort of priest. We find, in Genesis 14.18, upon Abram's successful defeat of Chedorleomer and the kings with him, a king named Melchizedek brings out bread and wine to Abram and blesses him. This Melchizedek is also called a "priest of God Most High." In Chapter 47 of Genesis, some light is shed on the importance of a priest in a structured society, in this case Egypt, for in verses 22 and 26 we see that Pharaoh gives land to the priests and this land can never revert back to Pharaoh's charge. We see here that the priests exercised some power over the kings of the country.

Up to this point, there has not been any indication at all of any kind of a structured priesthood, and only scattered mention of the word "priest." Upon examining the

stories of the Biblical Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we see that many of their actions parallel those of Melchizedek, but nowhere are they called "priest." To cite but a few examples: In Genesis 26.25, Isaac builds an altar to God and calls upon His name. The entirety of Genesis 22 is devoted to the building of an altar to God in order to sacrifice to Him. Although Melchizedek's incident did not specifically mention the concept of sacrifice, the mentioning of food is an indication that sacrifice was carried out. Regarding the role of the priest as one who blesses, the parallel between Melchizedek and both Isaac and Jacob is absolute. In Genesis 27.27-29, Isaac blesses Jacob, and in verses 39 and 40, he blesses Esau. The entire chapter 49 in Genesis deals with Jacob's blessing of his sons. Thus we see that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob carry out "priestly" functions, however they do not bear the title "priest," nor are they part of a structured and well-defined priesthood. They are the heads of their families, and as such, carry out the religious obligations. There is, up to this point, no indication what-so-ever of any type of formalized priesthood, at least as far as the Israelites are concerned.

Now, Moses enters the scene, and upon a cursory reading of the Bible, one might be led, albeit somewhat erroneously, to the conclusion that Moses authored the Israelitic Priesthood. Let us review what the Pentateuch says regarding Moses.

In Exodus 19.14, Moses consecrates the people so that they will be able to hear God's word. One could question

at this point whether all the people have become priests because of the consecration, or whether the Biblical text is out of order because in the same chapter, verses 22 and 24, there is mention of people and priests. Who these priests are is not indicated, and what their role in the community is, is not told us. These priests seem to arise out of nowhere with no specific tasks or authority and therefore the field is open to anyone's guess. One might, having the knowledge of what is to come, guess that this is part of Aaron's family, but in verse 24 there is a special distinction made between the priests and Aaron.

Finally, in Exodus 28.1, God tells Moses to bring forth Aaron and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, to serve God as priests and to have them consecrated (verse 3) for God's priesthood. The remainder of Exodus goes into the elaborate detail of outfitting the priests. In verse 29, we see that one task of Aaron is to go into a holy place in behalf of the people, and in verse 30, Aaron is to use Urim and Thummim. This indicates that the priests shall be distinct from the people, just as the priests of Pharaoh were, and that through the use of Urim and Thummim, the priests have powers the populace does not have. Exodus 29 presents the beginning of an ornate sacrificial system to be administered over by the priests, and in order that the people not forget that the priests are special, the people must offer up a priest's portion to God from their own peace offerings (Exodus 29.28). To fully cement the continuance of a formal priesthood, Exodus 29.29



boldly says that the holy garments of Aaron (the priests were given special clothing in order to really show their separateness from all the other people, and thereby demonstrate without a question of a doubt their superiority and power over the people) shall be for his sons after him. Finally, Exodus concludes (beginning with chapter 36) with Moses taking command of the building of a tabernacle. Thus, it appears, not only did Moses establish a formal priesthood, its continuance was insured by making this priesthood hereditary--only the family of Aaron could be priests!

The time has now come to examine prevailing scholarly opinion. At the outset, I should like to mention that I am using Wellhausen's nomenclature in this discussion. The material dealing with the Aaronides (that is, the references to Aaron and his descendants in the Biblical canon) will be called "P" standing for Priestly, and the material dealing with the Levites, exclusive of Aaron and his family, will be called "D" referring to the Book of Deuteronomy where this division is basically made manifest. J and E stand for the narrative sections of the Pentateuch which feature the following terms for God: Yahweh (Jehovah) and Elohim. Both J and E are dated in the pre-exilic period.

We begin our discussion by examining the conclusions of Julius Wellhausen. According to Wellhausen, there was no formal priesthood prior to the beginnings of the Monarchy when full-scale centralization began to take place.<sup>1</sup> At this time a number of local cults appeared on the scene. However,



we had to wait until, at the earliest, the Solomonic period to begin to do away with all the local cults to form one major one.<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy, the book which emphasizes a formal Levitical priesthood, had to be, at its earliest, a product of this period. This is felt because of its emphasis on a single altar,<sup>3</sup> (with a multiplicity of cults, one would expect to find-- in fact, one did find--a multiplicity of altars), and its demand for the unity of cult.<sup>4</sup> There was no unity of worship prior to Solomon's time.<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy, in Wellhausen's opinion, fostered a program of reform,<sup>6</sup> and since the major reform occurred around 621 B.C.E. with King Josiah, Wellhausen with great artistry finally deduces that D was composed during Josiah's reformation in 621 (in fact, Josiah mentions the "discovery" of the Book of Deuteronomy).<sup>7</sup>

Since, as Wellhausen shows, Deuteronomy with its statement of a formalized Levitical priesthood is Josianic (indicating that it was not until 621 B.C.E. that the Levites established themselves as a formal priesthood), Moses could not possibly have established the Levitical priesthood! One might then ask about the Aaronide priesthood, for Exodus did say that Moses anointed Aaron to be priest. We shall see how Wellhausen treats this, the P material.

To begin with, Wellhausen shows that the legislation found in P is more advanced than that even of D!<sup>8</sup> In fact, he says, the language of all the pre-exilic material differs from that of P.<sup>9</sup> P, just as D, suggested the desire for a single sanctuary,<sup>10</sup> and whereas in D, the unity of the cult is commanded, in P it is presupposed.<sup>11</sup>

In the pre-exilic material of J, we find no mention of

priests what-so-ever, but D and P mention priests throughout.<sup>12</sup> The J material says that Canaan was apportioned to the Israelitic tribes over a period of time, but P (which, if having been written in the post-exilic period would not have been historically so accurate) says that Canaan was apportioned to the Israelitic tribes at one time.<sup>13</sup>

Looking at the prophetic period, Wellhausen has discovered that P could not have existed in the time of the prophets, since the prophets, who mentioned everything, had no cognizance of any P material, and in fact, many of the prophets were not opposed to multiple bamoth.<sup>14</sup> Because the prophets, the historical witnesses of their times, show ignorance of any P-Code, Wellhausen is convinced that P could not have been in existence.<sup>15</sup> It was not until the time of Ezekiel, who was an exilic prophet, that P-Code concepts began to be aired.<sup>16</sup> As an example of this, the Asham and Hattah offerings were non-existent prior to Ezekiel, yet the P material spells these out in detail.<sup>17</sup> To further emphasize his point, Wellhausen boldly says that P has to be later than J,E, and the prophets, because P has many chronologies, which J,E, and the prophets do not have.<sup>18</sup> Wellhausen apparently is saying that chronologies cannot be written until there are enough in one family to chronologise! He also points out, in order to show the difference in time of the composition of J as opposed to P that in J, Aaron makes a late appearance, while in P, Moses cannot do anything without him,<sup>19</sup> and that in J, Moses is pictured as the deliverer, while P pictures him as the

lawgiver.<sup>20</sup> The reasons for this will be hypothesized at the conclusion of this chapter.

Getting back to more conclusive material regarding the dating of P, Wellhausen shows admirably that P-Code festal observances are observances which began to take place 200 years after D, about 450 B.C.E.<sup>21</sup> Regarding observances, there was no Atonement Day fast period prior to the exile,<sup>22</sup> yet the Day of Atonement fast is the most important fast day of the P material.<sup>23</sup> Also, there were no Sabbatical years in pre-exilic times,<sup>24</sup> yet the concept of the Sabbatical year is stressed in the P material.<sup>25</sup>

As a clincher to the argument for the lateness of the Aaronide Priestly material, Wellhausen has chosen a discussion of the tabernacle. He feels that the tabernacle of Moses (as was mentioned, the whole latter part of Exodus dealt with the tabernacle, and Moses's role in it) is not a prototype, but rather a copy of Solomon's Temple!<sup>26</sup> Wellhausen grants that there may have been a portable ark of some kind, but this would differ from the type of tabernacle Exodus describes.<sup>27</sup> He continues stressing his point that in Solomon's day, there was no pre-existent model of a tabernacle, nor were any objects from such a tabernacle preserved.<sup>28</sup> One would think that the people would have made a special effort to preserve tabernacle objects (had there been any) since they were purported to be holier than holy, and a "sign" of God's presence among the people. Also, Wellhausen shows, the historical pre-exilic books (in fact pre-monarchical books in part) of Judges and Samuel do not

support the concept of a Mosaic Tabernacle,<sup>29</sup> no doubt because there was none! The first "tabernacle" of any sort was the Temple of Solomon.

Therefore, via a masterful presentation of materials (there are more items, but I have attempted to choose some of the most dramatic) Wellhausen is convinced that not only was the P material post-exilic, it was written after the D material!<sup>30</sup> In fact, P was introduced in 444 B.C.E., one century after the exile,<sup>31</sup> and it was introduced by Ezra!<sup>32</sup> (We will not go into the dating of Ezra in this paper, as this falls outside of the limits of this paper.)

Therefore, given all this material, Moses could not possibly have been the author of either the Levitical, or Aaronide priesthods, or of any formalized priesthood what-so-ever. This brings us to the necessary conclusion that the reason a cursory reading of the Pentateuch gives one a feeling that Moses did author the priesthood, is because the authors of P brilliantly interpolated their material around the figure of Moses. In fact, Wellhausen, himself, indicates this.<sup>33</sup> I shall attempt to give a reason for this at the conclusion of this chapter, but first, let us look at the opinions of other scholars, to show that Wellhausen does not stand alone in his hypothesis.

Pfeiffer says that the authors of the P material were not only priests and lawyers (since the P material is loaded with legalisms) but scholars as well<sup>34</sup> who wrote "a fifth-century midrash, or historical commentary on the embryonic Pentateuch(JED)".<sup>35</sup>

He goes on to say (implying our theory of interpolation which is spelled out in chapter four of this paper) that no part of the Old Testament has a more systematic arrangement than the narrative passages of P...it may have been composed primarily as a supplement to J.E.<sup>36</sup>

Eissfeldt, also, agrees with Wellhausen. His major difference is in the dating of P and D. He dates D as a product of the First Jerusalem Temple period,<sup>37</sup> whereas P is a product of the exilic period (5th or 6th centuries) at the earliest,<sup>38</sup> or the period of Ezra, assigning P a date of 398 B.C.E. or a little earlier.<sup>39</sup> He points out that through Malachi, 477 B.C.E., there is no influence of the P material,<sup>40</sup> whereas Chronicles, 350 B.C.E., is definitely influenced by P material.<sup>41</sup> He also makes a point in stressing that P had to come after D, since P's cultic ordinances are the most developed--hence the latest.<sup>42</sup>

De Vaux is another of the giants of scholarship who agrees with the aforementioned men. He definitely feels that there was no official priesthood in the time of the Patriarchs.<sup>43</sup> He, too, feels that the P material, at least, is exilic. He raises a fascinating point in this regard when he says that the anointing of priests as a sign of office did not exist before the exile.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, how could Moses have truly anointed Aaron, regardless of what the Pentateuch indicates!

