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GROUNDS FOR CONFIDENCE AS SUGGESTED BY THE BIBLICAL
 PASSAGES IN WHICH DERIVATIVES
 OF THE ROOT AMEN ARE USED

by

Edwin Howard Friedman

see note on p. VI
AMAN

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for
 the Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination.

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PRECIS

This essay is a search for grounds of confidence. It is an attempt to see what the authors of the Bible said man and God considered stable, that is, worthy of this confidence. No attempt, however, will be made to give a complete systematic account of the grounds for faith which appear in the Bible. The purpose of this essay is to show what grounds for confidence the authors of the Bible had in mind when employing forms of the root 'amen to show relationships of reliability between God and man and between man and man. The primary concern is with the root 'amen and its derivatives. These derivatives are understood from the contexts in which they are used and not from the grammatical forms in which they appear. For the goal is not merely to understand each reference thoroughly, (and hence why any particular form was used) but rather to see how the various references contribute to an overall pattern.

The final formulation of this pattern which forms the Table of Contents took place only after all the verses which contain derivatives of the root 'amen were set in relief against the contexts in which they appear.

The major conclusions reached about the grounds for confidence which the Biblical authors had in mind when employing derivatives of the root 'amen are as follows:

1. Man's confidence in God rests upon three grounds:
 - a) God is sincere - God wants to keep His promise.
 - b) God is genuine - God can keep His promise.
 - c) God is constant - God has kept His promise.
2. The grounds for God's confidence in man are two:

- a) Man must prove to God through his actions that God can rely on him.
 - b) Man must prove to God through his actions that other men can rely on him.
3. Man's confidence in man, like God's confidence in man, rests upon man's relationship to God and other men.
- a) Man must prove empirically that other men can trust him.
 - b) Man must prove empirically that God is behind him.
4. Man demands empirical evidence for putting his confidence in God on the ground that God has been constant. But he will often accept God's sincerity and ability without such evidence.
5. Both man and God demand empirical evidence for putting their confidence in man on the ground that man is sincere, or has been sincere. But they accept without any evidence man's natural ability to be faithful if he wants to be.
6. Man can have confidence in himself if his actions inspire others to have confidence in him.

למורי

ד"ר שלדון בלנק

שכל מעשיו מבוזים

בחזותם האמת

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INTRODUCTION

To appreciate a performance of a string quartet is to appreciate the fruits of confidence.

Watch the first violinist as he starts to play, stops after several bars, and then, precisely at the correct moment begins to play again. What enables the others to play on, concentrating on their own performances, confident that he will enter at the right moment? Is it not confidence?

Listen to them play all at once now, with no one to lead them, no one to keep time for them. Hear the antiphonal struggle between the violins, the contrapuntal tension of the cello and viola. What enables them to play with such precision? Is it not skill?

Notice how they work together, guided by a common contract telling them all both the goal and the road, each artist knowing that as long as each one is 'true' to the contract, they will succeed. What name shall we give to such success? Is it not art?

A string quartet consists of four artists blending their individual skills to produce one work of art. If it were possible to put such things into mathematical terms, we might say that the product of their work together is greater than the sum of their individual performances. What must be the primary quality in their relationships to account for this additional factor? Is it not confidence?

Is it not confidence based on the knowledge that each artist has entered into their compact with the sincere desire to perform a work of art? (He will sincerely try to be 'true' to the contract.) Is it not confidence based on the knowledge that each artist has the

ability (skill) to perform a work of art? (He can remain 'true' to the contract.) Is it not confidence based on the knowledge that through practice, each artist has shown himself capable of performing a work of art? (They have already executed the contract.) Moreover, with each execution of the contract, with each practice, their confidence in one another is buttressed. For men are not machines and what they produce can never be reduced to mere mathematical formulae. Each man is different and what one learns from practice with one person cannot always be applied to another person. Working together, human beings must 'get used' to one another before they can have confidence in one another.

The Hebrew words for art, artist, practice, skill, and truth all are derived from the root 'amen. So is the Hebrew word 'emunah which means confidence.¹ 'amen means stable. This essay is a search for grounds of confidence. It is an attempt to see what the authors of the Bible said man and God considered stable, that is, worthy of their confidence.

Since every aspect of society, not only art, is the product and not the sum of human relationships, we may expect to find that what has just been said about the grounds for confidence among the members of a string quartet will be relevant also to any discussion of confidence which involves human beings.

The purpose of this essay is to show what grounds for con-

¹ The word confidence is used rather than faith first of all to avoid the particular connotations of the English word faith. But also because the prefix con (with, together) gives to confidence the important connotation that a two-way relationship is involved.

*Transcribe
the root form
here and
throughout:
→ aman
or → mnv*

fidence the authors of the Bible had in mind when employing forms of the root 'amen to show relationships of reliability between God and man and between man and man.

No attempt will be made to give a systematic account of the grounds for faith which appear in the Bible. To give such an account we would have to look at many other words such as samach, sha'an, batah, brit, etc., as well as passages not employing these roots. Rather will the primary concern here be with the root 'amen, and the grounds which a writer had in mind when he employed one of its derivatives.

In this essay, words are understood from the context in which they are used and not from the grammatical forms in which they appear. Therefore, the organization of the essay has not been made according to grammatical forms. Furthermore, some of the forms are used interchangeably. Our goal is not merely to understand each reference thoroughly (and hence why any particular grammatical form was used) but rather to see how the various references contribute to an overall pattern. This pattern, which forms the Table of Contents was not created beforehand as a mold into which to press the references, but was distilled from these references by a process of deduction.

Naturally, many references used in one part of the pattern could have been used in another. It was not always deemed necessary, however, to re-employ the same reference, if the point that it would have made had already been made by some other reference.

Now a legitimate question that might be asked is, "do all forms of the root 'amen deal with faith (confidence)?" This question results from a semantic problem due to the peculiar connotation of the English word faith.

We are dealing with a root ('amen) which basically means stable, firm, in a word, reliable. The particular kind of reliability that the English word faith connotes is only one kind of reliability. The Hebrew word 'emunah (usually translated by faith or faithfulness) contains many other connotations of reliability besides the one which the English word faith expresses. In its other connotations, 'emunah is in league with the connotations expressed by its sibling derivatives from the parent root 'amen. For example, 'emet (usually translated by truth) and 'emunah (faith) could both be translated by stability, as nouns coming from the root 'amen, meaning stable.

The closeness of the concepts of faith and truth as related through the idea of reliability exists in English too. This closeness is only made more obvious in Hebrew by the etymological connections. Thus in English we say:

True to his word.
A true measure, or line.
Truly, a human being.
Tells the truth.
She is true to him.
A true statement.

Each of the above phrases connotes reliability. In each case the subject is so reliable that one would not be afraid to put his faith in it.

Before proceeding, reference should be made to the translation of the word chesed. According to several studies done on this word, chesed involves a bargain, reliability, confidence. Since in many cases, studies of chesed were based on its relationship to 'emet, to now use chesed as an aid in understanding 'emet could lead to some dangerous circular reasoning. There is other evidence, however, outside

of its relationship to 'emet which indicates that chesed relationships demand reliability. Thus, in this essay the understanding of a particular derivative from 'amen is never made dependent on its relationship to chesed. But if the overall context stresses that chesed would connote confidence even if it was not used with a derivative of 'amen, then the presence of chesed in the passage is considered. And notice is taken of how it adds to the connotation of confidence expressed by its nearby derivative from 'amen.

Dr. Glueck has suggested the word faithfulness rather than loving kindness as a proper translation for chesed. Because of the nature of this essay, faithfulness could cause some confusion. Therefore, steadfast kindness which retains the overtones of reliability usually has been employed.²

² This decision was reached independent of the fact that the R.S.V. translates chesed as "steadfast love."

CHAPTER I

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD

In the Tanach, the basis of man's confidence in God, as reflected in the use of the root 'amen, rests upon three grounds. These grounds are a) God is sincere; b) God is genuine, and c) God is constant. In other phrases it might be stated; God means to keep His promises. God is fully capable of keeping His promises. God has, in the past, kept His promises.

a) God is sincere

The statement "God is sincere" basically means that God sincerely wants to do what he says he is going to do. There is the connotation that God is purposeful, determined, steadfast, and will be loyal. From the very beginnings of man's relationship with God, this 'belief' that God is sincere is an important ground for man's confidence in Him. Confidence in God begins with confidence in His creation. Man's confidence in God begins with the 'belief' that God created the world with sincerity of purpose.

For, consider a little boy balancing blocks one upon the other as he sits securely on the floor of his home. Or think of hundreds of men crawling about the skeleton of a sky-scraper framework as they add their bricks and beams. In each case there is a strong faith in the structure within which they are building. In neither case could these individuals have built towards the future confidently had they not believed that the structure within which they were building was itself secure.

Not one of the foundations for confidence that we shall en-

counter here, whether it be a ground for confidence between man and man or man and God, could have been laid had not the people of the Tanach had confidence in the overall structure within which they lived and built.

They had confidence in this structure because they believed that God did not create the world helter-skelter, but rather with purpose and with design, in short, with forethought. This belief in the sincerity of God's purpose is expressed in Proverbs 3:19.

God founded the world by means of wisdom,
And set the heavens by means of understanding.

Moreover, one of the by-products of wisdom is truth:

For my (Wisdom's) mouth utters truth ('emet)...
(Proverbs 8:7).

Therefore, since 'emet is derived from a root basically meaning stability ('amen), and since things which are true are consistent and unchanging, one can with confidence rely on that which results in 'emet.

Put syllogistically, these ideas would read as follows:

What is done in wisdom and understanding is done
with sincerity of purpose.
Wisdom and understanding produce truth.
Truth is sincerity of purpose.

Therefore, since God created the world with wisdom and understanding, He did so with purpose. Moreover, since wisdom and understanding produce truth and truth is stable, one may have confidence in what God thus created purposefully.

It follows then, that if God established the universe with a specific purpose in mind, He means to do something about it. And if

God is sincere in what He says and does, then man can look forward to His words and deeds as guides to traversing the paths of the world.¹ For who would have a better map of the ways in which to traverse the world, than He who with foresight and with sureness of purpose made these ways?

The works of His hands (result in) stability ('emet) and justice
All His precepts are reliable (ne'emanim)
Supporting unto all eternity
Fashioned in sure purpose ('emet) and straightforwardly (Psalm 111:7,8).

especially when these ways were planned to last (Psalm 119:151,152):

You are near O God and all your commandments are reliable ('emet).
Of old I knew from your testimonies that you established them for ever.

And especially when He who made the ways by which to traverse the world which He created also mapped them out.

Your righteousness is a righteousness (that will last) forever.
And your guide for man (Torah) is reliable ('emet) (Ibid: 142).²

In this last quotation we have a hint that God is involved with his righteousness and that His righteousness is made to last. The same psalmist, a few lines earlier, said that that which is righteous is also reliable.

You commanded your testimonies righteously.
And very faithfully ('emunah) (Ibid: 138),

In fact, one psalmist found God's righteousness so sure and so purposed that it gave him a solution to his theodical problems. Expressing

his confidence in God

It is good to give thanks unto the Lord.
...and to tell of your sure mercies in the morning.
And of your reliability ('emunah) in the evening
(Psalm 92:3).

he stated that even in the flourishing of the wicked, there was purpose. God had caused them to flourish in order to destroy them, and so He was still faithful to His righteousness (Ibid:8).