Like Wellhausen, de Vaux thinks that the ark of the covenant was a cultic object adapted by the Israelites after settlement in Palestine, and that it was later attributed to the desert period by the authors of the priestly tradition.<sup>45</sup>



The priestly tradition took the inspiration for the ark from Solomon's temple.<sup>46</sup> He continues to say that the priestly authors saw the liturgical organization (as well as the architecture) of the Temple in their own day, and ascribed it to the desert period of Moses.<sup>47</sup> De Vaux emphasizes that there is continued stress on the development of a formalized priesthood after the exile, rather than before,<sup>48</sup> and that the appellation "sons of Aaron" referring to the priests took hold upon the people only upon their return from exile.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, Moses could not have authored the Aaronide priesthood. He does feel that there was a priesthood prior to the exile, but it was Levitical, and not Aaronide and it was the exile that demonstrated the separation of these two groups.<sup>50</sup> However, regarding the Levites (the D authors) he definitely does not believe they were priests during Moses's time, but that if they existed at all, they were a non-priestly tribe.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Moses certainly did not call them priests, nor author their priesthood. There is a possibility, however, that Moses was from this non-priestly tribe of Levites.<sup>52</sup> It is not, however, until the time of Deuteronomy (621 B.C.E. ?) that the term priest is applied to the Levites.<sup>53</sup> This statement is an indication that the group of Levites made a power play for the priesthood at the time of Deuteronomy--a viable theory explored in chapter four of this paper, showing how they attained the priesthood. Also, de Vaux makes clear that the Levites and the Aaronides were two separate groups, and that the Aaronides were in opposition to the Levites.<sup>54</sup> This, too, is probable

and will be discussed in depth in chapter four, showing that the Aaronides did usurp the power of the Levites, and how they did it. One thing, though, that de Vaux really makes clear is that Moses did not author the Aaronide priesthood (anymore than he authored the Levitical priesthood!) because he shows that Moses and Aaron were from two separate traditions. Aaron's group had the bull as a sign of the divine presence, whereas Moses's group had the ark.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, logically, Moses never would have ordained Aaron!

Meek agrees with de Vaux. He is not sure that Moses did not author the Levitical priesthood, but he is sure that Moses had nothing to do with Aaron.<sup>56</sup> He does feel confident, however, that before the Levites became priests, they were a secular tribe.<sup>57</sup> Like de Vaux, Meek thinks there was a power struggle for the priesthood at some time, post desert period, with the Levites attaining the priesthood in the time of David,<sup>58</sup> and he indicates that later on the Aaronides drove out the Levites in order to wrest the priesthood for themselves.

At this point it seems rather evident that the first formal priesthood was Levitical (D) followed by the Aaronide priesthood (P). However, even though the great mass of scholarship bends in this direction, there is one major voice of dissent, and although the argumentation against him seems to negate his own findings, I feel it would be unfair not to take note of Kaufmann's views.

Kaufmann does think that D formalized itself during the period of Josiah's reform (thereby indicating that Moses did not author the Levitical priesthood), but that D's ideas are

not necessarily post-exilic.<sup>59</sup> He also feels that P's tent is a portable sanctuary and not modelled after Solomon's Temple.<sup>60</sup> (Interestingly, on this point, Bright is unsure.<sup>61</sup>) Kaufmann believes that P's festal laws betray a pre-D viewpoint, arguing that pilgrimages never were indispensable for the celebration of a festival!<sup>62</sup> He also indicates that P's portrayal of the Mosaic age does not reflect the conditions of the 2nd Temple period (i.e., the post-exilic period).<sup>63</sup> Therefore, he asserts that P's priestly system definitely is grounded in the desert tradition and is not a reflection from any post-exilic condition.<sup>64</sup>

Kaufmann says that the Aaronides were an ancient pagan Israelitic priesthood,<sup>65</sup> and that <sup>at</sup>the golden calf episode, the Levites split with the Aaronides--and he admits that P does make mention of this (but he does not indicate why!).<sup>66</sup> Then, after a period of time, the two groups merged, so that D says Levitical priests without any distinction of priests and Levites, (a very important distinction created by the Aaronides in their wresting of power from the Levites--see chapter four).<sup>67</sup> Of course, if D came before P, there would be no need to make this distinction as far as D is concerned, would there? After all, D did not foresee what was to come!

He then goes on to say that P's system of sacred and profane precincts make it clear that D-concepts are unknown to P,<sup>68</sup> and that since D and P are not at all similar, P could not have been a revision of D.<sup>69</sup> I am unsure how he arrives at this after Wellhausen and his followers have shown the great simil-



erities between the two, and that because of this, P logically came after D. And, if D and P are mutually exclusive so that P could not be a revision of D, how can we assert that D comes after P? Apparently Kaufmann is not blind to the problem of Levites as distinct from Aaronides, and he resolves the problem not by describing any power struggles, or individual priesthoods, but giving both equal authority (and at the same time?) by saying that God elected both the Aaronides and the Levites (again, at the same time?) to be the hereditary priesthood of Israel!<sup>70</sup>

I, for one, cannot accept Kaufmann, but I felt I had to be fair and include him in this discussion.

To conclude this chapter, I think we can say authoritatively that in no wise was Moses the founder of the Israelitic priesthood, but that it developed in a formal way at the beginning of the monarchy with the great stress on total centralization of all aspects of the Israelitic community. Also, I think we can say that there were two groups desiring the priesthood at this time, the Levites and the Aaronides. Through the creation of Deuteronomy, the Levites were able to attain the priesthood for themselves, to be firmly entrenched in it by 621 B.C.E., only to be deposed by the Aaronides in the post-exilic period, through a brilliant job of interpolation throughout the Mosaic text.

Chapter four will discuss the methodology used by both the Levites and the Aaronides in acquiring the priesthood. This chapter wanted to establish that Moses did not set up a formal priesthood, and that when centralization began at the beginning of the monarchy (and with it a centralization of cult) two groups

began a quest to establish for themselves a formal priesthood, to be passed down only to members of their own family groups, i.e., the Aaronides and the Levites.

Before concluding this chapter, however, I would like to express a theory as to why the Pentateuch seems to give Moses the role of founder of a formalized priesthood--even though scholarship has shown otherwise. Apparently the figure of Moses loomed large in the minds of the people at the beginning of the monarchy and following. Perhaps anything which could be ascribed to Moses was held to be "sacred" and to have absolute authority. Certainly many of the prophets were instrumental in building up the importance of Moses in the minds of the people, for many of them in chastising the people proclaimed the glories of the desert period. Therefore, it would seem that any group that could show it had the backing of Moses would automatically be held in esteem in the eyes of the community. Therefore, perhaps, both the Levites and later the Aaronides, in their quest for power, claimed authority for their positions by attempting to show that Moses had so ordained it in the desert period. By clever handling of the Mosaic material and brilliant interpolation, the Levites and the Aaronides both made it appear to a reader of the Pentateuch that Moses had ordained them to be priests. In this manner, the priests hoped to gain immediate acceptance by and respect from the populace, so that they could "ply their trade" without fear of investigations by the populace, or even of any questioning of their activities by the populace, and thereby

cement their position in the community and gain the underhand over everyone.

It would appear that the above theory might have some merit, else why would both the Aaronides and the Levites attempt to show that their office had its origin via Moses in the desert period?

Before going into the discussion of the methodology by which the Aaronides and the Levites gained the priesthood, we shall look at the duties of the priests in order to better understand their great influence throughout the community.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS

At the beginning of this discussion, I should like to make clear that the chapter is concerned with the duties of the priests, and not with the evolution of the priesthood as such. Therefore, wherever the text mentions Moses as being instrumental regarding the priesthood, the text is taken at face value, since it is the priestly duties that concern us, and not the authenticity of the personages involved.

We shall first look at the duties and obligations of the high priests, and then the duties and obligations of the priests in general, concluding with a brief note on the privileges of the high priests.

Leviticus 21.16-23 informs us that the high priest must be the eldest son of the priestly family, and that he, as well as the other priests, cannot have any blemishes. This statement is important as it establishes who is to assume the high priesthood. This statement attempts to remove the threat of challenge from other quarters of the community to vie for the priesthood, and thus its aim is to remove strife and dissension by establishing an order of office in the community. It apparently is trying to dissuade other groups from trying to wrest the priesthood for themselves, thereby causing confusion and chaos, weakening the society internally and externally resulting in its general dissolution and death as a unified community.

The blemish seems to be important, since the priest must be totally perfect in order to serve God. Thus it appears that not every son of Aaron would be eligible for the priesthood, only those who are physically perfect would be eligible. In the days prior to the establishment of the priesthood, the patriarch served in the capacity of priest, and there was no apparent concern with blemishes. In fact, if I can logically use this example, Job, who was the patriarch of his family group, and who constantly assumed the role of a priest offering up guilt sacrifices to God, was still expected to carry out his religious functions even after he was smitten with boils,<sup>7</sup> which would certainly be considered a blemish. But, those who were expressly anointed as God's servants had to be physically pure. Perhaps, and this is conjecture, the idea of the "blemish" was stressed to show the people that the priesthood was really a special office and one requiring the greatest of respect. I mention this because knowing the primitiveness of these desert dwellers, and their lack of awareness of cleanliness and hygiene, I would imagine that physical blemishes were the common thing, rather than the exception, and whoever was not blemished was perhaps thought of by the community as an individual singled out by God to receive special favors. Since the priesthood was a family of unblemished individuals, this added, in the eyes of the community, a great deal of respect for the priesthood, as these men were chosen by God especially, and therefore deserving of honor by the others in the community. Therefore, logically, we could assume that this helped solidify the office of the priesthood in the community and helped to prevent challenge from without--at least during this

initial stage. (At the time of the Hasmonean revolt and the rise of the Pharisees, when there was no question of the corruptness of the priesthood, challenges to their authority were quite frequent.) In fact, only when the priestly qualifications were met--that of being without blemish, and from the family of Aaron, and being undefiled, such as coming into contact with a corpse (Leviticus 21.11) which would defile a priest, thereby forcing him to enter into a protracted period of purification, could he eat of the bread of God, both of the holy and the most holy (Leviticus 21.22). This is a very interesting item in the evolution of a formalized priesthood. The partaking of the bread of God seems to have a parallel in Christian practices concerning the eucharist. Whenever a Christian eats of the eucharist, he is imbibing and taking God into himself, thereby attaching himself to the Divine. It would therefore seem to be the same with the priests. When they partook of God's bread, they became a part of God. Since the masses were not allowed to eat of this food, the power of the priesthood was terrifically strengthened over the masses by virtue of the fact that not only were these men without blemish, they also had the permission to partake of the special food of God, making these men "God-like." It is easily imaginable that because of this, no one would feel so confident of himself as to go against the wishes of the priests, for fear of inviting the wrath of God upon his head. Therefore, the priests probably had total command over the activities of the masses, and in their eyes, the priesthood became a worshipful God-loved part of the community which could do no wrong.

To continue, the high priest was forbidden to marry a widow,



a divorcee, a profaned woman, or a harlot. According to Leviticus 21.14, he could only marry a virgin of the House of Israel. (A question might be raised on this point concerning the prostitute. In Eben HaEzer (11,1) of the Shulchan Aruch, there is a statement that a prostitute of the House of Israel was permitted to marry a priest, but the harlot was not permitted to do so.) By virtue of this law, the High Priest was singled out as different from anyone else in the community, and after a period of time, his uniqueness probably became so accepted, and the priesthood so admired as well as feared, since these men had the power of God in their hands, that the institution of the priesthood was truly a stable and important element of the society, and probably an element around which the society could rally for strength and support, so that the priesthood, conceivably, was a element in the society keeping the society together. As a point of conjecture on this matter, we might say that this was another reason Moses wanted to establish a priesthood, and make it unique in the society, in order to create an institution which would keep the society from falling apart after his death.

Another item singling the high priest out from the masses and contributing to his sacrosanctness was the prohibition, Leviticus 21.10-12, of engaging in mourning rites, such as allowing his hair to grow, tearing his clothing, leaving the sanctuary during the service, or even defiling himself by coming into contact with any dead body including his immediate family. There are some exceptions to this rule, although they occurred at a later time, when the priesthood was firmly established so that it was taken for granted. In its early period, during the time of Moses, one could conjecture that all of

these stringent laws were necessary to demonstrate to the people without a question of a doubt that those individuals who formed the priesthood were different from everyone else, and therefore, because of their differences, expecting the respect of the whole community. Once, however, the people accepted the priesthood as a controlling element in their lives, and once they accepted the fact that only certain people could possibly hope to be a part of the priesthood, and that this organization was especially chosen by God to rule over the community, exceptions to some of the stringencies could occur, without weakening the strength or the prestige of the priesthood in the eyes of the community. One exception, for example, is that of the High Priest Jehoiakim, who wore sackcloth and poured ashes upon his head along with the other priests during a period of dire national distress, (see Judith 4.14-15, in the Apocrypha, and also Joel 1.13).

As far as his own purification was concerned, the High Priest had to wash his hands and feet with water before entering the tent of meeting so that he would not die upon approaching the altar at which he was to carry out his ministrations, (Exodus 30.19-21). Regarding his ministrations, another item which singled out all the priests from the masses was that they were the only ones allowed to intercede in behalf of the people to God, and that which singled out the High Priest above the masses and the lesser priests was that not only did he intercede on behalf of all the people, but he was the only one who could intercede to God in behalf of the priests. Apparently the lesser priests could not intercede in their own behalf, (Leviticus 16.32-34). This concept, that of the people not being permitted to pray to God on their own behalf, must have been



the capstone for the authority of the priests over the people. By stripping the right of worship from the masses and placing it in the hands of the priests gave the priests unquestioned authority over the masses and truly established a formal priesthood which for years would go unchallenged by anyone.

We shall now look at a few of the obligations of the High Priest, in order to show his area of influence which established his office and that of the entire priesthood as an unchallenged and respected area in the community which would establish communal policies, and practices, and around which the community would, no doubt, turn to and rally around for support, hence making the priesthood a very important element for the survival of the community. As long as the priesthood was in existence (theoretically) the community would have a banner around which to rally, a "banner" which would keep them together and thereby ensure their survival in the face of all odds.

Aaron offered incense every morning upon preparing the lamps, and also each evening, when he lit the lamps (Exodus 30.7-8). On the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) it was his function to atone\* for all the people as well as all the priests, and bless the people, and (verses 21-22) send a goat into the wilderness upon whom the sins of the community have been placed, thus exonerating the populace-- a very important religious function which the people relied upon the priests to do, thus ensuring the importance of the priesthood in the community. Leviticus 24.9 mentions Aaron's eating of the holy bread. He would accept the sin-offering of not only individuals in the community, but a sin-offering that represented the entire community, offer it up to God, that the community as a whole might be forgiven (Leviticus 4.13-21). It was the duty of the High Priest

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\* Please see Appendix C for a discussion concerning exiation.

together with the other priests to eat the remains of the meal offerings of the children of Israel in a holy place (Leviticus 6.9). Perhaps this requirement was put in so that the community could not object to the priests' living off the labor of others--i.e. eating food which served as an offering to God, the eating of which by the priests could have made the community quite angry. This might also convey the message that the community was responsible regarding the feeding of the priests. This is a rather useful tool in establishing the enduring permanence of the priesthood and its supremacy over the people since it reduces the people to a type of slavery to the priests, so that sooner or later the people might truly think themselves to be inferior and truly needing the superior wisdom and guidance of the priests for their own survival.

The High Priest had to be present when a king was crowned or a leader chosen in order to inquire, by use of the Urim, concerning God's will for their ventures (Numbers 27.19-21). He was to oversee the distribution of the war booty, as did Eleazar during the distribution of the booty of the Midianites to the people of Israel (Numbers 31.21-28). He, together with the other priests, was in charge of dismantling and reassembling the tabernacle and the items connected with it (Numbers 4.5-16). The High Priest, together with the other priests, was in charge of blessing the people (Numbers 6.23-27). So we see that the high priests were involved in every aspect of community life, from war to peace, so that the community would begin to believe that it could not function without these specialists. Moses, in outlining the responsibilities, did a phenomenal job in establishing a society of specialists which would appear vital to the ongoing life of the community, thus being an institution which

would have permanence of leadership for a long time to come.

Before concluding this discussion, let us take a few moments to look at the general duties of all the priests, over and above those of the High Priest alone.

The lesser priests had to be from the family of Aaron and also physically unblemished (Leviticus 21.16-23). This passage, of course, ensures an hereditary priesthood. They could not defile themselves for any dead body, except when the person was a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, wife, or virgin sister (Leviticus 21.1-5). We noted that the High Priest could not defile himself for anyone, showing that his purity is greater than those below him. To elevate the High Priest in this matter is important in eliminating contention for the leadership of the priesthood on the part of all the priests. This contention could have led to a weakening of the total priesthood, and perhaps end up in its collapse. Certainly it would have lost its respect by the community when the community saw the trouble within the priesthood. The community could have conceivably reasoned that if internal dissention exists, these people are not so sacred or special, they are just like us--without any Godlike characteristics, hence, why should we respect them? With this attitude, the priesthood would have collapsed and the community would have lost an important rallying ground to keep it together. By stating and showing the greater holiness of the High Priest over the other priests, this problem was not in danger of arising. The lesser priests would be afraid of the High Priest, since the High Priest had powers even they did not have. So, they would listen to him, and order would prevail.

The lesser priests, like the High Priest, could not marry a

divorcees, a profaned woman, or a harlot (Leviticus 21.7) and their's was the responsibility of keeping charge of the holy things of the sanctuary and guarding the altar from any profanation, intended or inadvertant (Numbers 18.5). They had to kindle the fire upon the altar, place the wood upon the fire to keep it burning and watch that the fire did not go out (Leviticus 6.2). They had to collect half the blood of certain sacrifices in basins and pour out the rest of the blood on the altar (Exodus 24.6) and make the various sections of the offering smoke, as opposed to burn (Leviticus 1.5-10).

It was the job of the lesser priests to pinch off the head of any bird offered to be sacrificed, drain its blood on the side of the altar, remove its crop and the feathers thereof, and cast it by the eastern side of the altar among the ashes (Leviticus 15-17). They were in charge of making the daily offering of one lamb in the morning and one lamb in the evening, and offer an additional sacrifice on Sabbaths, New Moons, and Festivals (Numbers 28.3,9-27). They offered the meal-offering and smoked a part of it as a memorial (Leviticus 2.1-2), and they sprinkled the blood of the peace-offering on the altar (Leviticus 3.1-3). These lesser priests could sacrifice the sin-offering of one individual, but the High Priest could sacrifice the sin-offering of the entire community--a much higher function than just one individual's offering which the lesser priests could only do (Leviticus 4.30). The lesser priests could eat the guilt offering (Leviticus 7.6; 10.16-18), and offer up the meal-offering and sprinkle the blood of the guilt-offering about the altar. (Leviticus 6.7-8; 7.2).

Together with the High Priest, they could partake of the holy bread (Leviticus 24.9), a very important function already discussed.

Another function distinguishing them from the masses, because they had special powers and knowledge the masses did not have, was their practicing of medicine--albeit on a very primitive level. Not only could the priests cleanse the soul, but they could purify the body, thus making the community really dependent upon them, thereby ensuring their continuance in the community. To back this up we cite the following passages from Leviticus: The lesser priests could make atonement for the woman who gave birth and fulfilled the days of her purification (12.6-7); they could ascertain when leprosy had departed from the leper (14.3-4), purify the leper (14.6-7), bring him before God to make atonement for him (14.10-32), determine whether a house was filled with leprosy (14.33-47), and make atonement for it to purify it (14.49-53). They could also make atonement for any man suffering a flow, as well as purify him (15.14-15), and they could purify any woman who was unclean (15.29-30).

Some of their other duties were the offering of the First Fruits (Leviticus 23.10-11) which was important because this gave them power in the agricultural area of communal life--<sup>72</sup>i.e. the secular area of survival. They were empowered to estimate the sum to be paid by persons making vows but unable to pay the regular valuation of the vow (Leviticus 27.8). They could establish the value of an unfit animal brought as an offering to God (Leviticus 27.11-12), set the value of a house consecrated to God (Leviticus 27.14), and declare the value of a field until its redemption in the Jubilee Year (Leviticus 27.23). They made atonement for Nazirites whose period of abstinence had come to an end, or when he had suddenly



become unclean (Numbers 6.9-13), and they could offer up the sin-offering and the burnt-offering of the Nazirite when his period of consecration had been completed (Numbers 6.14-15). They also sounded the silver trumpets on the required occasions (Numbers 10.8).

In general, only the High Priest made atonement for the entire community, but it seems an exception was made in Numbers 15.24-27, where it speaks of the lesser priests doing this. Perhaps, using the same conjecture as before, the High Priest was so firmly established as the group's leader, with nobody ever daring to think otherwise, that at this point, some of his duties were passed down to the lesser priests, such as being able to make atonement for the entire community as a whole, as well as individuals by themselves.

The lesser priests also prepared the prescription of the spices used in the sacrificial service (I Chronicles 9.30) and they prepared the waters of sprinkling for the service (Numbers 19.1-11). They supervised the breaking of the neck of a heifer after a corpse was found in a field and the identity of the murderer could not be determined (Deuteronomy 21.1-9). In a later period, after the establishment of the priesthood in the wilderness at Sinai, and on certain occasions, it was the job of the lesser priests to flay the burnt-offerings (II Chronicles 29.34) and to slaughter the Paschal Lamb (Ezra 6.20).

The priests also served as judges in the community, really extending their domain of influence so as to make the community totally dependent upon them and thus work to insure their survival. Deuteronomy 17.9 and 19.17 state that the priests were to serve as

judges when the populace sought them out in order to settle controversies, and Numbers 5.12-31, in the same vein, says that a role of the priests was to prepare the waters of bitterness used in testing a woman accused of adultery, and to conduct the prescribed ritual.

Also, according to Deuteronomy 20.2-3, special lesser priests were anointed to encourage the soldiers going forth in battle and to address the people and their officers. It almost sounds as if these people were the special public relations men of the priesthood, laboring to ingratiate the priesthood in the minds of all the people, so that the people would learn to love the priests, trust them implicitly, permit them to engage in all the communal activities, from the conducting of the religious services, to the trying of cases in court, making the people so dependent upon the existence of the priesthood, that the people were the ones who contributed their total support to its continuance. Once the priesthood had this support, it could operate freely and unquestioned within the community, and be the real rulers of the community. In fact, as a footnote to this, we find in Leviticus 21.9 that a priest's daughter who committed harlotry was to be burnt, because she profaned her father, showing the high level of the priesthood and its family members, so that the community would always respect this organization.

As an example of the success the priesthood had in ingratiating itself in the community can be viewed by looking at a few more passages in the Bible, passages which show us privileges accorded to the priests by the populace, and privileges, which, I feel, would not have been granted, had the populace been able to disregard the

importance of the priesthood for the survival of all. In fact, one might interpret these privileges to mean that the people gave these to the priests so that the priests would not only continue, but also continue to show favor to the people and help them out, as opposed to destroying them. So we can posit that these privileges were given out of love for the priests, or out of fear because of the power of the priesthood. At any rate, the priesthood had developed enough strength to gain these privileges. Let us now look at a few of these privileges. In Josephus, Antiquities IV, 4.4, we see that the heave-offerings and the tithes constituted a communal fund in which all the priests participated. Also, upon arriving in Canaan, many years following the establishment of the priesthood by Moses, and after Moses's death, Numbers 18.20 and Deuteronomy 18.1-2 tell us that the priests did not receive a portion of the land of Canaan to develop for their own use when the land was divided among the tribes of Israel. Instead, the priests lived off the fat of the land, so to speak, reaping in the fruits of other's, which the people gladly gave to the priests in order to have the priests' blessing upon them. The priests also received a tithe from the tithes given the Levites by the populace (Numbers 18.28 and Nehemiah 10.39), but this statement is very revealing, for it shows a split has occurred between the priests and Levites. At the time of establishing the priesthood, priests and Levites were spoken of in one breath, as if there was no distinction between them. This passage just cited indicates that as the priesthood developed, a split must have occurred. We shall investigate this in detail in the next chapter.

Prior to this investigation, however, we can say that as the



priesthood developed, it gained great power in the community and it extended itself to cover all aspects of community life, including the power over the success of the king, himself, and power in the courts. It became so powerful, that no one questioned its validity in working in all areas of the community. As a conclusion to this chapter, let us single out eight of the high priests as a further example of how the priesthood invaded all aspects of the life of the community.