An interesting variant is found in Psalm 88:12. As the psalmist languishes under terrors brought on by a God whom he admits to be righteous, he seems almost to be trying to remind God that we mortals are after all but mortals, and if God absolutely adheres to His purposed righteousness, He may well consume us in His ardor:

Will your sure mercies be told in the grave?
Will they tell of your faithfulness ('emunah)
in destruction?

There is no questioning that what God does is right or righteous. The only question is, "Will this steadfastness be fruitful?"

At least twice, the psalmist appeals to this very steadfastness or faithfulness of purpose when he seeks guidance. In Psalm 43:3 after asking to be delivered from deceitful men, the author's appeal shows his confidence in God's purpose.

Send your light and your faithfulness ('emet); they
will lead me and bring me into your holy mountain.

It is just because the author of Psalm 36 felt that in God's light men see light, the fountain of life being with God,³ that he praised God's faithfulness

O Lord your sure mercies are unto the skies.
And your faithfulness ('emunah) is unto the heavens (6).

and appealed to God through his confidence in God's faithfulness that He deliver the righteous from the wicked.

Yet it is probably in the splendid description of what God's law does, which is found in the latter half of Psalm 19, that we have the clearest statement that God has created a plan according to His purpose. The psalm, moreover, explicitly mentions what that purpose is

God's plan for men (Torah) is perfect, restoring the soul. His testimonies are of sure purpose (ne'emanah) making wise the simple (8).

and it implicitly ascribes to God the desire to carry out that purpose, thus laying the grounds for confidence in His Torah.

...the ordinances of the Lord are reliable ('emet) they are righteous altogether (10).

It does not follow, however, that just because a promise is made initially in sincerity that it will be carried out. For cannot one who promises be dissuaded from carrying out what he originally intended? What, in particular, of the actions of men? Can they not dissuade God from His purpose? Or does He retain His original purposiveness, seeking His goals unswervingly? The latter would seem to be the case even if only the doxological Psalm 100 were taken into consideration.

For well meaning (tov) is the Lord: his sure mercies are forever.
And 'He sticks by His word' ('emunahto) in every generation (5).

But there is more than ample evidence to re-enforce the psalmist's joyous exclamation. This evidence groups itself into two categories. In the first category, we find that God keeps after what he wants. He is steadfast in His purpose even after He is released from His word by men breaking their part of the bargain. God is, in a word, compassionate. And compassionate, perhaps, because He sincerely wants to do what He intended to do. In the second category, we find that God keeps after His goals no matter how men try to become His favorites, that, in a word, God is just. And just, perhaps, because it was His very intention from the beginning to bring justice to the world.

In the category where God may have been released from His part of the bargain, we find both in a private psalm, and in an episode from the life of Moses, that God's truth is coupled with His graciousness and His mercy, but above all, with His slowness to anger.

In Psalm 86:5, there is an allusion to God being quick to pardon those that call upon Him. And the psalmist later says to God

You, O Lord, God of compassion, gracious, long suffering, and abundant in steadfast kindness (chesed v'emet) (15).

And Moses uses these same adjectives to describe God as God passes by during their meeting for the second set of tablets. (Ex. 34:6) Moses undoubtedly has in mind the fact that God did not utterly destroy His people when he could have done so after they left Him and worshipped the golden calf. But God is still loyal to His purpose.⁴

Both Psalm 106 and the author of Isaiah 49:7 describe God as being faithful even though He did not have to be; as one deserving confidence, as one who is trusted, and the implication is because He

wants to be faithful.

In Psalm 106 we find that the people either put their confidence in God and took it away again.

And they put their confidence (ya'aminu) in His words...
(12).
They quickly forgot His deeds...(13).

or they would not put their confidence in His word at all:

And they rejected the delightful land and did not put their confidence in His words (ya'aminu) (24).

Yet despite these actions, continues the psalm, God had not destroyed the people, though it must be admitted, He thought of doing so. He had punished them, but He had not destroyed them. And the reason He did not destroy them is the same reason appealed to by the psalmist, above, in his conclusion: Israel is important for God's name, for God's purpose. Despite Israel's actions and feelings towards the covenant, as the covenant is concerned with God's purpose so God is faithful to the covenant. So much is this the case, that upon praising God as eternally the God of Israel (despite what they have done to Him), the psalmist can ask that all the people confirm their belief in God's perpetual faithfulness towards Israel.

Blessed are you O God of Israel from the beginning and unto the end of time. And all the people said: We have confidence this is true ('amen) (48).

It is a similar theme in Isaiah 49. God can still be called the "faithful one of Israel," even though Israel has been most unfaithful to Him. And the reason this epithet can be used concerning God is that God has a purpose, and has chosen Israel for that purpose.

In other words, God's faithfulness to Israel does not depend on Israel's faithfulness to Him, but on His faithfulness to His purpose and to Himself.

...Kings shall see and arise
Princes shall bow down (before Israel)
Because of the Lord who is faithful (ne'eman)
The Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.

On the more personal side, we have several other examples which suggest that God will forgive in order to be faithful to His purpose. Hezekiah, when literally given a new lease on life, echoes a theme we have heard before: that God's faithfulness ('emet) is no good to the dead.

For the netherworld does not thank you
Nor death praise you
Those who go down to the pit will not await your
faithfulness ('emet) (Isaiah 38:18).

But the living person, the living, will praise you
as I do this day
The father will make known to the children your
faithfulness ('emet) (Ibid:19).

But what is important here is why Hezekiah thinks God to be a God of 'emet. The answer is to be found in the preceding line.

Behold, for my peace, it was bitter to me.
And you desired (to redeem) my soul from the pit
of destruction.
For You cast my sins behind Your back (Ibid:17).

In Psalm 69, ascribed to David, we find

As for me, O Lord, my prayer is towards You.
At Your will, O God, in the abundance of Your steadfast
mercy,
Answer me in the sureness ('emet) of Your salvation (16).

In verse six, David admits that he has done wrongly. God does not have to save him. But David asks to be saved so that others who place their confidence in God, who wait for him (verse 7), be not ashamed as a result of the treatment he is getting. He too claims to have borne reproach for God (8-13). Thus David makes the grounds for his faith in God's salvation the fact that God is merciful and compassionate and forgiving to those who suffer for God. Expressed differently: God is faithful to save those who are in league with His purpose.⁵

The faithfulness of God to His purpose which causes Him to be merciful is also the thought of the author of Lamentations 3 when he says

The steadfast mercies of the Lord are not finished
His compassionate acts are not ended (22).

They are renewed every morning; great is Your
faithfulness ('emunah) (23).

For, continues the lament

The Lord will not reject forever (31).
If He grieves, He will be compassionate according to
the abundance of His steadfast mercies (32).
For He does not afflict nor willingly grieve mankind
(33).

That it is never His desire to punish wantonly is an unexpressed idea of the evidence which falls into the second category of which we spoke above; namely, that God does not play favorites and will punish (only) if he must do so in order to be faithful to His goal.

That God is straight by nature and not a deviser of all sorts of devices, we may learn from the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The Rock, His work is perfect, His every deed justice

A God of sure purpose ('emunah) without iniquity.
Just and straightforward (yashar) is He.

And Elihu agrees (Job 34:12).

But there can be no doubt ('amnam) God will not cause
evil.
The Almighty will not pervert justice.

But a dissent rings out from the psalter. It is not dissent to the
idea that God by nature cannot be swerved from His purpose by men try-
ing to ingratiate themselves with Him. Rather, it is once more the
reminder to God that He can not expect to judge man only according to
His standards. That if God is to be too rigid in His purposiveness
towards the world, He will be left without anyone in that world.
First the psalmist bursts forth with an appeal (Psalm 143)

O Lord hear my prayer and harken to my petition.
In your faithfulness ('emunah) answer me and in
your righteousness (1).

Then, as if suddenly asking himself, "How can I claim to be saved on
the basis of God's righteousness? After all I have not been perfect."
He says to God, still preserving a distinction between his wrong-
doings and the absolute evil of his enemies:

But do not enter into judgment with your servant. (2).
For, before you no living man can be justified (no
matter how righteous) (2).

A nation that tried to be considered a favorite learned its
lesson. Daniel, in no way questioning God's faithfulness to His words,
says:

As it is written in the Torah of Moses, all this evil

has come upon us, yet we did not entreat the Lord our God and did not return from our iniquities or become wise in the sureness of your word ('emet) (Daniel 9:13).

In fact a line earlier, he admits that punishing Israel was the way God had kept faith with His word.

And God kept his promise (vayakam et d'varav) which he promised us...to bring upon us this great evil (Ibid:12).

That God will be faithful to His purpose despite the actions of men is what Jeremiah tried to make Israel realize. If they return to God, they must do so with an understanding not just that God lives but of how He lives -- they must be prepared to join in with His plan, but then naturally they must also be prepared to suffer the consequences of additional back-sliding.

If you will return O Israel, says the Lord.
Indeed, return unto me.
And if you will remove the detestable things from my sight and not waver,
And if you will swear, "as the Lord lives," true to your word (b'emet) and in righteousness.
Then will all the nations of the world bless themselves in you and in you shall they glory
(Jeremiah 4:1-2).

Even in personal affliction it is possible to feel that God is faithful to His purpose

I know O Lord that righteous is your decision and according to your sure purpose ('emunah) you afflicted me (Psalm 119:75).

And when the psalmist follows this line with a request for mercy

Please let your sure mercies comfort me as you promised unto your servant.

he only dares to make this request on the grounds that he loves God's law and wants to serve Him (77-80).

Jeremiah, on the other hand, after suffering personally and feeling that he has been, all the while, serving God faithfully, questions whether or not God has deviated from His course.

Why is my pain perpetual and my wound mortal that
it refuses healing?
Will you indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook,
as waters upon which one cannot rely? (ne'emanu)
(Jeremiah 15:18).

Actually, Habakkuk's outcry that no one will 'believe' what is happening when God raises up the Chaldeans

Look among the nations and behold and wonder exceedingly
For a deed will be done in your days which you will not
consider true (ta'amimu) when it is related to you
(Habakkuk 1:5).

only makes sense if God's doing this deed is contrary to what He has been doing. What is hard to 'believe' is not so much what is happening as Who is causing it to happen.

We have reached a dilemma. On the one hand, we try to prove God's faithfulness to His purpose by showing that He goes after what He wants even when He is released by the unfaithfulness of men from keeping His word. On the other hand, we have seen that if men try to alter His ways or bribe Him into showing them favoritism, He will not succumb. But surely these two factors overlap. Their reconciliation is part of the problem of the joining of mercy and justice. It is not within the scope of this paper to enter into a question which has been in man's mind as long as he has had religious experience. There are, however, three Biblical references worthy of note here.

For in all three God is both just and merciful, and yet He is faithful to His purpose also.

In Psalm 89, to which we will have occasion to refer often in this study because of the frequency of the appearance of ^{the} root 'amen, a distinction is made between justice and mercy. God has made a covenant with David

Forever I will guard for him My sure mercies and
My purposed (ne'emenet) covenant unto him.