Eleazar, the third son of Aaron, participated in the conquest of Canaan, the success of which battle hinged on the blessings of the priests (Numbers 20.25ff. and Joshua 24.33).

Eli, the first member of the family of Ithamar to serve as High Priest, was not only a priest, but also a judge. As I Samuel 4.18 says--Eli judged Israel for forty years.

Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, apparently was High Priest during King Saul's reign, during which he took part in the wars of Michmas, wearing an ephod in the camp of Saul--thus giving the soldiers a great deal of inner strength to continue and eventually win the battle (I Samuel 14.3).

Amariah, the son of Azariah, was appointed to supervise the judges in Jerusalem in matters of a religious nature. Zebadiah, the son of Ishmael, at the same time was the official of the House of Judah, in charge of all the affairs of state (II Chronicles 19.11).

Jehoiada not only saved Jeash from the murderous Athaliah, but was also very instrumental in having Jeash crowned king (II Kings 11-12, and II Chronicles 23-24).

This next example really shows the priests' power over even the king.

Azariah was the High Priest during the reign of King Uzziah. When King Uzziah tried to enter the sanctuary and offer incense on the altar, Azariah said: "'It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated, it pertaineth to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thy honor from the Lord God.'" Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy broke forth in his forehead" (II Chronicles 26.18-19).

Urijah was requested by King Ahaz to build an altar, which he did (II Kings 16.10-11).

We have seen how powerful the priests were in Israel. But, in foreign lands, they were not feared for we have the account of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon slaying Seraiah, Zephaniah (II Kings 25.18-21), and Jehozadak (I Chronicles 5.41).

From these examples, there cannot be a question of a doubt the influence the priests enjoyed among their own people. Their sphere of influence was so inclusive as to touch the lives of all the people. It is a small wonder, then, that the people came to depend upon the priesthood for their very survival, and one can indeed see that as long as the priesthood was around, the people felt that they were invincible, and this gave them the inner strength to carry on, and stay together, and survive any and all ordeals which might befall them--such as the Babylonian Exile.

However, with the gain of power enjoyed by the priests, it would seem unusual for everything to continue to run so smoothly. Indeed, everything appeared fine while they were gaining the support

of the people, because the priesthood could not afford at this point to risk internal dissention, else they would not have become the true and trusted leaders of the community. Once, however, they were accented, and not held under the scrutiny of the community to see whether they deserved all the respect and honor accorded them because of their special powers and wisdom, it was inevitable that internal struggles would begin. And, indeed, this is what happened. We shall name the next chapter "Aaronide Supremacy" and we shall within the confines of this chapter, discuss the internal power struggle of the Aaronides and the Levites, and other items dealing with this phase of the development of the Israelitic Priesthood.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AARONIDE SUPREMACY

Many conjectural statements have been given thus far in this paper attempting to explain the evolution and development of the Israelitic Priesthood. However, the material in this chapter, although perhaps somewhat repetitious, is, what I consider, the most important set of concepts and discussion concerning this entire development. At the beginning, it may appear to the reader that a great deal of irrelevant material is being presented. However, a broad historical base is necessary to fully grasp the reasons behind the Aaronides' struggle for power. For, as we noticed at the conclusion of the last chapter, a split did develop between the Levites and the direct descendants of Aaron, and a mammoth power struggle ensued in order to determine which group of and by itself would be the priests, the group having the greatest control over all the people. And, it should be pointed out, at the conclusion of this struggle, the priesthood will have attained its ultimate as a formal group having definite control over the masses. All else that occurs will either add onto the priestly functions, thus broadening their powers even more, or contribute to the eventual decline of the priesthood with the beginning of the helis culture and the Hasmonean revolt, both items of which do not truly fall into the scope of this paper, as it deals with the development, and not the decline, of the priesthood.

With these few opening remarks, we are about to begin the

discussion. However, I would like to call the reader's attention to Appendix B of this paper which will present two differing genealogical tables of priests which will be of relevance to this discussion, as a part of the discussion concerns itself with the hereditary of priests in order for the Aaronides to claim to have the true authority for the priesthood in Israel. Now we can begin our discussion.

When Abraham first appears on the scene in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Genesis, we found a semi-nomadic societal structure. It consisted of families living in tents and roving about the desert. All the Biblical texts compatible with a semi-nomadic society can be attributed to this formative stage of Israel's history. Also, and this is a crucial concept to establish at this time, we would be more correct to label this stage "semi-nomadic monotheism." This appellation is crucial for the monotheistic idea. The God, Yehweh, to whom Abraham addressed himself, began to take on monotheistic characteristics, because Abraham modelled Him after the image of the patriarch in a semi-nomadic family. Since the patriarch was the sole head of the family, and completely omnipotent, Abraham's God became the sole God, totally omnipotent. This concept was fine for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob since the desert was a large enough place and one people did not have to inflict their God-concept upon another group living in their midst. The desert was large enough so that each family unit lived in its own area, by itself. The omnipotent God of Abraham apparently became wide-spread enough, or attractive enough, to emerge in the wilderness period of the wanderings of the people under Moses. All we need do is compare the Abraham story with the Book of Exodus, and we will see much



similarity regarding the activities and descriptions of God. It was not long, however, only forty years, until Joshua led the people across the Jordan in Canaan,<sup>23</sup> and now the trouble began. This group of nomads with their monotheistic God suddenly left the wilderness for urban agricultural life. Upon crossing the Jordan, they discovered a society already living on the land, with its own religious system. The clash of peoples with their different systems was inevitable, and the winner of the struggle would be the group which would control the land.

The Israelites said that Yahweh was so powerful, he could rule not only over the desert, but in an agricultural setting as well. The Canaanites, who worshipped a god named Baal, said no. In fact, they said, no one god can rule over a complex agricultural society. For this reason, there were many Baals. The Melkart Baal was the god of commerce. The Fertility Baals took care of the sun and rain and the fertility of the land which would ensure an abundant harvest. The result of this struggle hinged upon the devices of the prophet Elijah. It was he who promoted the concept of Yahweh Exclusivism. And, it was because of Elijah's success that the Israelites gained the supremacy over the Canaanites, and thereby set the rules and regulations for the total society.

Elijah gathered all the priests of the Baals together upon a mountain.<sup>24</sup> He challenged the Canaanite gods to descend upon the altars and consume the sacrifices being offered up. Nothing happened, even though the Baal priesthood incanted rituals, and burned incense. Then, Elijah called upon Yahweh, and in a dramatic moment, Yahweh came down and not only consumed the sacrifices of Elijah, but also



these of the Baal priesthood, and then Yahweh burned up the altars constructed by the Baal priests. Thus did Yahweh exclusively assume the role of God of the land.

The next important even centered around the prophet Elisha. Elisha worked to bring about the Jehu revolution,<sup>15</sup> the end result of which placed the monarchy of the Israelites exclusively behind the God, Yahweh. (And by the time of Jeroboam II, Amos's function was merely one of attempting to clarify "the type of worship that Yahweh required").

As Yahweh took on more and more functions, he gained more and more attributes. A major attribute of Yahweh, mentioned briefly above, was that of being ruler over the monarchy. Although Elisha fostered the Jehu revolution to put the monarchy exclusively behind Yahweh, Samuel was the individual who extended the power of Yahweh to underwrite the Monarchy. When the people wanted a king to rule over them, Samuel, the prophet, the representative of Yahweh to the people, was requested to choose and anoint the king, thus showing Yahweh's consent and blessing over the king.<sup>16</sup> Samuel and Elisha and the other preliterary prophets created good kings over the people by giving them Yahweh's approval. Thus, as Yahweh underwrote the monarchy, the monarchy underwrote the importance of Yahweh exclusivism, since the kings wanted Yahweh's blessing--thus there could be no question in anyone's mind that Yahweh was recognized as the sole God over the people.

At this point in our story, cultification became a very important concept, and one which was promoted by many of the pre-literary prophets, such as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha.

And, by the time of King Solomon, the cult was really established and defined. (As an added note: this cult demanded people who would be able to administer at the cult-centers. These people would of course be the priests, and with the growing importance of the cult in Israel, the priests became more and more important. I am inserting this note because we must not lose sight of the growing importance of the priests with the cult-centers, even though the bulk of this discussion deals with the development of the cult, not mentioning the priests per se). In fact, by the time of King Solomon, there were a number of cult centers with a large one in Jerusalem at the temple there, and one in the northern part of Israel, at Beth El. Beth El would become more important after the death of King Solomon when the kingdom would be split into two parts, the capital of the northern part being Samaria, which was in the vicinity of Beth El. The system of multiple altars was fostered by the pre-literary prophets, and it was for this reason that at the time of the divided monarchy, this system was strongly entrenched. The material in the Pentateuch which concerns itself with the multiple altar system can be referred to as J and E. J normally means passages in which Yahweh is mentioned, and E means passages in which the word Elohim occurs. Whether or not one completely believes in this system of treating the Pentateuch, or accepts this as valid, I shall use it since it is convenient and well-known in scholarly circles.??

About this time when the monarchy divided, a new group of prophets appeared on the scene. It seems, from reading the Bible, that these men either wrote, or had someone write, their actual

speeches they delivered to the populace, and the royal court. These men, Amos, Micah, Hosea, and Isaiah--to mention a few of the most prominent--denounced the multiple altar system which was ruled over by cults, a number of whose members seemed to be Levites. These prophets were afraid that these cults might reintroduce Baalism, and misinterpret the Covenant. These new prophets, even though they preached a different message, were apparently listened to because of the respect prophecy attained under the pre-literary prophets.

Then, around 721 B.C.E., the event occurred which, at least to the masses, seemed to authenticate and validate the words of the literary prophets. Assyria swept down from the north and attacked and completely destroyed the Northern Kingdom, Israel. No doubt, at this occurrence, the literary prophets screamed out, "Ah ha, do not you see that we have been correct? The Northern Kingdom was destroyed because of the multiple altar and cult system which every one helped to maintain and which we said God did not like! Therefore, God destroyed Israel using Assyria as His tool, and this is a warning for all of you in Judah. There is to be one place of worship, the Temple in Jerusalem, and there is to be one set of priests administering there, and these priests are to be Levites, and no other. Is not that which Moses proclaimed for us in the wilderness?" One can readily see the impact of the message of these literary prophets, and we can surmise that this is exactly what happened at the time. Jerusalem became the single cult center and the Levites took over all the religious duties. The pre-literary prophetic guilds which conducted some of the religious services at the cult centers in the north (and some in the south as well, no doubt) were ostracised and the Levites became the sole religious

functionaries.

I shall now embark upon a bit of conjecture. It would seem logical that since the pre-literary prophetic preachments were discounted after a period of time, there would be no guarantee that the preachments of the literary prophets would not suffer the same fate. Therefore, it is conceivable that the Levites, when the literary prophets cemented into power, were afraid that some event might occur in the future which would jeopardize their sovereignty as leaders over the people. To prevent this, perhaps it was the Levites themselves who carefully plotted the events which in 621 B.C.E., during the reign of King Josiah, became known as the Deuteronomie Revolution.