He will abide by this covenant, but if David's children profane it, then they shall be punished, continues the psalm. So much for the preservation of justice. But, continues God

My sure mercies I will not break off from him
And I will not be false to my sure purpose ('emunati)
(34).

I will not profane my covenant
And what comes out of my lips I will not change (35).

For, says God, having sworn in my holiness

I will not be false to David (36).

Indeed, David's throne will be something to rely upon, it will be

...as the moon, established forever.
and as a witness steadfast (ne'eman) in the sky (38).

Here is reconciliation of mercy and justice with, if not through, a God 'true' to His purpose (for which purpose He had made the covenant). The reconciliation is achieved by the distinction made between David to whom the promise was made, and David's children, for whose activities he can hardly be blamed.

But if the moon, which the Holy One Blessed Be He, set in the skies be a faithful witness, how much more so the Holy One Himself? When the people come to Jeremiah begging him to pray for them, he agrees. But he agrees on one condition. That condition is that he will tell the people whatever God says. Now the people did not know what God would say, otherwise there would have been no need to come to Jeremiah. And Jeremiah did not know what God would say to them, as he had to wait ten days. Therefore, if the people could say that they would harken to whatever God would say whether it would be for their good or their evil, and if the people could also say to Jeremiah

Let the Lord be a sure and reliable witness ('emet v'ne'eman) against us if we do not do according to all which the Lord your God send you to us (Jeremiah 42:5).

then we must conclude that whether God was to be merciful or just in His message, He was still being faithful to His purpose.

Isaiah had another answer. Here again God had a purpose, and according to that purpose, He would make an eternal covenant with Israel. But the covenant this time is with the whole people, not just with David. The just will get their due and the iniquitous theirs.

For I the Lord love justice and hate robbery with iniquity. And I will repay them in my sure purpose ('emet) and an everlasting covenant I will make with them (Isaiah 61:8).

There is apparently no questioning of what God would do if all of Israel were to commit the things that the Lord hates. But there seems to be little doubt that God has a purpose, and He also has standards.

These standards guide Him in His purpose, which from man's point of view began with creation. Thus, the first ground on which man

will put his confidence in God is that God, in all that He does, sets about it deliberately and with forethought. Man is included in God's plans. He has given to man a guide that man might know better how to work with God. If man does not follow God's guide, God may either forgive him or punish him. But ultimately, whichever God decides to forgive or to punish - He makes His choice with reference to His standards. For, always loyal to His purpose, God sincerely chooses that way in which He will be able to accomplish His purpose best.

b) God is Genuine

The statement "God is genuine" means God is what one expects a god to be. God is a god who can do what he says He will do. The ability of God to carry out His word brings us into the second phase of our search for the grounds upon which man will place his confidence in God. For sincerity, purposiveness, or desire in one who makes a promise is not worth anything if the promiser has neither the means nor the ability to carry out his plan. We found much ground for man putting his confidence in God because he believed that God sincerely intended to carry out His word when He spoke it. We will also find much ground for man putting his confidence in God because he 'believes' that God, by His very nature, can carry out what He has said he intends to do.

Confidence in God's ability to carry out His word is first of all based on God's strength. He created the world. He set up an order that is stable. But also, He is still around working with this same strength within that order.

Psalms 146 emphasises this strength. It cautions against putting

one's faith in princes and men that perish in the dust and have no effect upon the world from the day that they cease (3-4). While God is described as being just and kind, it is in the contrast of His ability to do what He says with the ability of mortals, that we find the basis for one's putting confidence in Him.

Maker of the heavens and the earth the sea and all that is in them. Who keeps His sure purpose ('emet) forever (6).

And in Psalm 93, when the guidance of God is called reliable and lasting

Your testimonies are very reliable (ne'emanu) (5)

they are not called reliable just because He proposed to make these testimonies but because He who made them also made all the world.

The Lord reigns; He is clothed in majesty.
...He has girded Himself with strength.
The world is established that it cannot be moved (1).

Nor "did the hand of the potter shake."

Your faithfulness ('emunatcha) is unto every generation.
You established the earth and it is standing (Psalm 119:90).

Contrast His ability with that of the other gods and let us see who is genuine. Idols cannot of themselves move, neither can they do good nor evil (Jeremiah 10:1-9). But

~~the~~ Lord God is a genuine ('emet) God. He is the living god and the everlasting king. Because of His wrath, the earth will tremble, and the nations can not cope with His anger (Ibid:10).

Indeed, Jeremiah's ultimate criterion for who is and who is not the 'true' God is who created the heavens and the earth, for, he says that the others

shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens (Ibid:11).⁸

Other gods are naught. He is to be feared above them, for He made the heavens and the earth. All the world is aware of this. And when "He comes to judge the earth...

He will judge the world in righteousness
And the peoples according to His sure purpose
('emunah) (13).

This sure purpose can be relied upon because He has the might to carry it into action.

Other gods, though they have all the organs of the human body, can not use them. But our God is in heaven and is therefore worthy of trust. It is because of this genuineness of God as a god that the psalmist asks God to help Israel, not for Israel's sake, but to show the world what He can do.

Not for us O Lord, not for us but for thy name's sake
give glory.
For the sake of your sure mercies (and that they might
see that you are) the real ('emet) God. (Psalm 115:1).

God who rules the seas and crushes enemies, who created heaven and earth, who is held in dread by even the holy ones, who can compare to you? (Psalm 89).

I will sing of your sure mercy forever.
I will make known your reliability ('emunah) in
every generation (2).

For I said steadfast mercy is built forever.
In the very heavens you have established your reliability
('emunah) (3).

The heavens shall praise the wonders of Lord
Your reliability ('emunah) in the congregation of the
holy ones (6).

O Lord, God ^{of} hosts, who is like you? You are a refuge

O Lord, [^]

Your reliability ('emunatcha) is all about you (9).

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.

Your sure mercies (chesed v'emet) go before you (15).

Indeed, on whom can we rely as upon you?

This great power which belongs only to God and serves as grounds for putting one's confidence in Him is used by God both with respect to nature and with respect to human beings. The distinction is somewhat artificial, since in almost every case to be described, His power affects people.

The visions of Daniel about the violent changes in the course of history, the ups and downs of nations, are called 'emet (sure to happen) because they are from God. In other words, the visions come from the source which is capable of producing the reaction envisioned and foretold (Daniel 10:1,21).

In discussing God's intention above (page 13) we made note that in Psalm 89 God purposes to make a covenant with David and to keep it. In this same Psalm, a few lines before the mention of the covenant, God prefaces His statement which assures David that he can rely on Him

My assured mercies ('emunati v'chesdi) are with him.
And through my name will his horn be uplifted (25).

with a statement that tells David why he can rely on God's faithful mercies. It is because God strengthens whom he chooses, and protects them from His enemies, devastating them ⁱⁿ before him (Ibid:24).

And when the people cry out about more people coming into the city walls, Nehemiah, in order to get the people to promise that they will put their confidence in the word of God and do what He asks,

threatens them with a show of God's might. He tells them, performing a symbolic action, that God will shake them out of their houses and fields. And it is directly as a result of their 'belief' in God's ability to do what Nehemiah says He will do, that the people affirm their confidence in God's word and affirm their intention to do His will (Nehemiah 5:13).

And all the congregation said, "we believe it is true,"
('amen)
And they praised the Lord, and the people did according to this word.

The classic story of a people putting their confidence in God because of His effect on nature is, of course, the incident at the Red Sea.

And Israel saw the great hand of ~~which~~ the Lord against the Egyptians and they feared the Lord and put their confidence (va'ya'aminu) in the Lord and in Moses His servant (Exodus 14:31).

Similarly, when Moses is afraid that the people will not believe that he represents God, God gives him three miracles to perform, three violations of natural law, that will ultimately serve as the basis for confidence in God and hence in Moses.⁹ God Himself says that he gives Moses the sign

In order that they will consider (it to be) true (ya'aminu) that God appeared to you (Exodus 4:5).

And if they will not 'believe' (ya'aminu) you and will not pay heed to the first sign, then they will put their confidence (v'he'aminu) in the latter sign (8).

And if they do not put their confidence (ya'aminu) in either sign, and do not harken unto your voice (then you shall give them a third sign)(9).

And the signs, which prove the might of God, His ability to carry out His word, work as a basis for the Israelites putting their confidence in God:

And he did the signs before the eyes of the people,
And the people believed (that God appeared before Moses)
(Exodus 4:31).

Nor must we forget how indignant God became when Sarah laughed at the suggestion that she would bear a child in her old age.

...why did Sarah laugh saying "will I really ('amnam) bear a child now that I have grown old?" (Genesis 18:13).

God is indignant that Sarah should deny His ability and not have confidence in what He says. For He says

Is anything too wondrous for the Lord? (Ibid:14).

The authors of Psalm 57:11 and Psalm 108:5 would answer no. For in both psalms which talk about the power of God, we see expressed in very broad terms what these authors thought was the range of God's faithfulness.

For great unto the heavens is your steadfast mercy,
And unto the skies your reliability (amitcha).

Such broadness of conception can inspire confidence, as it often did.¹⁰ When conceived in terms of power alone, it can also create paralysis, as it did in Job.

If I had called and He had answered me
I (still) would not rely (a'amin) on His listening to
my voice (9:16).¹¹

Thus, as man puts his confidence in God on the ground that God

acts with purpose, so man puts re-enforced confidence in God on the ground that God has the ability to accomplish His purpose, that nothing is too wondrous for the Lord. It is this very ability exercised with respect to man and nature which differentiates Him from the no-gods and establishes Him as the genuine ('true') God.

c) God Is Constant

If you were trying to convince someone to put his confidence in someone else, and you found that the person you were trying to convince would not "believe" that this other person is reliable, what would you say to him? Obviously to simply reiterate that someone is reliable because he is a sincere sort, or because he has the ability to do what he says he will do would get you nowhere. What you might do though is to try to show your friend that he may put his confidence in the other person because this other person has a reputation for keeping his word. That is to say, on the basis of how the other person has acted in the past, and you would, of course, give specific examples, he is definitely reliable.

The references to follow have in common, situations analogous to the circumstances described above. In each case the ground for putting one's confidence in God seems to be that He has been reliable in the past. Now this is not to say that sincerity or ability are not also appealed to, nor is it claimed that there was no appeal to God's reputation based on His deeds, in any of the passages already mentioned. What is important here is that the emphasis is on God's deeds rather than on His words; what He has definitely done, and we know Him to have done rather than just by reputation. (We will notice later, when we deal with man's confidence in other men, that this sort of empiricism is the most important grounds for such confidence.) God's purpose

is incidental, and the emphasis is not so much on the fact that He has the ability to do what He says, but that He has used this ability. The implication is, of course, that God is constant.

We start with an incident that is apparently a refutation of this whole position. When the spies return to tell the people that Israel does not stand a chance with the Nephilim, the people murmur and immediately lose confidence in God (Numbers 14:1-10). God is angry because they would not heed His signs.

And the Lord said to Moses, "how long will this people spurn me and how long will it be before they put their confidence in me (ya'aminu) considering all the signs which I have done in their midst (Ibid: 11).