In 621 B.C.E. an amazing "document" was suddenly discovered and was immediately brought to the attention of King Josiah.<sup>79</sup> This document (which is known to us as the Book of Deuteronomy, hence called D) was the farewell speech of Moses, delivered just before his death, and previously unknown to have existed. In that this speech was attributed to Moses made it law to the people, because Moses was considered by the people to be the authentic revealer of God's word--no questions asked. The essence of Deuteronomy is the condemnation of the multiple altar system, the appointment without question of the Levites as the sole administrators of religious affairs, the statement that only if the people would follow all the laws and commandments would God favor them, thus placing the responsibility for proper behavior on the masses, who in turn would feel all sorts of guilt, thereby elevating the Levites in their minds since the Levites were the ones to expiate their



feelings of guilt, and, in general, placing the Levites in such a position in the eyes of the people that it would seem that nothing could possibly dethrone them (except that they never conceived of the utter brilliance of the Aaronides yet to come).<sup>10</sup>

The only objection that one could raise is that how could Messianic revelation counteract Messianic revelation, since J.E. promulgated the system of multiple altars and multiple cults, whereas D proclaimed the one altar, one religious group rule. The brilliant way the Levites escaped this criticism was that Deuteronomy did not openly challenge the authenticity of J.E., but merely supplanted it by having Deuteronomy appear as Moses's farewell speech. Since it was the farewell speech of Moses, the Levites hoped that everyone would consider this to be revelation given to Moses after the other revelations had been given, and since later publications always take precedence over previous ones, the people accepted this and therefore followed the D pronouncements, disregarding the J.E. material. And, as the final element of brilliancy exhibited by the Levites, at the conclusion of this speech, there is a statement that nothing can be added after this.<sup>11</sup> We note that J.E. never said anything about future material being added, so therefore no one could question the validity of adding material to J.E. Now, however, with this statement, the Levites could feel secure knowing that another group in the future could not depose them by adding anything following Moses's farewell address. The reason I conjectured that the Levites might have been the group to have plotted and written Deuteronomy is that it is the Levites who are the ones benefitting from this book. It concerns their interest in

the struggle for supremacy and their success in this matter. Also, perhaps the Aaronides were around beginning to cause trouble, so the Levites in the Book of Deuteronomy do not refer to the sons of Aaron even once with the exception of mentioning the episode of the Golden Calf in which Aaron is shown in a very bad light, as the one who attempted to wrest the power from Moses during the time Moses was upon Mount Sinai. Anyone reading Deuteronomy, therefore, would certainly look down upon the Aaronides, and praise the Levites as the true religious functionaries in the society.

However, as brilliant as the Levites were, they did not match the fantastic brilliance, the true genius, of the Aaronides. For indeed, the Levites were correct in assuming that the Aaronides were a threat to their position as religious heads of the people. The very brilliant and complex way the Aaronides did destroy the power and authority of the Levites is that upon which I shall now embark and which will be the main interest of this chapter.

Up to this time, and somewhat beyond, extending through the Babylonian Captivity of 521 B.C.E., the Pentateuch was recognized as the "constitution and by-laws" governing the Israelites. (Fortunately for the Aaronides, the Babylonians did not impose their religious rules and regulations upon the captives, squelching the cosmic power of Yahweh, or destroying the importance of the priesthood--nor did the Persians after them). This non-canonized Pentateuch was the key to the Aaronides rise to power. Had the Pentateuch been canonized, it could not have been tampered with, or touched in any way. Thus, the Aaronides would have had to write a new book,



hoping that the people would read and accept this new book instead of the Pentateuch. But, since the Levites so very cleverly said that nothing could be added following Moses's farewell address, and since the Pentateuch had the unquestioned authority of Moses, one could reasonably assume that the Aaronides would have been shunned completely by the masses. If this new book by the Aaronides had given Moses as the authority, the Aaronides would probably have been considered to be blasphemers, since Moses had already delivered his farewell address stating what was and what was not valid.

Therefore, what could the Aaronides do? Instead of attempting to add anything to the end of the Pentateuch, they interwove a great deal of material (which we shall label as P, standing for priestly) throughout the pages of the Pentateuch, so that upon reading the Pentateuch, the constant mention of Aaron would focus the reader's attention upon Aaron and his role in the society and the reader would not consider the Levites as important as Aaron, since they are not mentioned as frequently. The Aaronides did not add anything following Deuteronomy, but there was no law that they could not interpolate material in the books preceding Deuteronomy, so that it was not important to worry about Deuteronomy at all. In fact, were one to read through the entire Pentateuch, by the time the reader arrived at Deuteronomy, there would be no question in his mind that the mentioning of Levites merely means members of the Aaronide family, and not the special family known as Levites. Then, the Aaronides were successful in canonizing the Pentateuch so that no one in the future could touch any part of it, either adding to it at the end (the end being Moses's farewell address, so nothing

could have been added to it even prior to the canonization) nor interpolating material into other parts of the Pentateuch. In this way, with the Pentateuch primarily focusing upon the importance of the Aaronides as the true religious functionaries of the people, the Aaronides, by 400 B.C.E. could feel fairly safe that no one would question their authority or depose them. And, in this they were correct. No one did depose them, but with the beginning of the polis culture and the Hasmonean revolt featuring the rise of the Pharisees, the entire Pentateuchal system featuring the concept of the written law, was overthrown. Of course, the corruptness of the Aaronide priesthood contributed to the collapse of the system, but this falls outside the scope of this paper.

Let us now look at the methods used by the Aaronides to accomplish their task of gaining supremacy over the masses and the Levites. In Ezekiel we find the statement that redemption comes only through proper cult observance which was to be directed through the sons of Zadok. The Aaronides jumped on Ezekiel's bandwagon, so to speak, and emphasized that the worship of Yahweh was possible only through the ritualistic temple service. The Aaronides convinced the people that they needed constant expiation, and this emphasis created, we will postulate, a guilt-complex filled society. As Professor Rivkin admirably points out, guilt is a primary stimulus for religion, so that the success of the priests hinges upon their ability to expiate the sins of the people. Then the Aaronides traced the genealogy of the sons of Zadok back through Zadok to Phineas to Elazar to Aaron to Moses. By doing this, the Aaronides claim that they alone are the ones who can successfully expiate the

sins of the people. The Levites, however, reminded the people that in the Book of Deuteronomy (their book!) Joshua is the leader commissioned by Moses, and Joshua was not only not a member of Aaron's family, he was not even a priest at all. The Aaronides, being so brilliantly clever, interpolated material throughout the Book of Numbers, and in Numbers 27.12, we read that Moses tells Joshua to present himself before Elazar, the High Priest, at which time both Moses and Elazar together commission Joshua. This interpolation implies that Joshua had to check with the priests before he could make any sort of move, because he was indebted to the priests for commissioning him leader of the people. We see in this episode that the Aaronides did not do away with Joshua, but by adding a great deal of material to the Joshua story, they demonstrated how Joshua needed the priests. The Aaronides were represented as the power behind the throne, thus making them extremely important, hence powerful, in the Israelite community.

There was, however, one more important problem, and that was the placing of the Levites in a bad light, thereby causing them to lose the respect of the populace and become a poor second to the "league leading" Aaronides. The Aaronides did this most cleverly. They took the Book of Numbers and told about a man named Korach who was a Levite. Korach, it was told, rebelled against Moses in the wilderness, causing a great deal of trouble in the camp. Korach rebelled because he wanted to usurp Moses's power in the community--certainly a dastardly thing to do, as far as the people of 400 B.C.E. were concerned. In their minds, nobody who challenged Moses was to be respected. (see Numbers, Chapter 16, for the story). As the story

goes, Korach and four hundred people with him, felt that they should be the priests of the people, since God really ordered them to fill this position. (Naturally, since Korach was a Levite, the story implies that all the Levites followed Korach, hence the Levites in toto are reprobates and not deserving of the priesthood.) The story continues with God announcing to the people that He would destroy Korach and all of his followers because of their rebelliousness. An earthquake suddenly occurs and Korach and his followers are indeed destroyed, being swallowed up in the earth. Then a plague strikes the camp of Moses, and at this point, Aaron races in and grabs a fire-pan of hot coals, ritually making a supplication before God to save the rest of the people. Surely enough, at this point the plague ceases as suddenly as it began, and Aaron is the hero of the day. The Levites are held in disrepute, Aaron is the one chosen by God to be His priest making expiation before Him for the sins of the people, and the Aaronides have captured the upper hand. But not quite--the Aaronides were brilliant enough to realize that perhaps this episode would be forgotten in time, and the Levites would still remain in control. Therefore, the next day, so the story goes, God commanded Aaron to hammer a bronze plaque upon every altar to constantly remind the people of the rebellion of Korach. By virtue of this reminder, the Levites would always be in disrepute, and the Aaronides had established their control over the priesthood, and thus over the society. Because of this enormous amount of interpolation, the Aaronides were successful, and the Golden Calf incident of Deuteronomy fell insignificantly by the wayside. Had, however, the Levites had the foresight to hammer the



incident of the Golden Calf in full view of the people, the Aaronides might still have never been so overwhelmingly successful (if at all) in overcoming the hold the Levites had had upon the society.<sup>86</sup> The Aaronides with this story also ensured the importance of an expiatory priesthood because it was through the burning of incense in the fire-pen that God repented and saved the people. Obviously the people would respect and praise Aaron and his sons because of this act of saving them from destruction by stoning for them before God. Thus did the Aaronides cement their hold on the priesthood, and the Levites became the helpers of the Aaronides, but only the Aaronides were permitted to ascend the altar. As an added piece of support for the Aaronides, it might be worth mentioning that Ben Sirah recalls the incident of Korach, again reminding the people that it is the Aaronides, and not the Levites, who are deserving of the priesthood.<sup>87</sup>

Another item that is important in the development of the priesthood, culminating in the supremacy of the Aaronides, is the way the Aaronides utilized existing institutions, especially the calendar, for their benefit to show their importance for the survival of the community.

When we read the Pentateuch in its canonized form as a single unit, we find numbered months and non-named months. This was done by the Aaronides to associate the calendar with the cult, and not with a fixed agricultural cycle which would not need the services of the Aaronides. The calendar became a ritual calendar, and not a "functional" calendar. The calendar emphasized the importance of sacrifice, which of course could only be conducted by the cult, and in this instance, the Aaronide "cult." The calendar consisted of

twelve month with thirty days in each month, making a year of three hundred sixty days. Every three months, one extra day was intercalated, making a total of four intercalated days each year, or a total of three hundred sixty four days each year. Every forty-ninth year, there would be an intercalation of seven weeks, interspersed throughout the year in order to catch up for the missing day each previous year. The fiftieth year in each cycle of fifty years would be the Jubilee Year, a very important year for the priests, as this is the time when they declared debts to be cancelled and prisoners to go free. The Aaronides would number the months, exist at certain times, and declare the Jubilee Year. Thus it is that we see the entire daily life of the people bound up with and very dependent upon the Aaronides.

Everything is under the aegis of the Aaronides and subject to their interpretation with the exception of Passover, in the Pentateuch. Passover is the only historical festival to be found in the Pentateuch, so that this festival was not interfered with or changed by the Aaronides, but additions were made to it. The other two major festivals listed in the Pentateuch are Succos and Shavuot. But, Succos and Shavuot are not so historically oriented or fixed as to when they occur, so the Aaronides had free reign over these two events in the calendar year. As far as Passover is concerned, it is fixed to fall in "Aviv" but there is no fixed day in "Aviv" when it is to fall so that even with Passover, the Aaronides had some control. Succos is called merely "KawTzeer" (the harvest) and so can fall "when due." And, the "when due" is up to the Aaronides. Turning once more to Passover, Exodus states



merely that one is to have matzoh. But, in Deuteronomy (thanks to the Levites!) there is mention of a sacrifice to be offered up,<sup>22</sup> thereby binding this holiday to the priesthood. And, upon looking at the Book of Leviticus, a book of much interpolation by the Aaronides (as is the Book of Numbers), the Passover observance is spelled out in full.<sup>23</sup> For the first time do we find mention that Passover is to last seven days, and that during the seven days, there is to be daily sacrifices. Thus is the holiday of Passover absolutely dependent upon the priesthood for its successful observance, and thus is the importance of the priesthood made manifest via the spelling out of the observance of the Passover festival. Whether or not the Levites or the Aaronides or any one else for that matter spelled out the observance of the Passover festival tying it up with the cult is immaterial. The important item to keep in mind is that when the Aaronides became the priests of the people, they capitalized upon the importance of this festival and the absolute dependence of the people upon them, else the people would not be able to have expiation for their sins. So we see one way that the Aaronides became involved in the total life of the community.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly enough, there is no mention of either Rosh Rosh HaShonah or Yom Kippur in the Pentateuch. There is a reference to the first day of the seventh month,<sup>25</sup> but it is a cultic day, to be presided over by the priests, because any multiple of seven is considered to be a special cultic event. This is why the forty-ninth year was important to the Aaronides, and why they decreed the absolution of debts and punishments and made expiation for the

populace. The tenth day of the seventh month was also referred to but it was merely called a fast day, and a great Sabbath.<sup>26</sup> This, again would make it a day dependent upon the priests, because the Sabbath was a day on which special sacrifices were offered up in behalf of the people, and the fast day part of it emphasized the importance of expiation--again an act dependent upon the priests. Both of these days had priests in control and were probably devised by the priests, perhaps the Aaronides themselves, in order to constantly remind the people of the importance of the priesthood in their lives. I am making this conjecture on the strength that no historical nor economic reasons were attached to these days making them important from a standpoint other than as a device for the priests to remind the people of the importance of the priesthood.