There is a problem here. The people were apparently quicker to believe a mere report from other men than to believe a God who had actually, and not too long previous to this moment, done great things for them. In the light of the evidence about to be marshalled for God's past doings as a ground for confidence in Him, as well as what will be seen of the especial importance of deeds and not words as a ground for confidence in other men, this passage is notable for its singularity. It may have been created just to emphasize Israel's backsliding, or to rationalize her hardships in the desert. In all events, it is brought up for fairness' sake, and placed here before the other evidence, that the reader may make his own judgment.

Ironically, at another time, Moses harkens back to these refusals to place confidence in God, as grounds for doing it now. He refers to the incident just cited:

Yet in this thing, you do not put your confidence (na'aminim) in the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 1:3).¹²

as well as to many others. His object? To show the people that with all this refusal to trust God, God has been reliable and brought them this far.

But that God's reputation, as based on what He has done before, is important in the mind of the people, can be seen from the prophetic passages. Both Jeremiah and Zechariah want the people to "believe" that God will be faithful to them in the future and build them up as a nation again. The problem they face is that for the past few centuries God has indeed done everything but build them up.

Thus Jeremiah for the Lord buttresses

And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will surely (b'emet) plant them in this land with all my heart and with all my soul (Jeremiah 32:41).

with

...as I have brought upon this people all this great evil, so, will I bring upon them all the good which I promise to them (Ibid:42).

God is trying to show the people that He has the power to do what He says He will do. Unfortunately, He has no palatable examples.

And when Zechariah promises the people that God will return to Jerusalem

Thus said the Lord, I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3).

that in fact the city will again be called a city of 'emet (Ibid.) and that the covenant will definitely be restored:

And you shall be unto me for a people and I unto you for a God faithfully (b'emet), and in righteousness (Ibid:8).

Zechariah is forced to add:

But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people
as in former days....(Ibid:11).

But perhaps the best example of a nation losing all confidence in God owing to their past relationship with him is the example which we find in Trito Isaiah. As this Isaiah tries to instill in the people, once more, hope in the future, as he tries to make the people feel that life is worth living, and that God has not forsaken them completely, as much as His deeds in the past would seem to indicate that He has, he calls the God in whom Israel will be blessed an Elohe-'amen (God of reliability). And it really does not matter how you point the word (Isaiah 65:16).

The next step is the opposite extreme from the people not wanting to put their confidence in God because He has not done good to them in the past. In Nehemiah full cognizance is taken of how faithful God had been way back in the past:

And on Mount Sinai you came down...and gave them straight forward ordinances and a Torah of sure purpose ('emet) (Nehemiah 9:13).

Thus, though what was done in the more recent past was surely not good for Israel, the people still feel that God still deserves their confidence

For you are righteous in all that which has come upon us.
For you did what should be done according to this righteousness ('emet) and we are the ones who have done wickedly
(Ibid :33).

so much so, that they are willing to join together and place their con-

fidence in Him again.

And despite all this that has happened we will make a firm compact ('amanah) with You. (The English word compact is used here because it is derived from the Latin pango: to fasten)

The conclusion that they were at fault when God punish^{ed} them is inescapable. It is inescapable not because of any bland belief that God is just or merciful but because, as a reading of Nehemiah 9 will show, the people were well aware of all that God had done for them before in the past.

This awareness of what God has done for Israel or particular individuals in the past is the ground for confidence in many instances in the Bible when a form of 'amen is used to express this confidence. It has been convenient to group these references in two categories: persons who "believe" because of how God acted towards them in the past, and nations who "believe" because of how God has acted towards them in the past. There is some overlapping when these individuals happen to be the leaders of Israel.

The psalmist, on at least four different occasions declares his willingness to rely on God because he knows that in the past he has relied on God and found God reliable. In Psalm 30, he relates how God had "raised him up," protected him from his enemies and kept him alive from the pit. Declaring a feeling of security, he asks God again to be his helper (1-7).

What gain is there in my blood when I descend to the pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it tell how faithful you
are ('amitcha) (10).

We have once again the theme reminding God that His faithfulness to men

will do man no good if His faithfulness to justice or His patience, having all eternity in which to accomplish His purpose, destroys ephemeral man. The important point here though is why the psalmist feels that God has 'emet worth talking about. In context, the answer is because God has been faithful in the past.

In Psalm 71, when the psalmist says that he will declare God's 'emet (reliability)

Also I will sing praises of your reliability ('emet) with the ~~happ~~, O my God... (22).

We know from the preceding lines which tell how God was his refuge "from the day of his birth" (Ibid, 6ff), that his reliance on God is a confident one because of his past experience.

Likewise, in Psalm 116, when the psalmist declares that he is confident in God even when he is afflicted:

I had confidence (he'emeti) when I spoke
I have been greatly humbled (10).

It is because God inclined His ear in former days (Ibid:2). In fact, as a result of this latter happy experience, he says that he will call upon God all the days of his life (Ibid).

Also in Psalm 138 it is because God answered in the very day that he called upon Him (3), that

I will bow down to your holy temple and praise your name concerning your steadfast mercies and your faithfulness ('amitcha). For you have made your word even greater than your name (2).

Some other examples of personal confidence in God based on God's works in the past are found in Genesis. Eliezer praises God for His

faithfulness to Abraham when he sees that God has brought him to Laban's household.

...blessed are you, God of my master Abraham who has not forsaken His steadfast mercy nor His faithfulness ('emeto) unto my master...(Genesis 24:27).

and when he tells the whole story to Laban, he calls this road upon which God has led him a road of 'emet (Ibid :48); for it has been faithful to lead him to what he wants. But did not God, in fact, cause this to happen? (Ibid:14)

God evidently kept right on causing things to happen to the fathers. Jacob, after dividing his camp and when he is about to ask for additional deliverance from God, bases his confidence in God on the fact that He has done much for him in the past.

I am not worthy of all the steadfast mercies and faithfulness ('emet) which you have shown your servant (Genesis 32:11).

Moreover, these deeds were done after God had promised to do them for him (Ibid:10).

When we come to God doing what he had promised to David we reach the overlapping of categories. For now the promises are not made just to individuals but to individuals because God has a purpose with the whole people to which this individual belongs (which he leads). Thus when God keeps this promise, He has kept faith not only with the individual king but with the whole people.

David, himself, has confidence in God because of what God has done to Israel in the past (287:23,24). Hence, he can have faith in God's promises.

And now O Lord, you are God and your word can be relied on ('emet)...(Ibid:28).

and thus, at another time, he can use what has just happened (God's helping him to bring back the Ark) to praise God for how He has been faithful to Israel and David can induce the people to "believe" so also. When he says

Blessed are you O Lord throughout all eternity,

they agree:

And all the people said it is true ('amen), praised be the Lord (1Ch16:36).

Thus David may have confidence in God when God says:

Your house will be stable (ne'aman) and your reign ~~forever~~...(257:16).

because He has pointed out to David through Nathan that He was with him wherever he went (Ibid:9).¹³ And thus he may ask -- with confidence -- since he knows and acknowledges that God has been with Israel from Egypt that God keep His promise:

And now, O Lord, the thing which you promised unto your servant...
May it be sure (ye'amen) for ever, and do as you promised.¹⁴

It is because God did as He said He would to David and let his descendants build the house, that the lucky descendant can have confidence when he asks, in language similar to that which his father used,

And now God of Israel let the things which you promised

to your servant David my father come true (ye'amen)
(1K8:26; 2Ch 6:17).

that God keep another of His promises to David. This promise is that no one from David's family will be cut off (1K8:25).

The reputation of God's constancy to David influenced the psalmist as well as Isaiah. The former in Psalm 132 makes a very confident statement:

The Lord swore unto David faithfully ('emet).
He will not go back on His word (Psalm 132:114).

And when Isaiah wants to convince the people that God will be faithful to them if they are to him, he picks what is evidently a pretty well known example of God's faithfulness in the past:

Incline your ears and come to me, harken and your soul shall live.
And I will surely make an everlasting covenant with you. (So everlasting in fact that it will be as) the reliable (ne'emanim) steadfast mercies of David (Isaiah 55:3).¹⁵

Ne'eman (not only can be used) for the good things which God does for a people, but also for His punishments. For when Moses wants to show the people that unless they regard God's law well, God will not regard them well either, he uses a reference to Egypt (Deuteronomy 28:60) after he says:

And the Lord will smite you with wondrous plagues and your seed (they will be) great, sure (ne'emanot) plagues and evil sure (ne'emanot) sicknesses (Ibid:59).

It is open to question whether ne'eman is used here just to emphasize the soreness of the plagues or also for its connotation of God being

faithful to His purpose. Whatever the case, the point is carried that God had been faithful to this purpose in the past.

On at least two occasions the psalmist uses the fact that God has been constant to Israel in the past as a ground for confidence that He will continue His faithfulness. In Psalm 98:

He remembered His sure mercies and His faithfulness
(perhaps sure purpose-emanato) to the house of Israel.
Look, all ye ends of the earth at the salvation of our
God (3).

he says when encouraging all the world to praise God.¹⁶

And thus again, the psalmist with Psalm 117:

Praise the Lord all the nations; praise Him all the peoples.
For He has brought to bear His sure mercies upon us,
And the faithfulness ('emet) of the Lord is forever.

But perhaps the most ^vequisite passage dealing with man's faith in God comes from the Chronicler:

And Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me O Judah and ye dwellers of Jerusalem.

Rely (he'eminu) on the Lord your God.
And you shall be stable (v'te'amenu)

or

Put your confidence in the Lord your God.
And you shall be worthy of confidence (cf. Isaiah 7:9).

Put your confidence in His prophets.
And prosper (2Ch 20:20).

These are the words of Jehoshaphat when he wants to encourage the people to fight. Though he does not explicitly give them grounds for why they should put their confidence in God, except perhaps for the fact that he calls Yahweh your God, we do know why Jehoshaphat is confident.

Surely, you are our God. You drove out the inhabitants of this land from before your people Israel and gave it to the seed of Abraham, your eternal lover (Ibid:7).

Two items remain for our consideration of "God has been constant" as a ground for belief in Him now. Firstly a pair of apocalyptic passages. In Isaiah 10:20, we find that God will once more rely on Israel faithfully.

And on that day, the remainder of Israel...will no longer have to lean on its smiter, but rather on the Holy One of Israel in security ('emet).

"On that day," that is. How can Israel be sure? Because on that day Israel will have been what God has done, which, incidentally, will be even as He has done before in the slaughter at Midian at the Rock of Oreb, and at the sea with Egypt (Ibid:26).

Also in Isaiah 25, when God is spoken of as one who will do such wondrous things as wipe away all tears and swallow up death (8), the confidence in God's ability to do this, which is expressed in the very first line of this chapter

O Lord, you are my God. I will exalt you and praise your name.

For you have done wondrous things, Counsels from of old, faithfully ('emunah). It is surely true ('amen) (8).

is based on the very many things which God has done in the past (Ibid:2f).