With the holiday of Succos, booths were specified in the Pentateuch, and along with this ritualistic practices were mentioned as well as an offering by the priests in the Temple in Jerusalem. In fact, Ezra supports this by referring to the practices mentioned in the Pentateuch surrounding the holiday of Succos.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, it appears that the Aaronides were indeed clever in having the entire year focus around them. As far as their authority for the celebration of the festivals, and the spelling out of the observance of the festivals on a cultic level, the Aaronides, it appears, stated Joshua was the one who ordained all this concerning the observance of the festivals. Certainly the Aaronides were on safe grounds, since no one was around in 400 B.C.E. who would have had any idea of what Joshua really said. Thus, no one could question the Aaronides'

declarations concerning the observance of the festivals, and the Aaronides were on very safe grounds in this area.

The role of the Temple and the cult stole the "show." Offerings of first fruits and expiation for all was seen all over as a pervasive element in the lives of the people. But, the Aaronides, if we follow our line of conjecture and view the calendar as a method utilized by the Aaronides to cement their position in the Israelite society, did not stop at the festivals. Upon reading the Book of Numbers, <sup>70</sup> we find that there are to be daily offerings at the Temple in behalf of the people, one offering in the morning, and the other offering in the evening. Also, special offerings for each Sabbath are mentioned in this same book. And, as a climax, guilt-offerings are stressed for every occasion. Thus we see that the importance of the Aaronides in the daily life of all the people, for not a day went by in the calendar year, that the Aaronides were not involved in sacrificing in behalf of the people. And, the fact that many of these offerings were called guilt-offerings reminded the people of their constant sinfulness so that they would never forget the importance and goodness of the Aaronides and their dependence upon the Aaronide priesthood in making expiations for the populace. It is not inconceivable that the populace said, "how, oh how could we survive without the Aaronide priesthood." Thus it was that the Aaronides, via their utilization of existing institutions firmly established their supremacy over the people, and their methods were so thorough, the supremacy could not have been challenged, unless the entire system were challenged, which happened, as I mentioned, around 129 B.C.E. with the beginning of the Hasmonean Revolt.

In the calendar, each day becomes important unto itself as a passage of time, during which exiation was made for the sins of the people during that time period. The cultic calendar was a time-centered calendar, and not a seasonally-oriented one, because the Aaronides are concerned with the process of exiation, which is a daily program of ritual and sacrifice. Also, and this is a rather important point which should be stressed, this calendar does not open itself up for criticism, since it appears in the Biblical text, in the same way that the Book of Deuteronomy appeared, as something that supercedes all previous systems, and not as something which attacks and exposes previous systems. If it did attack and attempt to expose previous systems, it not only would be open to all types of criticism, but also it would be held in question as to its validity, since the previous systems supposedly had Mosaic authority. Of course, the Aaronides, as far as the calendar was concerned, did not care if it superceded previous systems in the manner that the Levitical Book of Deuteronomy did, because by virtue of the process of canonization\* which paralleled the establishment of the new clauendrical system, no one would be able to tamper with the new calendar, either by adding onto it, or by utilizing the method of the Aaronides in their quest for supremacy, by interpolating around and through it. Since it became part of the canon, and because the canon fixed the permanency of everything contained in it, the calendar stood in no danger, since no one could change in any way what the canon firmly and permanently established.

In the discussion concerning the calendar, there is yet one

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\* Please see Appendix D for a discussion concerning canonization.



more item which should be mentioned, and that is the situation occurring with the forty-ninth year.

At the time of the forty-ninth year, because of the number of days lost throughout this cycle (with three hundred sixty four days in each year, this means a loss of forty-nine days by the time of the forty-ninth year), spring would come forty-nine days early! This problem does not concern itself with Succos, as it comes in the fall, nor Passover, so Passover can have a fixed date, as well as Succos. The holiday which would be involved was the holiday of Shavuos. Since Shavuos was a spring harvest festival, and since, if Shavuos would have had a fixed date, people would begin to wonder, by the forty-ninth year, why there was no harvest to harvest at the time of Shavuos, and this would lead the people to question the authenticity of the calendar which the priests established supposedly through Divine Revelation from God, and this would make the activities of the Aaronides suspect and perhaps be the item which would cause their overthrow, the festival of Shavuos has no fixed date in the Pentateuch. No doubt, by way of conjecture, the Aaronides in their brilliance foresaw this problem, so that by the canonization of the Pentateuch, it would not be illogical to assume that they purposely made sure that Shavuos did not have any fixed date what-so-ever. This is proof positive, as far as I am concerned, that the calendar was a cultically-oriented device, and not an agriculturally-oriented one, otherwise the holiday of Shavuos would have had a fixed date.

At this point one can question the statement in the Pentateuch mentioning that Shavuos was to occur seven weeks after Passover. ”

Does this not establish a fixed date for Shavuot, since Passover has a fixed date? The answer to this comes from the close scrutiny of the Pentateuch. We see that the measurement is not really from Passover, but seven weeks of the first ripening of the barley. The link of Shavuot being seven weeks from Passover came about with the establishment of the solar calendar around the time of the Pharisees. We must remember that the calendar of the Aaronides was based on the moon, and not the sun. Thus we clearly see that the priests were not hindered by any agricultural cycle. They cleverly operated around the agricultural cycle and they concentrated upon the cultic requirements of the various festivals, thereby turning the populace's attention away from any agricultural cycle, which would be subject to question on the part of the Aaronides, to the importance of sacrifice and expiation needed to absolve themselves of their guilt brought on by their sins--a concept really drilled home by the Aaronides, and drilled home apparently quite successfully. As an added note to the above, the important event surrounding the appearance of the barley was the processional of the priests into the fields where they collected some of the ripened barley and waved it about (I suppose in the manner that one waves the esrog and the lulav on the holiday of Succot) as a sign to begin the seven week's counting (which in today's traditional prayer book is called the counting of the omer) and more important, I would imagine this waving was another form of expiation, perhaps waving away the sins of the people into the breezes of the afternoon (or morning, whenever they went out!). Thus we see that not only was this calendar operational, and apparently accepted, but it



ensured that the priests held sway over every facet of the life of the community. And, and we must never forget this, the priests equated all of their actions and the goals to which they ascribed, to the one Cosmic God, who ruled over everyone and everything. The creation of a Cosmic God concept for Yahweh went hand-in-hand with the process of canonization of the Pentateuch, but this item although very fascinating in and by itself, is not truly relevant to the discussion of the development of the priesthood, except to say that another group ascribing to the priesthood would be unable to challenge Yahweh with their own god, since the canon established that Yahweh was the only God.

It should also be pointed out the brilliance of the establishment of the Jubilee Year<sup>19</sup>! Although this, like a lot of this material is conjecture, it seems to be fairly logical. The Aaronides needed the support of the masses. The majority of the masses were the peasants, therefore, the Aaronides needed the support of the peasants in order to reign supreme over the community. An individual will only openly and avidly support you if you help him out of his troubles. A major trouble of the peasant was that he was so poor, he was often in debt, and in many instances, in a sort of debtors' prison. If the Aaronides could free the peasantry, at least once in a while, they would have the undying love, affection, and gratitude of the peasantry, thereby giving them the societal support they would need to establish themselves as the supreme rulers of the society. Therefore, by establishing a Jubilee Year, in which all debts and obligations and punishments would be removed, the Aaronides created a "free peasantry." They gave the peasants hope that in a

given period of time, they would have an opportunity to begin over again in their quest for a secure life. This guarantee was the vital element winning unquestioned support from the majority of the populace, aiding greatly to establish themselves as priests-rulers over Israel.

To further augment the importance of the priests over the populace, a new group of people began to appear on the scene after 400 B.C.E. These people we shall call the Sopherim. Although I do not want to get enmeshed in a discussion of these Sopherim, their works, such as the Book of Psalms, praised the Aaronides to the hilt and none of the literature appearing on the scene at this time attacked the Aaronides in the least. In fact, this literature is so very favorable to the Aaronides, one might wonder whether perhaps these Sopherim might not have been an hierocratic Aaronitic intellectual group that did not occupy itself with the carrying out of the religious rituals and sacrifices. What these people did do was to constantly sing out the glories of the Aaronides. This action was important because it continually called attention to the work the Aaronides were doing, their importance to the well-being of the community, and the necessity of the community to rely upon the Aaronides for the survival of the community. These men studied the Pentateuch and wrote inspiring Psalms, and informative Proverbs to give the populace guidance in its daily life and reminding the populace of the respect it had better show toward the Aaronides.

One could perhaps bring counter-arguments about the Sopherim saying that they were something other than Aaronides, but from their

writings, it would certainly seem that if they were not Aaronides, they had strong Aaronide leanings and a great deal of love for the Aaronides. The only other suggestion I might offer regarding this group of men would be that the Aaronides built such a wall of support within the populace, that anyone who would speak against them would be ostracised from the community and looked upon with disrepute. Therefore, in order to survive comfortably and not be treated with hostility, this group wrote about the wonders and glories of the Aaronides and their cultic, expiationary system. As far as the argument that these people must have been Aaronides, but not involved with the cultic functions of the group, why would someone write, and spend the amount of effort needed in those days to preserve words for posterity, if they did not have a cause which would definitely benefit themselves. Only by being members of the Aaronide group would they share in the "riches" of the Aaronides. Merely writing the praises of the Aaronides might gain them some rewards from the Aaronides, but not enough to warrant their great expenditure of energy along these lines. I make this appraisal because it seems, given the great body of material already presented, that the Aaronides were so firmly entrenched that although the efforts of the Sopherim would have been welcomed by the Aaronides as extra support from the society, this support was not so vital as to require the giving of great rewards on behalf of the Aaronides to the Sopherim.

Therefore, it seems quite logical that the Sopherim were a special branch of the Aaronides, and if this assumption is correct, this would be the zenith for the Aaronides, the high point of their

development, the ultimate of attainment in the development and evolution of the Israelitic priesthood which began as a body to carry out religious functions of a society, splitting into various factions, such as Levites and Aaronides, having these factions war with each other, with the faction coming out on top becoming not only the religious heads of the people, but also the power behind the throne, and completing its development with a group of them leaving the area of priestly functions to engage in the height of literary activity, attaining an excellence desired by all writers in any age. Certainly this is quite an evolution for a single group of people within one society.

At any rate, the Aaronides were by this time on top, and everyone including kings turned to them for advice, and strengthening.

There are a few more items which should be mentioned prior to the conclusion of this chapter, the chapter which perhaps should be called the key chapter in the discussion of the development of the priesthood, and at the end of which, all that really can be said about the priesthood will have been said without merely repeating the words of others, words which have been echoed throughout this paper. These few items I shall now mention in as brief a form as is possible, since these items merely augment what has already been said, and call to light certain things which, upon the investigation of the previous material would seem to be the next logical points in a discussion of this kind. Therefore, without any further introduction to that which follows let us now take a look at that material.

Because of the introduction of all types of rituals covering all sorts of situations (rituals which one can examine in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, and which have been summarized in the chapter entitled Duties of the Priests, in this paper) it would seem logical to assert that because of this, the Aaronides convinced the people that only the Aaronides could possibly know enough to satiate the Deity. This is a very important item in our discussion of the Aaronides, as this would insure that no insurrectionist would attempt to infiltrate the ranks of the masses and in so doing, convince the masses that people, other than the Aaronides, should be allowed to participate in the sacrificial service. This did happen later, however, with the Pharisees, but that subject is for another paper.