The climax of any study of man's belief in God must be chapters 43ff of Isaiah. In these chapters, in which God wishes to restore the covenant and Israel "to its rightful place among the nations," we see God in terms of His purpose, His ability to carry out His purpose, and

without doubt, we see Him in terms of the fact that He has been carrying out this purpose since man has known Him. But of all the ways which God could choose for man to have confidence in Him, He chooses knowing what God can do by being witness to what God has done. He dares others, any others, to come forth and prove -- with witnesses -- that they can announce "the former things."

All the nations are gathered together...who among them can tell us of the former things...let them bring their witness and be justified. (just) let them hear and say, "it is true" (emet) (Isaiah 43:9).

Then he chooses His own witnesses, Israel.

You are my witnesses, says the Lord, whom I have chosen, that you might know and put your confidence (v'ta-aminu) in me, and you will understand that I am He, before me no god was formed, and none shall be after me.

Israel will be a witness to the only genuine God. They will know that He is sincere (loyal) to His purpose; He has told them beforehand what He is about to do. Israel will know that He has the ability to do what He has told them He is going to do; He will have carried out His purpose before them. And Israel will know that God is "true" to His purpose; having witnessed this process they will KNOW it to be true. Thus is Israel given a mighty foundation for its confidence in God, and thus has God given Israel a ground for its continued existence. And thus are grounds established for God putting His confidence in Israel.

CHAPTER I

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD

FOOTNOTES

- 1 On the essential stability of God's words and actions, Cf. Psalm 119:60.
The beginning of your word is truth ('emet)
and Psalm 33:4
For straight of purpose (yashar) is the word of God
His every deed is (done) in faithfulness ('emunah)
- 2 Cf the well known opening midrash from Bereshit Rabah which points
the root as 'omen and has the Torah say that it was the instrument of
God's artistry ('emunato) when He built the world, that the Torah was
in fact the blueprint.
- 3 Psalm 36:10. Cf. also 86:11.
Teach me O God your mercy that I may walk in the sureness
('emet) of your word.
- 4 On the theme that God will not be angry for long cf. also Micah 7:18-20.
- 5 Verses 17 and 18. Cf also 2Ch 15:3, where Asa puts his confidence in
God. In Chapter II we will see more fully that one of the grounds for
God's confidence in man is just this: that man shows he is willing to
serve God.
- 6 Cf. Psalm 119:86. Again there is no question of God's faithfulness
to His purpose. But here the psalmist is afraid that justice is not
coming soon enough, that perhaps God figures He has all eternity to
actualize His plans.
- 7 The root daber often means promise. Compare the idioms (l'hakim
davar and l'hapil davar as in 1S3:19. One expression is the exact
opposite of the other. The root kum basically means to stand erect,
not to rise. Therefore the first idiom means something (a promise)
which is stable, affirmed, with corresponding antithetical meaning
to the second idiom. See also the targum for Aramaic (CJN/7)
- 8 Cf the criteria of the Second Isaiah, Chapters 43 ff - 43,32.
- 9 See below, Chapter III, page 7/, for men putting their confidence in
other men when the other men have a special relationship to, the
backing of, God.
- 10 Two other interesting passages using might as a basis for confidence
in God couple 'emet with shalom. They are 2K20:19 (also Isaiah 39)
and Jeremiah 33:6. In neither case is the 'emet necessarily describ-
ing the relationship between man and God. It does seem, however, that
the shalom will be 'emet (trustworthy, sure) because it comes from God.
Or that the 'emet will be 'emet for the same reason. Hezekiah thinks so.

- 11 Compare also Job 9:2 and 12:20.
- 12 Cf. also Deuteronomy 9:23.
- 13 And lest God's past actions with Saul shake David's confidence in God's promise, we have verse 15.
- 14 The version found in Chronicles, may it be sure is repeated. Cf. 1Ch 17:23, 25 to 2S 7:25.
- 15 Cf Psalm 89:50. Here the reputation of God is known but there is no recent actions to support this reputation. He still has confidence, however (53). The grounds may be the strength of that previous reputation, or His sincerity.
- 16 For an interesting side-light on what happens when all the ends of the earth know of God's past, see Isaiah 53:1. Having seen how He treated Israel in the past, they would naturally expect God to be constant in His actions.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN

The grounds for God's confidence in man are two: man's relationship to God and man's relationship to other men.

Man's Relationship to God

We have seen that one of the most important questions in the mind of man before he would place his confidence in God was: "Is God able to do what he says he will do?" Of course, man claims he can do far less, but it is significant that throughout the Hebrew Bible, with one notable exception, the authors believed men fully capable of doing what God asks of them. With the exception of the Book of Job¹ whenever the root 'amen is used with regard to the conditions under which God would place His confidence in man, it is a definite assumption that man is capable (and hence worthy) of the trust of God.

Another idea in Job, however does have its parallels in the rest of the Tanach. This idea is that trust in earthly creatures does not depend on strength.

Will you trust in him (the wild-ox) because his strength is great?

Will you leave your labor to him? (Job 39:11)✓

Will you rely (ta'aminu) on him to bring home your seed, And to gather from your threshing floor? (Ibid:12).✓

for as the psalmist says in Psalm 145

God is close to all who call upon Him
To all who call upon Him in 'emet (sincerely) (18).

It is this qualifying latter phrase which explains to whom God will be close, in whom God will put His trust, whom God will want to help. Most

of this chapter will be devoted to explaining just what it means to call upon God in 'emet. For underlying the criteria by which God decides whether or not to put His faith in man is whether or not man puts his faith in God.

One criterion that God uses is the extent to which the man has put his heart into the matter. Abraham seems to be the prototype

For you found his heart steadfast (ne'eman) before you and you made a covenant with him to give him the land... (Nehemiah 9:8)/

for remember that Abraham put his faith in God without much questioning. No grounds are given.

And he put his faith (v'he'emin) in God and it was² reckoned unto him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6).

The matter of serving God with one's heart is also the key to Samuel's answer to the people, when, after they had wanted a king, there is still an opportunity for them to avoid punishment and enjoy God's favor. Says Samuel,

Only fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully ('emet) with all your heart... (1S 12:24).

And David warns his son that the kind of service that God expects from His servants if they want Him to have confidence in them is a service done before God in 'emet and with all one's heart and soul (1K 2:4):

In order that the Lord may keep His promise which he made unto you, saying, "let your children watch their way to walk before me faithfully (b'emet) with all their heart and with all their soul."

In fact, when the psalmist in Psalm 78 relates how the people were unfaithful to God's plans, he states clearly that the source of this unfaithfulness to God was the fact that their allegiance was not rooted deep within their souls.

And let them not be as their fathers, a rebellious generation, ~~that did not make its heart steadfast~~ nor its spirit faithful (ne'emanah) with God (8).

for they were echad b'lev v'echad b'feh.⁴

For they were treacherous with their mouths and lied to Him with their tongues (36).

And their heart was not steadfast with Him.
And they were not faithful (ne'emanu) to His covenant (37).

But what could be more explicit than the psalm ascribed to David after Nathan had pointed out his sin with Bath-sheba?

Behold you desire faithfulness ('emet) for the inward parts.

Make me to know wisdom in my inmost heart, (8).⁵

A second criterion that God would use for testing how much confidence He can place in man flows naturally from the first. For if the first criterion was how deeply within his heart a man will be reliable, then the second criterion is how much tugging this heart can take. In other words, in time of trouble how patient a man will be in waiting for God's help.

Miriam and Aaron can not wait to be told everything through Moses, and they murmur against him. God answers that He speaks to others in dreams and visions but to Moses face to face, for he is unlike the others:

In all my house, my servant Moses is (most) reliable
(ne'eman) (Numbers 12:7).

And when Moses can not wait for the water and does not follow the command of God exactly, God loses some of His confidence in him too:

Because you did not have confidence in me (he'emanten),
you will not bring this people to the land which I have
given to them (Ibid: 20:12).

This confidence in God which He is seeking, that he may know
in whom to put His confidence, is expressed in Psalm 31.

In Your hand I will entrust my spirit, You have re-
deemed me O Lord, the reliable ('emet) God (6).

Many times throughout this psalm, the psalmist emphasizes how he has
waited for the Lord in times of adversity. And he concludes by ad-
vising others to do likewise, for God will be faithful to those who
place their confidence ('emunim) in Him.

Love the Lord all His godly ones.
The Lord preserves the faithful ones ('emunim)...(24).

In another psalm (91) this idea is broadened. God's 'emet
seems to be a sort of magic air which envelops him who will seek
shelter in God, affording the "believer" protection.

He will cover you with His pinions.
And under His wings shall you take refuge.
His reliability ('emet) is a shield and buckler (4).

But it must be emphasized once more that all this faithfulness which God
is willing to show to men is done because the men are willing to put
their confidence in God.

Because he has desired Me, therefore will I deliver him.
I will lift him high because he knows my name (14).

Another criterion by which God can tell the faithfulness of His people is the extent to which they have confidence in His miracles. We have already mentioned the passage in which the people are quicker to "believe" a false report from fellow men than to "believe" in God who has done wondrous things, providing their needs in the midst of the wilderness (Numbers 14:11). And though for His name's sake God does not destroy them, He does lose confidence in them and does not permit that generation to inherit the promised land.⁶

Psalm 78, to which there has already been an allusion, described the people as unfaithful because their faith was not deep within their hearts; it also provides examples of how the people manifested this superficial faith. Twice the psalmist tells how the people did not "rely" on the miracles of God.

For you did not put your confidence (he'eminu) in God,
Nor trust in His salvation (22).

With all this, still they sinned
And did not put their confidence (he'eminu) in His
wonders (32).

It is a psalm that describes, chronologically, God's search for faithfulness in His people. As the psalmist describes it, it is trial and error, at least until He finds David. For David shepherded them:

according to the integrity of his heart (72).

The author of Psalm 40 also is aware that God's law must reach to his "innermost parts" (9). But he seems to feel that God wants more than just a rapport. He seems to feel that God thinks it

important that the man who is in such rapport with God advertise his feelings.

I did not hide your righteousness in the midst of my heart.
I have declared thy faithfulness ('emunatcha) and thy
salvation.
I have not concealed your sure mercies or your reliability
('amitcha) from the great congregation (11).

if he wants God to be concerned with him;

You, O Lord will not withhold your compassions from me.
Let your sure mercies and reliability ('amitcha) pre-
serve me always (12).

Both II Isaiah and Jeremiah on at least one occasion think likewise. In the famous servant song that appears in the 42nd chapter of Isaiah there can be no doubt that God will not be satisfied with a servant that is faithful in heart but does nothing about it. There can be no doubt but that God expects him to "publish" this 'emet.⁷

A similar idea is expressed in chapter 23 of Jeremiah, where God serves notice on the false prophets that He is well aware of their message which leads people away from Him. He is sort of disgusted with their naivete, that they might think that He is unable to discern who is a false prophet and who is a "true" prophet. He is willing to let these false prophets tell their dreams - as dreams, but He also expects the faithful prophets to speak out.

The prophet who has a dream let him tell the dream.
And the one that has my word, let him speak it faith-
fully ('emet) (23:28).

In the past few references, the perspective has shifted slightly. Starting with the importance of the right attitude, one that is

whole and unswerving, the discussion has begun, more and more, to place the emphasis on putting this right attitude into action.

There is much evidence to show that one of the most important criteria by which God decides if a man is faithful and therefore worthy of His confidence is how this man acts. These actions, as will be shown, must exhibit whole-heartedness towards God. Man's actions must, on the one hand, contain none that show the heart directed to any other God, and their actions must, on the other hand, by their consistency, show that they are directed to God with firmness.

In the psalm that appears in Deuteronomy 32, God says that
~~In the~~
 the people of Israel contain no grounds for confidence in them

...I will hide my face from them. I will tell what
 their end will be.
 For they are a generation that is perverse, children
 on whom one cannot rely ('emun) (20).

because they actively served other objects of devotion (Ibid:16,17,21).

The grounds on which God will put His confidence in Jeroboam so that the latter's house will be firm with the stability of God's faith is that he guard God's commandments even as David did:

And it will be that if you harken to all which I command you and walk in my way and do what is straightforward in my eyes, guarding my statutes as David my servant did, then I will be with you and I shall build for you a stable (ne'eman) house as I built for David, and I ~~will~~ will give you Israel (1K 11:38).

As David did in comparison to Solomon, that is. For the latter distributed his confidence among many other gods (Ibid:33).

After reviewing what confidence God has already put in Israel by retelling what He has done for them, Joshua too, explains that

in
serving God is 'emet

And now fear the Lord and serve Him with integrity and
steadfastly (b'emet)..

means not serving other gods:

...and put away the other gods which your fathers served
across the river in Egypt, and serve the Lord (Joshua 24:14).

And Jeremiah and Hosea, using the poetic imagery famous in
their respective styles, each find that a sine qua non for God's re-
lying on Israel is a sincerity of worship that is marked by a stabi-
lity of devotion to and faith in God alone.

Thus Jeremiah to those who go after the baalim, the no-gods:

I had planted you a noble vine
Wholly a faithful ('emet) seed.
How has it turned into a degenerate plant -- a strange
vine (2:21) (Cf. Ibid: 8,11,18,23)).

Thus Jeremiah to those who build high places, sacrifice their
children and pollute the Temple:

And you said unto them, this is the nation that did not
harken unto the voice of the Lord its God, nor received
correction. Faithfulness ('emunah) is perished and is
cut off from their mouth (7:28). (Cf. Ibid: 29-31)

Thus Hosea to those who mouth the names of the Baalim:

And I will betroth you unto me forever.
And I will betroth you unto me through righteousness,⁸
justice and sure mercy.
And I will betroth you unto me through faithfulness
('emunah).
And you will know the Lord (Hosea 2:21-22) (Cf. Ibid;
18, ff).

And thus also Hosea to those who rather than in the stable God

put their confidence in such things as winds are made of

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of
Israel with deceit.
Judah still is wayward with God and with the Holy One
Who is reliable (ne'eman)

In three different statements, Hezekiah's actions concerning
God are described as 'emet. When he asks to be allowed to live longer
he claims he has walked before God in 'emet.

I beg of you, O Lord, remember how I have walked before
you faithfully (b'emet) and with a steadfast heart...
(2K 20:3).

His tearing down of the high places and other objects that might have
enticed the hearts of Israel from placing all their confidence in God
alone is well known (2K 18:4-6).

In the other two references, however, the 'emet which explains
the character of his actions towards God in the past:

And Hezekiah did thus in all Judah, and he did what
was good and steadfast and loyal ('emet) before the
Lord, God (2 Ch 31:20).

is much more concerned with doing God's commandments in the correct
manner than with mixing them with observances of other gods (2Ch:29 ff).⁹

The Deuteronomist also saw that God was concerned with His
people's doing His commandments whole-heartedly, that is, not just
some of them, but all of them, and in just the manner He wanted them
to be done. The Lord could be relied upon to put His confidence in
man:

And you will know that the Lord your God is the God the
reliable (ne'eman) god that guards the covenant and
sure mercy

to certain men, that is

to those who love Him and keep His commandments unto the thousandth generation (Deuteronomy 7:9).

And there is the added injunction that they should keep the commandments which he commands the people:

And you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the ordinances which I command you this day...

not just in their hearts, but

to do them (Deuteronomy 7:11).

The probably Deuteronomic insertion in Jeremiah 11 corroborates this idea that God will keep His confidence with those who are exact in following His law.

Cursed is the man who will not harken to the words of this covenant which I commanded their fathers...saying harken unto my voice and do according to all which I command you. And you shall be unto me for a people and I will be unto you for a God, in order that I might fulfill the oath which I made unto your fathers to give them the land... (Jeremiah 11:33-5).

And Jeremiah is made to say that he "believes" this sincerely.

And I answered, and said, it is so ('amen) O Lord (Ibid).

God loses confidence in and rejects the sons of Eli and keeps His confidence in Samuel because of their respective actions with regard to fulfilling God's commandments. The sons of Eli are rejected because they make light of God's law (18 2:28 ff). For what God really wants is to raise Himself up a

steadfast (ne'eman) priest who will do according to what is in my heart and in my mind, and I will build him a firm (ne'eman) house, and he will walk before me, as my anointed forever (Ibid:35).

Unlike the sons of Eli, Samuel had God's favor. In fact, it was said that

...all Israel knew...that Samuel was steadfast (ne'eman) as a prophet before the Lord (IS 3:20)

for after he grew up it was said,

The Lord was with him and he did not let fall to the ground any of His words¹⁰ (IS 3:19).

From the point of view of the psalter, the matter (see footnote 10) is quite one of free will, or better, desire on the part of the individual man to want to learn how to be faithful, to want to learn how to do all of God's commandments.

In Psalm 25 for instance, the psalmist asks to be led in God's 'emet.

Lead me in your faithfulness ('amitcha), and teach me that you are the God of my salvation. For you I have waited all the day (5).

He wants to be in league with God's faithfulness. For he "believes" that God's faithfulness extends only to him who shows himself to be a person in whom God can place His confidence by showing this with his actions.

All the paths of the Lord are reliable mercies (chesed v'emet)
To those who preserve His covenant and His testimonies (10).

Thus, also in the mammoth Psalm 119, noted for its emphasis on praising God's law, the psalmist asks, over and over again, that he may learn more of God's ways. For he considers doing God's ways the proper way in which to show God He can place His confidence in him.

I have chosen the reliable ('emunah) way, I have set
(before me) your ordinances (30).

He continues, asking that God allow him to be a source of confidence.

And do not completely take from my mouth the reliable word
(davar 'emet),
For I hope in your ordinances (43).

And he claims that he is worthy to be or remain a person in whom God can place His confidence because he has had confidence in God's ways.

Teach me good sense and knowledge,
Because in your commandments have I put my confidence
(he'emanti) (66).

But if Psalm 119 is well known for its emphasis on keeping God's laws, it is as well known for its emphasis on keeping them so that a man may find the right and just way. That is, so that he may be also a source of confidence to other men. That men would be willing to put their confidence in another man is also a criterion through which God decides in which men to put His confidence.

Man's Relationship to Other Men

An inkling of how God expects men to treat men is given us by the author of Proverbs. In a context filled with the importance of honesty and uprightness in the relationships among men, he says

An abomination to the Lord are lips of falseness.
But those who do reliable ('emunah) actions are His
desire (12:22).^{II}

Why else would the author of Psalm 101, when he is wondering when God
will come to him (2) try to prove his faithfulness by saying

My eyes are with the reliable (ne'emanim) of the land
that they may dwell with me.
Who walks in the way of integrity will serve me (6).

And otherwise, would the author of Psalm 26, in asking God to be a
source of stability to him, try to show his stability in God's 'emet,
by proving that his walking in God's 'emet has meant not walking with
the unfaithful

For Your steadfast mercies are set before my eyes.
I have walked continually in Your right way ('amitcha) (3).

I have sat neither with false menⁿ or with dissemblers,
I hate the congregation of evil doers and will not
dwell with the wicked (4).

It is natural to expect that, associated with the feeling that
God will "stand behind" those men who are faithful to other men, would
be the feeling that God would reward the faithful with His faith in
them. And, in fact, that He would punish the unfaithful by with-
drawing His faithful protection from them...if not by some more overt
action. This is why the author of Psalm 37 can give answering God's
requests as the rule by which one can be sure that God will be re-
liable

Trust (batah) in the Lord and do good.
Dwell in the land make a companion of faithfulness
('emunah) (3).

for, says the psalmist, throughout his life he never saw

The righteous man forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread (25).

David used the same rule when he wanted God to realize how faithful he had been to God's anointed, hoping that this would now serve as a basis for God's protecting him from His anointed.

The Lord will return to a man his righteousness and his faithfulness ('emunato). For he has given you into my hand this day and I have not wanted to stretch out my hand against the anointed of the Lord (1S 26:23).

And Ezekiel used this rule when he related God's refutation of the sour grapes proverb:

Who does not lend on interest, nor take any increase, but keeps his hand back from iniquity, who executes reliable judgments (mishpat-'emet) between men. Who walks in my statutes and keeps my ordinances to do them truly ('emet). He is righteous. He will surely live... (Ezekiel 18:8,9).¹²

Actually, "executing reliable judgments between men," as a ground for God's having confidence in a man was pointed out by more than one prophet. Zechariah tells the people that what proves to God the nature of the faith of mortals is not their sacrifices (7:4 ff), but rather, says he

Thus said the Lord, faithful judgments (mishpat-'emet) and steadfast mercy and compassionate acts should men do with one another (Ibid: 7:9).

Consistent is Zechariah, when he tells the people what they must do to have God back as their main stay once more.

Speak reliably ('emet) with one another, make reliable judgments that lead to a stable society ('emet u'mishpat-

shalom shiftu) in your gates (Ibid: 8:16).¹³

Isaiah found that God could not rely on a city in which men were unfaithful to one another.

How is the faithful (ne'emanah) city become a harlot.
She was full of justice; righteousness
lodged in her, and now murderers (Isaiah 1:21).

While the author of Isaiah 1:26 knew that God would first have to restore judges upon whom her people could rely before He could rely upon Jerusalem:

And I will return your judges as they were at first
and your counselors as at the beginning.

After this will you be called a city of justice, a city
of faithfulness ('emunah).

And the author of Isaiah 59:4 saw that a situation between men and man where there was no confidence in stable things

No one calls (to judgment) in righteousness, there are no
reliable judgments ('ein nshpat b'emunah)

There is trusting in vanity and speaking of lies
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

produced a situation between man and God characterized by an impasse:

...your iniquities have separated you from your God...

And this impasse prevented God from even wanting to put His faith in a people so non-stable:

And your sins have caused him to hide his face from you
and not to listen to you (Ibid: 2).

But judging, of course, is only one aspect of the relationships

between men. God in seeking men upon whom to rely would expect that all relationships between men would be of the nature of 'emet. For truth is the fluid in the spinal column of life, and when it dries up, proportion is lost and nothing appears straight ('true). And when

justice is turned away backwards, and righteousness stands afar,

then

faithfulness ('emet) has stumbled in the street...
(Ibid:14).

And when

stability ('emet) is lacking,

even

one who avoids evil will find himself prey (Ibid:15).