Another item which bears mentioning and which is rather important to our discussion is that any group controlling the economic surplus controls the population, and this is exactly what the Aaronides did. Not only did they cement their position among the populace on an emotional level, of being the group to exorcise the sins of the populace, but on a very practical economic level as well. The Aaronides did indeed control the economic surplus because, upon reading the Biblical text, we find statements that the people were instructed that the only way to alleviate their guilt-feelings would be to turn everything in excess over to the Temple, including all the excess crops, and even money (although I wonder whether there really was much money as we know it today around at that time, or whether the type of life was on the barter and exchange of goods level). This the people would unhesitatingly do because they



certainly did want their sins expiated.

There is no question that the people were strongly behind the Aaronides. The Aaronides had firmly cemented their supremacy status over the populace, and the importance of the canonization of the Pentateuch can be viewed, I think, as the absolute statement of the supremacy of the Aaronides. They interpolated their material anywhere they could throughout the entire five books of the Pentateuch without changing or deleting a single word of the previous three sources, J.E. and D. The Pentateuch became the book of Aaronide authority and there was absolutely no one in this agricultural environment who would be a challenge to the Aaronides. We must remember that the concept of the group was still strong during this period (in fact, this was quite important for the Aaronide quest for supremacy) so that were one person to do something wrong, it would be a sin upon the entire community. This was an important control for the Aaronides because as long as individualism did not rear its ugly head, the Aaronides would be very safe in their holding of supreme power in the community, because everyone would, no doubt, caution his neighbor that he had better be careful or the whole nation would be in disfavor in the eyes of God. Also, and although this had been mentioned before, I feel it bears mentioning briefly again, because the Aaronides held the economic power, being the funnels through which everyone would give their surplus, the Aaronides, with the authority they created for themselves through their brilliant editing of the Pentateuch, reigned supreme until a new cultural strain began to evidence itself in the society, corrupting the Aaronides, defeating the concept of the necessity of

of a cult-center because law replaced the cult, freeing the individuals in the agricultural environment from the land, this new structure is the Polis, arising by virtue of the rapid advance of Hellenism across the Mid-East.

Indeed, the Aaronides were secure. They had ingratiated themselves into their society, and had firmly cast the Levites into a secondary position from which they would never be able to arise, and had done this through the basic act of interpolation within the body of the Pentateuch. The Aaronides had ingratiated themselves into the society at large by convincing this society that it was terribly guilt-ridden, and that the only way to salvation is through a complex system of rituals known only to the Aaronides and through whom, therefore, only only through whom, could the people relieve themselves of their terrible guilt. Of course the Aaronides were extremely careful to convince the people that the expiation had to be done on a day to day basis since no matter how careful anyone is, he still cannot keep himself from sin. Therefore, it was necessary to have expiation made daily, thereby constantly calling attention to the importance of the Aaronide priesthood in this particular agriculturally-centered peasant society.

The brilliance of the Aaronides was met only by those who ascribed to a totally different way of life, but in the particular system in which the Aaronides operated, there was no one, nor was there any group which could have possibly challenged their supremacy in any way, shape, or form. They attained the zenith, and they held onto it. They created the most complex and detailed priesthood

imaginable, the details of which can be seen upon reading the Pentateuch.

This then is the essence of the discussion on the Aaronides and their struggle to attain the leadership of the people which they did so masterfully. In fact, since they were the last body of priests prior to the Hasmonean revolt, there is little that can be said about the evolution of the priesthood beyond this point. We could mention the high priests in more detail than has been done, but I can see no need of this. We might, upon an even closer scrutiny of the Biblical text come up with a few more priestly functions and obligations, but none of which would shed any more light upon that which has already been discussed. And yet, upon reaching the conclusion of a chapter of this nature, one always wonders whether everything has been said, or whether there are items which have been inadvertently overlooked. Therefore this material should be a challenge which can only be answered by even more study of the material, and a reading of each and every article in this field.

No doubt there are items which are important to this discussion and which have been overlooked, yet I have not found them. And, perhaps there are many more items which can only come to light after much more archaeological excavations have been completed in Israel, and more tablets, scrolls and documents have been unearthed and read. Perhaps there are a few caves yet unexplored which contain material not of the period of the Essenes, but of the Aaronides, or the Levites, or Joshua, or Moses, or even the three founding fathers, the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, themselves.

And, perhaps of the material that we do have today, I, myself, have left something important out, or have not considered some important piece of evidence. For this I take full blame, and shall accept all criticism with interest and with a desire to add to the knowledge I have already attained through the preparation of not only this chapter, but this entire paper.

I admit that I did not deal at all fully with the problem of the cosmification of Yahweh, as I felt that this had much more to do with the total problem of Pentateuchal Canonization, than with the actual development of the priesthood, in all of its ramifications, nor did I deal fully with the discussion of the validity of the man Ezra, since again I felt that to conduct a full discussion on this problem would have been tangential, and unnecessary for the scope of this paper.

I hope that in this chapter I have treated fully the growth and development of the Aaronides, and that this chapter, coupled with all of those that have preceded this, will give the reader a fairly well-rounded picture of the development and evolution of the priesthood from the very informal beginnings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their sacrificing to God as Patriarchs of their respective families, to the terribly ornate system evolved and developed by the Aaronides.

And so the end of this chapter has been reached, and with it the basic material of this paper has been presented. Aside from the several appendices and footnotes added to this paper in the following pages, little else can be said, I feel, regarding the development of the Israelitic priesthood from its earliest beginnings

to the Hasmonean revolt. That is, little else can be said which might shed any new light upon the problem discussed in these pages.

Basically, the original source material has been used, and it is the hope of the author, that through the use of this material, a fairly complete picture of the development of the priesthood has been presented to anyone who might chance upon this paper and decide to read its pages.

NOTE: At this point I would like to add a footnote to this chapter as to my reason for not discussing the Samaritan schism. Although this schism is indeed important in a general study of Jewish history, I did not feel that this particular event had vital bearing on the development of the Israelitic priesthood. This schism seemed to take place because there was some unhappiness as to the type of religious observances and the people in charge of them (the Aaronides) so that it became necessary for this group of Samaritans to disassociate with the mainstream of Israelites in order to practice their beliefs. This disassociation did not seem to disrupt the society of Israelites, nor the Aaronide priesthood, although we might use this schism as an example of how firmly entrenched the Aaronides actually were--that no one was able to depose them or infiltrate their ranks, thus the only way to disagree with them was to start a new movement hoping that it would take hold, but probably knowing that it would not, since the Aaronides seemed to have an air-tight case for their supremacy and their authority. It is for this reason that I did not go into any kind of lengthy discussion of this small and relatively minor group,



since it was my feelings, having looked at the material concerning this group, that they were not at all essential to the discussion of an emerging and developing Israelitic priesthood. No doubt there will be those who will take exception to this, but as I have said, I cannot see any important relevance of the Samaritan schism to the topic in question in this paper. Hence, I did not bother to discuss this schism in this paper.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The very fact that this paper is called a "thesis" means that it can never have any air of finality about it. No proposition or set of propositions can be considered, necessarily, to be foolproof. As more and more scholarship is done, greater insights cannot help but come to light, giving us much more accurate information about the priesthood and the period in which it flourished. In fact, even this paper did not concern itself with such Biblical books like that of Malachai, which upon very close scrutiny seems to be a polemic in behalf of the Levites against the Aaronides. Since this paper tried to trace the development of the priesthood, it concentrated upon the aspects that contributed directly to the development of this group. The fact, however, that a book like Malachai was written, seems to back up the premiss of this paper that the Aaronide priesthood was extremely well established and that as a last resort, the Levites tried to show the unauthenticity of the Aaronide control by adding a book to the Biblical canon, since they could not challenge the Aaronides any other way, and no doubt this way was not very successful, either.

We have seen that the people living in the pre-Mosaic period did not have to establish a special group within their societal structure to handle priestly functions, for the family's patriarch was well able to handle this task and have the respect that the

priestly office demanded. We saw that in all probability Moses could not have possibly been the founder of an organized priesthood, but that it began with the centralization period at the time of the beginnings of the monarchy. We offered a theory that Moses was "credited" as the author of the priesthood only to give extra credence to the demands first of the Levites, and then of the Aaronides, that they be recognized as the true priests over Israel. We saw the power struggle between the Levites and the Aaronides with the Aaronides becoming victorious. We viewed the duties of the priests, also, in order to see how, by becoming involved in the total life of the community, the priesthood became the rulers of the society, even more powerful than the kings.

Without going into any detail, we mentioned that the priesthood was extremely secure until an entirely new societal pattern appeared upon the scene, the "polis," and with it the beginnings of the Hasmonean revolt.

This, then, concludes this paper, but, as I said on the page preceding, it does not close the work that still must be done in this area in order to get an even more accurate picture of the development of the priesthood in the Biblical period.

APPENDIX A

The following is a complete list of all the references in this paper which come from the Bible and the Anochrypha, including the reference to Josephus which can be found at the end of this list, as well as the reference to Eben HaEzer of the Shulchan Aruch.

GENESIS: Chapter 12, in toto.

14.18.

Chapter 22, in toto.

26.25.

27.27,28,29,39,40.

47.22,26

Chapter 49, in toto.

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EXODUS: Chapter 12, in toto, especially 12.38.

19.5,6,14,22,24.

24.6.

28.1,3,30.

29.1,2,4,5,21,28,29.

30.7,8,19,20,21.

34.22.

LEVITICUS:

1.5-10.

2.1,2.

3.1-3.

4.13,21,30.

6.2,7,8,9.

7.2,6.

LEVITICUS (continued):

8.33.

9.23,24.

10.16-18.

12.6,7.

14.6,7,10-32,33-47,49-53.

Chapter 15, in toto.

Chapter 16, in toto, especially 16.32-34.

Chapter 17, in toto.

21.1-5,7,9,10,11,12,14,16-23.

23.5-8,10,11,24,27,34,42,43.

24.9.

Chapter 25, in toto.

Chapter 27, in toto, especially 27.8,11,12,14,23.

NUMBERS: 4.5-16.

5.12-31.

6.9-13,14-15,23-27.

10.8.

11.4.

15.24-27.

Chapter 16, in toto.

18.5,20,28.

19.1-11.

20.25ff.

27.12,19-21.

28.3,9-27.

31.21-28.

Regarding information concerning sacrifices, see Chapters 6,7,10,15,18,28, and 29, in toto.



DEUTERONOMY: 9.8-21.

16.1-6, 9, 10.

17.9.

Chapter 18, in toto, especially 18.1-2.

19.17.

20.2-3.

21.1-9.

31.24-30.

JOSHUA: 3.14.

24.33.

I SAMUEL: 4.18.

10.1.

14.3.

I KINGS: 18.19.

II KINGS: Chapter 9, in toto.

Chapter 11, in toto.

Chapter 12, in toto.

16.10-11.

22.8.

25.18-21.

I CHRONICLES:

5.41.

9.30.

1

II CHRONICLES:

12.3.

19.11.

Chapter 23, in toto.

Chapter 24, in toto.

26.18-19.

29.34.

EZRA:

3.4.

6.20.

NEHEMIAH:

10.39.

EZEKIEL:

40.44.

43.19.

44.15-16.

48.11.

AMOS:

5.25-27.

7.10-13.

JOEL:

1.13.

MALACHI:

In Toto.

JOB:

2.7.

PSALMS:

In Toto.

PROVERBS: In Toto.

BEN SIRAH: Chapter 45, in toto.

JUDITH: 4.14-15.

JOSEPHUS: The Antiquities, Book IV: 4.4.

EBEN HAEZER of the SHULCHAN ARUCH:

n,1

APPENDIX B

The High Priests of the First Temple Era  
according to the Seder Olam Zuta and Josephus:

Seder Olam Zuta

Josephus

Zadok

Zadok

Ahimasz

Ahimaz

Abiathar

Azariah

Jehoahaz

Joram

Jehoiarib

Johanan (?)

Jehoshaphat

Axieramus

Jehoiada and Pedaias

Phideas (or Phiduis) (?)