Therefore, in the land where there is no 'emet between man and man but rather

swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing of adultery has broken forth so that there is blood all over (Hosea 4:2),

then men have provided God with no cause for confidence in them but rather

God has a bone to pick with the inhabitants of the land

since

There is no reliability ('emet), no steadfast kindness and no knowledge of God (Ibid:1).

But if they will obey His commandment to "love peace and security," then He will show His confidence in them by turning their fasts into feasts (Zechariah 8:19). As the psalmist put it, the man who is a source of confidence, he will enjoy the confidence of the Lord; indeed, he will dwell in His holy mountain.

Who will dwell in your tent, and who will dwell in your holy mountain?
...he who walks in integrity, who works righteousness and who speaks "truth" ('emet) in his heart (Psalm 15:2).¹⁴

And, as the wise father said to his son

Let neither steadfast mercy nor faithfulness ('emet) forsake you.
But bind them about your neck and write them on the tablets of your heart (Proverbs 3:3).

And you will find grace and favour in the eyes of God
And you ~~and man~~ (Ibid:1) and favour in the eyes of God and man

And you will be considered faithful by God and man.

God's confidence in man depends on man's proving that he is worthy of this confidence. He can prove this worthiness by showing the reliability of his words and actions with respect to both God and man. In his relationship to God, man shows God his reliability by giving evidence to God that he is unswervingly loyal to Him. In his relationship to other men, man shows God is reliability by giving evidence to God that other men can rely on him. He proves his loyalty by avoiding the ways of other gods, by doing all of God's ways, and by telling other people about God's ways. He proves that other men can rely on him by avoiding the gatherings of the wicked, by associating only with the righteous and by speaking the truth and doing justice.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S CONFIDENCE IN MANFOOTNOTES

- 1 Job 15:15, 16, and 4:8.
 - 2 The use of righteous here is curious. Cf. Isaiah 26:2 where the nation to enter His gates shall be a righteous one and is called one that keeps faithful deeds (shomer 'emunim).
 - 3 Notice, by the way, that in the rest of the sentence we have a cross reference to the first chapter. The grounds which Samuel sets up for why the people should serve God are: "For see all which he has made great before you."
 - 4 Talmudic expression aptly describing those who say one thing and do another from Pesachim 113^b.
 - 5 Notice also that in Psalm 54:7 when David asks ~~for assistance~~ from God against his enemies, he only dares ask this for he feels that unlike them he (implicitly) has set God before him (54:5,6). Cf. also Solomon in 1K 3:6 who appeals to God saying his father was straightforward in heart.
 - 6 Notice that immediately after this, he says that He will let Caleb go. For he has proven himself trustworthy by his spirit in the past, and also by his past actions (Numbers 14:24ff).
 - 7 Isaiah 42:1-4 Here is my servant whom I uphold
My chosen one in whom I delight
I have put my spirit upon him;
He will publish the truth among the nations.
He will not cry nor shout,
He will not raise his voice outside.
He will break no crushed reed,
Quench no dim wick.
In faithfulness (le'emet) he will publish the truth.
He himself will neither fade nor be broken
Until he establish truth on earth
The coastlands wait for his teaching.
- Translation from Prophetic Faith in Isaiah, Sheldon Blank, Harper and Bros., New York, 1958.
- 8 The theme of righteousness which makes its appearance here as a ground for God's confidence in man will be discussed more fully below.
 - 9 Cf also 2Ch 32:1 "After these faithful deeds ('emet)"
 - 10 This sentence is very ambiguous both in the Hebrew original and in its English translation, if we forget about capitalizing pronouns that refer to God. For we must ask WHO did not let fall to the

ground WHOSE words. Since the first half of the sentence seems to indicate that Samuel had God's close help, we might say that the WHO refers to God. But if so, then there is the connotation that God controls, or at least can control, the faithfulness of those in whom He wishes to place His confidence. It is well to note though that one who does not hipil davar is the same as one who m'kayem davar. See (below,) page // . The interpretation given to this passage here, as can be seen from the capital letters used in the translation is that it is Samuel who keeps 'erect' and firm the orders of God.

Interpretation questionable

- 11 Pity poor Jeremiah who had to deal with both a city that contained no 'emunah (trustworthiness) (5:1) and people that spoke falsely to God (5:2,3).
- 12 Compare Proverbs 16:6 where iniquity rather than being punished can be atoned for through chesed v'emet.
- 13 Compare Avot 1:18 which quotes this verse when saying: On three things the world stands, on 'emet on justice and on peace.
- 14 Cf. Isaiah 33:4b-6 and Psalm 24. Also see Malachi 2:6 for further evidence that God expects 'emet and righteousness in the mouth of him who is to dwell in his holy mountain. Here God sets up what he expects from the ideal priest.

CHAPTER III

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN

In many respects the grounds for a man's confidence in other men are similar to the grounds for God's confidence in man. A hint of this similarity appears in the closing of the last chapter. A father advises his son that if he did not let 'emet or steadfast kindness forsake him, but rather bound them about his neck and wrote them on the tablets of his heart, then he would find favor in the sight of God and man.' God and man are here equated as to what they seek in man.*

We will see that as God's confidence in man depends on man's relationship to man as well as on His relationship to God, so man's confidence in man depends on man's relationship to man and God.

Man's Relationship to Man

At the beginning of our discussion of man's confidence in God, we tried to show through the analogy of the little boy and his blocks, that before man could have confidence in any act of God, he first had to have confidence that these acts were performed in a structure that was itself stable. For only if man "believed" that the universe was physically stable could he "believe" that what God was doing, was being done on solid ground, so to speak. Naturally, an action contrary to the basic order of the structure would by its nature produce instability. If the overall structure was stable, however, then the fruits of actions made within that order, provided that they too were stable, would contribute to the stability of the over-all order.

In a discussion of man's confidence in man, there is an analog-

ous situation. The order with which we will be concerned, however, is moral not physical. It is a moral order which also gives stability to the world, stability, to be more exact, to the relationships between men and men. Men who are not moral, who do things contrary to the nature of the moral order, will produce a situation marked by instability, marked by a lack of confidence in the relationships of men and men. And those whose actions are moral, are themselves in harmony with the moral order, they are stable, are sources of confidence for their fellow men, and, in fact, contribute through their actions to the overall moral order. But unless man believed that the world was so ordered morally as to provide an intrinsic stability to a particular way of acting, then man could have no confidence that if a human being acted in that particular way, rather than in some other manner, he could place his confidence in that human being.

There are many passages in the Book of Proverbs to suggest the belief that a certain way of living by its very nature provides stability in inter-human relationships. For instance in 14:22 is the concept of an intrinsic moral order which if followed produces stability and if not, produces error and insecurity.

Those whose devices result in evil (produce the question)
will they not stray?

And those whose devices result in good (produce) a
steadfast kindness that is reliable (chesed v'emet).

In this passage the result of the actions of those who follow the moral order is a stable order in which one can have confidence.² In 28:20, the idea is that those people who are stable, and in whom one can place his confidence, act in such a way as to help assure the moral order.

The man of faithful deeds ('emunim), he abounds in blessings.

But the one who hastens to become rich, he will not be held guiltless.

It is implicit that one who hastens to become rich will do things which are worthy of punishment, which certainly do not bring blessings to the world. And such a man is in definite contrast to one whose deeds inspire confidence. There is a decided contrast between the fruits of the actions of a man in whom one can place confidence and the fruits of a man's actions whose desires make him untrustworthy.

The fruits of the actions of a man who is not reliable are well described in 11:13.

The man who goes about as a talebearer will reveal secrets
But he that is stable (ne'eman) in spirit covers things up.

What is more important for the stability of human relationships, what is more important for establishing confidence between man and man, than discretion?

...Unless it is that a man who is entrusted with a mission should be faithful to his sender. For in a time that lacked mass communication, where travel was tedious and dangerous, the man in whom confidence could be placed must have been prized. Two passages in Proverbs refer to the fruits of faithful messengers. In 13:17 for instance there is the comment,

An evil messenger will fall into trouble.
But the ambassador who is faithful ('emunim) heals.

And in 25:13

Like the cold of the snow in the day of the harvest
Is the faithful (ne'eman) messenger to his senders.

The remainder of this verse may be a gloss because it breaks the meter typical of this part of the chapter; it explains the simile:

He refreshes the soul of his masters.

Yet it is probably in the courtroom that we find best focalized this pattern that people who are trustworthy, people who inspire confidence, are those whose actions are most in line with the moral order, that the fruits of their actions add stability to that order.

He who breathes forth faithfulness ('emunah) will
relate righteousness.
But the witness of falseness (utters) deceit

says 17:12 as it clearly defines the fruits of men in whom one can place one's confidence as compared with the fruits of men who can not be trusted. Falseness can do naught but make crooked and unsure the relationships between men. For lies are misrepresentations of reality. They are not 'true' to reality; they are deceiving. Thus does the witness who lies deceive.³ In fact, the faithful witness is the witness who does not lie. We get this definition from 14:5.

The witness who can be relied upon ('ed 'emunim) is the
one who will not give false representation of reality.
And the one who breathes (forth) such false representations
is a false witness.

A few lines later, in verse 25, the idea that the liar deceives occurs again. The liar is contrasted with the truthful witness who saves souls.

We must now ask, what are the criteria

A savor of souls is the witness (who speaks) truth (emet)-
or is a witness of reliability.
While the one who breathes forth lies (produces) deception.

There is perhaps the connotation here that it is not enough that all which one says (here, on the witness stand) be a true representation of reality, but it is required that if one knows the true representation of reality, even if he is not called upon to say it, must come forth and utter what he knows. He is, in fact, morally bound. And if he does follow this moral order, he will certainly be considered a source of trust and confidence, and he will certainly be thought to have added strength to the moral order ^{and} of stability to the relationships among men. *he*

We must now ask, what are the criteria by which a man can consider another man worthy of his confidence, that he follows or contributes to the moral order? You might say that one criterion is that he tells the truth. But we have seen that even when God speaks the truth, the basis for putting confidence in His word is either that it is "believed" that God is sincere in His purpose and can give effect to His word, or that through experience it is known that God has given effect to His word. We will find that, with almost no exception, man will "believe" another man only when he has found out empirically that the man's words are "true" to the reality of the situation. This empiricism is particularly evident in the court. Thus, in Deuteronomy 13:15 and 17:14 which deal with persons suspected of leading others astray after false gods, an act which is the essence of social instability, the report even of this act is not considered trustworthy until investigation has been made. One must inquire and search diligently, and only then may one consider the report true. One is to place confidence in the witness who made the report only after checking his story, only after finding out if people have, in fact, been led astray.

An identical situation occurs in chapter 22, verse 20 of Deuteronomy. A man accuses his wife of not being a virgin. Her mother

says that she was. One relies on the word of neither, but rather searches to see if the "tokens of virginity" were with her, and only after this can one say that either the husband's or the mother's word is true.

Similarly, in Numbers 5, if a man "believes" his wife unfaithful, but there was no witness, and she was not caught in adultery, she is brought before the priest who performs an ordeal which involves her drinking some bitter water. The priest tells her that if she has not been unfaithful to her husband, then she will be free of the curse of the bitter waters, but in case she has been, he causes her to swear with an oath of cursing. He says to her that when the water enters her bowels the Lord will make her belly to swell and her thigh to fall away (5:19-22). God is made the warder of the oath. And when she answers amen, aman to the priests words, she places her confidence in an agreement which leaves it to God to determine the truth of the matter. What is significant here is that the verification of her words is put in God's hands because the nature of the situation precludes empiric verification.