Zedekiah

Dodai

Joel

Joel

Urijah

Jotham

Neriah

Urijah

Hoshea

Neriah

Shallum

Udiah

Hilkiah

Shallum

Azariah

Hilkiah

Seraiah

Hezir (?)

Jehozadak

Jehozadak

## APPENDIX C

EXPIATION

Although expiation has been mentioned a number of times throughout this paper, it was felt by the author that a few more words should be said about it, since this was an important element utilized by the priests, and especially by the Aaronides, in their quest for supremacy over the populace.

The priests stressed that a major role of their's was to atone for the sins of the populace. This implied that the populace was quite sin-filled. In their explanation of the reason for expiation, the priests seemed to indicate that the God of Israel needed constant recognition that He was the supreme power over the people, and that if he were not constantly recognized by the people, He would come down and destroy them. This concept would make any group fearful, lest they do something to anger the Deity. The priests at this point exclaimed that the populace need not worry, since the priests have been trained to propitiate the Deity--and the priests implied that this training was so specialized that only a priest would be able to do this correctly. Therefore, the populace truly were forced to recognize the priests as the power-holders over them and consequently, out of the fear that the priests one day might not favor the populace, the populace never dared to challenge the office of the priesthood.

In order for the priests to cement their hold over the populace, they (especially the Aaronides who used this theme to firmly cement their hold over the priesthood) declared that atonement must be made every day. Because of this pronouncement, it would not seem illogical to suggest that the people began to feel



very guilt-ridden, fearful that no matter what they did, they somehow transgressed one of God's laws and angered the Deity. The populace therefore became absolutely dependent upon the priesthood for their very survival. The priesthood, by creating a guilt-ridden society, ensured their hold over the people, so that no matter what the priests might do, the people would be forced to do them homage. Therefore, in the light of this discussion, we see how important was the role of expiation which was performed by the priests, and how this concept of daily expiation reminded the people of the importance of the priests, thereby giving the priesthood what they apparently desired, absolute control over the society-at-large, since the populace needed the priests to save them from destruction, the society having been convinced that only a priest would have the power to propitiate God.

From this we can see beyond a question of a doubt how important the concept of expiation was in giving the priests absolute power over the populace, and how clever the priesthood was to utilize this concept.

APPENDIX D  
CANONIZATION

In this paper, note has been taken regarding the importance of canonization in giving the Aaronides absolute supremacy over the populace, and cementing their hold on the priesthood, so that no one else might try to wrest the power of the priesthood from the hands of the Aaronides. Since the author felt that a few more words should be said regarding canonization, this appendix has been affixed to the paper.

The Pentateuch was considered by the people to be the absolute revelation from God, establishing the lines of authority over the society and describing the type of activities the society would have to perform in order to be favored by God. We saw that the Levites cleverly prohibited anyone from adding onto the last book of the Pentateuch by having Moses in his farewell speech say that no words can be added on to this final address. However, as we saw, the Aaronides gained the upper hand over the Levites by not adding onto the Book of Deuteronomy, but by interpolating a great deal of material into and around the other four books of the Pentateuch. Having done this, the Aaronides wanted to make sure that no one else could wrest the power of the priesthood from their hands. The only way to do this was to utilize the same method the Levites used, but apply it to the entire Pentateuch, instead of to just one of the five books. They did this via canonization. The process of canonization is a process of taking material and arranging in it a final form, known and recognized by the populace, so that no one could tamper with the finished product without the populace knowing it. We can surmise that after

the Aaronides had established themselves as supreme priests over the population, they presented the Pentateuch in the form they desired to the entire society, familiarizing them with all the contents. After doing this, they convinced the society that the Pentateuch was in the form dictated by God, which of course, ensured the fact that the people would ratify it and accept it unanimously. This having been done, they probably placed it on public view in the Jerusalem Temple. By doing this, everyone knew and accepted what the Pentateuch said, and anyone attempting to tamper with it would be immediately chastised by the populace.

By fixing this document in the minds of the populace, i.e.-- by canonizing the Pentateuch, the Aaronides did not have to worry about anyone attempting to dethrone them, at least through the utilization of the Pentateuch. Thus we see that canonization was very important to ensure the hold the Aaronides had over the populace, in their position as priests of the society.

APPENDIX E

THE RELATIONSHIP OF KING AND PRIEST

Within the confines of the body of this paper, I did not dwell upon the item of the king of the monarchy assuming the duties of the priests. Therefore, I felt that it was my duty to call to the attention of the reader the following passage from E. O. James's book, The Nature and Function of Priesthood, A Comparative and Anthreneological Study, page 78:

"That it was the accented practice for the king to exercise priestly functions as soon as the monarchy was established in Israel is shown, for example, by David taking over the cult organization at Jerusalem as its leader and not hesitating himself to wear an ephod when he danced ecstatically before the ark on its introduction into the sanctuary on Zion. Similarly, Solomon three times a year is said to have offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built to Yahweh, and to have burnt incense upon it. At a later period as Jeroboam sacrificed at the altar that he had erected at Bethel, so Ahaz offered burnt offerings, meat offerings and drink offerings upon an altar designed on an Assyrian pattern he had seen at Damascus, and sprinkled the blood of the peace offering upon it."

Whether or not David could be said to have the leadership of the priesthood in his hands might be debatable. Also, the other incidents cited by James were merely scattered incidents. I do

not think, therefore, that we could say with any degree of certainty, that the kings, upon the establishing of the monarchy, either took over the leadership of the priesthood, or acted as priests unto the people. And, we must always remember that the high priest was still in charge of anointing the kings of the monarchy, so that it would seem that priestly functions by and large still remained in the hands of the hierarchical priesthood, whether Levites, or Aaronides.

It is interesting that the kings did, once in a while, assume some of the sacrificial duties of the priests, but not to the extent that I would assert that upon the formation of the monarchy, the kings usurped the priestly functions. I have not found enough evidence in the Bible, itself, to comfortably make that claim. Basically, so it seems to me, the kings performed the various offices the kingship required, and the priests continued to have charge over the priestly affairs.



THE FOOTNOTES

NOTE: Due to the many references given on the pages to which they refer in this paper, this list of footnotes will be kept to a minimum.

1. Wellhausen, Julius, Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel, Meridian Books, World Publishing Company, Cleveland, 3rd printing, 1961. P. 131.
2. Ibid. P. 28.
3. Ibid. P. 33.
4. Ibid. P. 35.
5. Ibid. P. 36.
6. Ibid. P. 404.
7. Ibid. P. 9.
8. Ibid. P. 378.
9. Ibid. P. 386.
10. Ibid. P. 34.
11. Ibid. P. 36.
12. Ibid. P. 141.
13. Ibid. P. 358.
14. Ibid. Pp. 48-49.
15. Ibid. P. 59.
16. Ibid. P. 60.
17. Ibid. P. 74.
18. Ibid. P. 333.
19. Ibid. P. 354.
20. Ibid. Pp. 345-346.

THE FOOTNOTES (CONTINUED)

21. Ibid. P. 106.
22. Ibid. P. 110.
23. Ibid. P. 112.
24. Ibid. P. 119.
25. Ibid. P. 117.
26. Ibid. P. 37.
27. Ibid. P. 42.
28. Ibid. P. 44.
29. Ibid. P. 41.
30. Ibid. P. 12.
31. Ibid. P. 405.
32. Ibid. P. 408.
33. Ibid. Pp. 340, 345.
34. Pfeiffer, Robert, Introduction to the Old Testament, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1941. P. 203.
35. Ibid. P. 188.
36. Ibid. P. 207.
37. Eissfeldt, Otto, The Old Testament, An Introduction, Harper and Row, New York, 1955. Pp. 174-175.
38. Ibid. P. 207.
39. Ibid. P. 208.
40. Ibid. P. 208.
41. Ibid. P. 208.
42. Ibid. P. 207.
43. de Vaux, Roland, Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions, McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1961. P. 345.
44. Ibid. P. 347.

THE FOOTNOTES (CONTINUED)

45. Ibid. P. 298.
46. Ibid. P. 302.
47. Ibid. P. 428.
48. Ibid. P. 378.
49. Ibid. Pp. 396-397.
50. Ibid. Pp. 387-388.
51. Ibid. P. 368.
52. Ibid. P. 362.
53. Ibid. P. 363.
54. Ibid. P. 360.
55. Ibid. P. 334.
56. Meek, Theophile James, Hebrew Origins, Harper and Brothers, Torchbook, New York, 1960. Pp. 136, 140-141.
57. Ibid. P. 122.
58. Ibid. Pp. 133, 147.
59. Kaufmann, Yehezkel, The Religion of Israel, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2nd Impression 1963. P. 174.
60. Ibid. P. 176.
61. Bright, John, A History of Israel, Westminster Press, Philadelphia. P. 146.
62. Kaufmann, Op. Cit. P. 178.
63. Ibid. P. 185.
64. Ibid. P. 187.

THE FOOTNOTES (CONTINUED)

65. Ibid. P. 197.
66. Ibid. P. 198.
67. Ibid. P. 199.
68. Ibid. P. 177.
69. Ibid. Pp. 170-171.
70. Ibid. P. 301.
71. Job 2.7.
72. See Chapter 4 of this paper regarding the agricultural calendar.
73. Joshua 3.14.
74. I Kings 18.19.
75. II Kings 9, in toto.
76. I Samuel 10.1.
77. Most scholars attribute the J.E.D.P. classification to Wellhausen. See also the Jewish Encyclopedia for a discussion on this classification system.
78. See the Book of Amos, especially 5.25-27; and 7.10-13.
79. II Kings 22.8.
80. Read Deuteronomy in toto to get the full impact of Moses's farewell address.

The Footnotes (Continued):

81. Deuteronomy 31.24-30 states that the Levites should place this speech by the side of the ark. No doubt this was their attempt to cement their authority for the priesthood, by giving Deuteronomy the same importance as the Ark of the Covenant, no less!
82. Deuteronomy 9.8-21.
83. Wellhausen et. al. discuss this material--see the Jewish Encyclopedia for a good discussion also.
84. Were one to read the entire Pentateuch as a unit, Aaron's name would appear very frequently, giving the reader the impression that there was no question but that the Aaronides were the priests-supreme.
85. Ezekiel 40.46; 43.19; 44.15-16; and 48.11.
86. The Levites did place Deuteronomy next to the Ark, but this did not mean that it was in full view of the people. However, when the people saw the hammered plates on every altar, the people could not help but be aware that the Aaronides deserved the priesthood over the Levites. And, looking at the Temple in Jerusalem, since the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, which none of the populace was allowed to enter, and since the Book of Deuteronomy was next to the Ark, it is conceivable that the people forgot Deuteronomy ever existed. However, since many of the altars of the Temple were in the public court-yard, where the people would obviously see the hammered plates, the people would constantly be reminded of Korach and the reprobate Levites, and the glory of the Aaronides in dethroning the Levites!
87. See Ben Sirah, Chapter 45, especially verses 19 and 20, for his treatment of the Aaronides and the Levites.
88. Guttman, Alexander, Professor, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, private communication. We cannot stress too much the control the Aaronides had over the daily lives of the people as viewed by the Aaronide influence over the year's cycle, via their treatment of the calendar.
89. Among many references, see Exodus, Chapter 12.
90. Among many references, see Leviticus 23.34,42,43.
91. Exodus 34.22.
92. Deuteronomy 16.1-6.
93. Leviticus 23.5-8.



The Footnotes (Continued):

94. Here we might take note of Leviticus 23.11, showing the absolute dependence of the populace upon the priests for the proper observance of the various holidays, since in all the observances, the priests must wave an offering to God. Holidays were vital to propitiate the Deity so that He would not harm the people, and since only the priests can do this for the people (the people could not do this for themselves), we see the importance given the priests by the populace, and another example of how the priests entrenched themselves in power over the populace since the priests were vital for the welfare of the entire community.
95. Leviticus 23.24.
96. Leviticus 23.27.
97. Ezra 3.4.
98. Numbers, Chapters 6,7,10,15,18,28, and 29.
99. Deuteronomy 16.9-10.
100. Rivkin, Ellis, Professor, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, private communication.
101. See Leviticus, Chapters 25 and 26.

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