Actually, so important was empiric verification before one would place his confidence in a witness that in one case, after a man witnessed against himself, they still sought to find out if what he said was "true." I refer here to the case of Achan who took spoil which was herem. When Joshua asks him to confess, he does so, saying

Truly, ('annah)
I sinned before Yahweh, the God of Israel, and I did this
and this (Joshua 7:20).

But he is not believed! And as the lines which follow indicate, even after he specifically enumerates what he took, they do not punish him until they find the hiding place and see what he took.

But empiric verification as the grounds upon which one man will place his confidence in the word of another is not limited to the court.⁴ In Genesis, Joseph will not believe his brothers that little Benjamin is at home and well. He need not do so just on the grounds that he has no proof; we might feel that his past experience with them added to his lack of confidence in their word. Thus, in Chapter 42:16, he tells them how he will learn whether their word is reliable. He will inquire more carefully into what they said. But ultimately, for proof, he asks that they send someone to bring Benjamin before him. Such an act will prove their words, as he says in verse 20.

Bring your little brother and your words will be verified (ye'amenu).⁵

When the brothers finally get to their home, they have a difficult time persuading Jacob that Joseph is alive. This is perhaps because of their reputation, or perhaps after all these years it was just "unbelievable." They cannot convince Jacob by producing Joseph but they do use visual proof; the wagons in which Joseph sent them back (Ibid:27).

Yet perhaps the best example in the whole Bible of the idea that seeing is believing is the story of Sheba coming to visit Solomon. She had heard of his great wealth and wisdom but did not believe it, and only believes it when she is herself witness to it. Says Sheba in 1K 10:6,7 (also 2Ch 9:5,6)

"True ('emet) was the word (I could have placed my confidence in it) which I heard in my land about your property and about your wisdom."

I did not believe (lo ha'emanti) these words until I came and my eyes saw and beheld I was not told the half of it...

If experience is the ground for putting one's confidence in a man's word, then experience is the ground for putting one's confidence in a man's actions.

There is a situation regarding David which indicates that a man puts his confidence in another man only because this other man has shown himself to be worthy of his trust. In 1Samuel 29, David is trusted by Achish that he will do nothing against him because he has proven his reliability by an act -- the slaying of those in the south of Judah. It is significant that the other princes who only heard of this act and were not close enough to the battle to be sure of what happened are not so quick to place their confidence in David. When David tells Achish that he has slain these Judeans, Achish is quick to "believe" it (1Samuel 27:12). He has confidence in David because of an overt act, but the source indicates that he believed David had committed that act merely on David's own report (Ibid:10ff).⁶

Gedaliah's death occurs evidently because he had good reason not to believe (lo he'emin lahem) that Ishmael had come to kill him when the captains of the forces in the field tell him this (Jeremiah 40:14). What his reasons were are probably lost in the not well known web of politics that surrounded the remnant of Israel. What we can say though is that the political alignment was probably such that he had good reason to have faith in Ishmael.

If Gedaliah was duped by the previous sweet words of Ishmael, the authors of Proverbs would not have fallen into the same trap. At least three different proverbs from the Book of Proverbs carry home the point forcefully that it is not what a man says which reveals his loyalty but rather what he does.

Many is the man that proclaims his own loyalty (chaddo)
But the man of faithful deeds ('ish 'emunim) who will
find? (20:6).

And the warning in 26:25 is similar

If he speaks nicely, don't place your confidence in him,
(al ta'aminu bo)
For there are seven abominations in his heart.

It is natural inter-civilization which demanded empiric verification of a person's words, that deceitful people will use guile to gain the confidence of others. This is perhaps the reason for the warning in chapter 26; it seems to be also the reason for the warning in 27:6 which says:

Stable (ne'emanim) (without ulterior motives) are the
wounds of a friend.
And many can be the kisses of an enemy.

It is impossible to say that ordinary inter-relationships between human beings in the Biblical society were characterized by an attitude of "show me," if one man was to put his confidence in another. There is, however, one type of inter-relationship among human beings where the very nature of that relationship connoted stability and trust. I speak of family relationships. For instance, we have the example of Esther doing what Mordecai asks of her just because he was her cousin, for she had relied on him in the past. He had brought her up ('omen) (2:7).

There is justification for using the word 'omen (nursing father or 'omenet, nursing mother) in this essay on grounds for confidence. While it is true that the word 'omen belongs to the category of Hebrew words which denote professions, they also describe the profession. Such terms do not come into use in completely arbitrary fashion, es-

pecially in Hebrew where the meaning of the root upon which a term denoting a profession is based usually is very relevant to the profession. Compare: ro'eh (one who shepherds), ro'eh (one who sees), and lofeh (one who bakes). 'omen also is a participle, meaning etymologically one who supports.⁷ Thus

And it was that he was a support (o'men) to Esther (2:7);
therefore

(Esther did) as Mordecai commanded her, and she did his bidding as she had confidence in him (b'ammah 'ito) (2:20).

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi is given the offspring of Ruth and Boaz to care for. They know that they can place the child's care in her hands with confidence because she is a member of the family, as it is said:

And Naomi took the child and placed it on her bosom and became a support (omenet) unto it.

How much confidence a child can put in one who rears him receives contradictory evidence from passages in 2K and 2S. Each case involves people who reared the children of former kings. But there is an important difference between the two situations. In second Samuel, after the woman who reared Jonathan's sons hears that Ish-Bosheth's father and grandfather ~~have been killed~~, she flees presumably to save him from the new king (2S4:4). Ish-Bosheth's 'omenet thus remained a support to him; she remained 'true' to him. To the contrary, in 2K, after Ahab's death and during his son Ahaziah's reign, when Jehu sends letters to the people who had reared Ahab's seventy other sons, they slay these sons (2K 10:1-7). The 'omanim of Ahab's seventy sons thus

cease being faithful to them.

It is important to notice that Jehu does not ask the 'omanim and elders to kill the sons immediately. Rather, he tells them to pick the best of the seventy and gird him for battle against Jehu, that this son might defend his father's house. It is only after the 'omanim and elders fear that they will not be able to stand up against Jehu, and communicate to Jehu their desire to serve him, that he tells them to kill the seventy sons. It is as if Jehu were testing the 'omanim to see if they are still faithful to those that they had brought up. In other words, it was his wont to expect that they would be faithful to those who had relied upon them for their support.

It is the very natural tendency to expect that you may rely on people who are close to you that makes Micah warn the members of his society that this natural assumption could be dangerous.

The author of Micah 7 depicting how iniquitous and unstable is his society, warns

Do not rely ('al ta'amimu) on a friend and do not trust an intimate friend.

Guard the opening of your mouth from her that lies in your bosom (7:5).

It is a society in which

The son dishonors the father,
The daughter rises against her mother,
The daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law.

in fact

The enemies of a man are the men of his own house (7:6).

And in Chapter 9 when Jeremiah wishes to show how treacherous a society Israel has become, he says that even the most naturally reliable of human relationships have become unstable.

They draw their tongues as a bow.
Falseness and not faithfulness ('emunah) is in the land.
From evil to evil they go... (2).

Let every man watch out for his friend; do not trust in
any brother.
For every brother acts subtly and every neighbor goes
about a tale-bearer (3).

A slaughtering arrow is their tongue; deceit one speaks
with his mouth.
Peace he speaks to his friend, but inwardly he lays an
ambush (7).

Each one deceives his neighbor; truth ('emet) they do
not speak.
They have taught their tongues the language of false-
ness... (4).

And again Chapter 12

For also your brother and the house of your father, even
they have acted traitorously to you. Even they cried
heartily after you. Do not put your faith ('al ta'amin)
in them even if they say nice things to you (6).

If it seems that Jeremiah is taking it a bit personally, one should re-
fer to the related verse 19 of the preceding chapter. There Jeremiah
tells of his naivete:

For I was as a docile lamb being led to the slaughter...

Made aware now by God's knowledge that those people in whom he had com-
plete confidence were not only not loyal but were actually actively
seeking his hurt, Jeremiah uses the instability of the family relation-
ship as a metaphor to express how insecure society has become.

It is perhaps fair to say that while the ultimate ground upon which to judge whether or not a man was faithful (even in family relationships) was the empirical evidence of how he behaved in the past, it certainly seems that in relationships involving close friends and relatives the tendency was to place confidence in the other human beings without necessarily having this evidence. But as we have seen (if all the above prophetic passages are not taken allegorically) from the Joseph story, even a relative, once he has been unfaithful to his relative can no longer expect his relative's confidence merely on the basis of their familial relationship.⁹

Still another ground for placing one's confidence in one's fellow man appears in the specific case of leaders and the people they lead. Under what conditions, for instance, will a leader have confidence that those whom he leads will follow?

After Gideon's (Jerubbaäl's) death, when the men of Schechem anoint Abimelech king, and after he has slain all his brethren with the exception of Jotham, Jotham asks the men of Schechem

If you have dealt truly (b'emet) and uprightly with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech and let him rejoice in you, but if not... (Judges 9:19f),

then may a fire come out of each of you devouring the other, he continues. Jotham tells them that Gideon has dealt well with them and fought for them, yet this is how they repay his household. But it is in the parable of the trees that we see more fully what a leader expects from his people. For Jotham prefaces the above remarks with a story telling that all the trees of great worth resolve to make the lowly bramble their ruler. But the bramble is no fool. He knows

that he has been picked only as a last resort, and he is aware that a king must have the loyalty of his subjects, and so he resolves to test this loyalty.

And the bramble said to the trees, if in sincerity (b'emet) you anoint me to be king over you then come and seek shelter in my shade (9:15,16).

For our concern here the punishment that the bramble threatens, namely fire from the cedars of Lebanon, is incidental. So is the fact that Abimelech and the men of Shechem do fall out with one another thus "bringing true" a curse parallel to that which Jotham uttered against them for their infidelity to his father's house. What is important here is the grounds for a king's confidence in his people. Those grounds are of course, loyalty, or more specifically, willingness to support the king, to follow him, and to return to his household his kindnesses to them.

Three stories concerning David emphasize this importance of loyalty. In 1 Samuel 22, when Saul accuses David of conspiring with the priests against him, Abimelech tries to defend David and show Saul that he may have confidence in him.

Who among all your servants is as trustworthy (ne'eman) as David? (After all) he is the king's son-in-law (familial relationship and if that is not enough) and he turns to your bidding and is honored in your house.

It is because there are no concrete statements to show that David (empirically) has, in the past, been disloyal, as against many instances which would give Saul reason to put his confidence in David that some have considered Saul paranoid.

On the other hand, in 2S 19, when Shebna tries to lead a revolt against

revolt against David, and it is quelled, and Joab seeks him out in Abel,
a woman answers Joab

We are the peaceful and ('emune') loyal in Israel.

Joab consents to spare the city provided that they can prove through a specific act that they are faithful. And they perform this request and deliver over Shebna. And when Shebna's head comes over the wall, Joab keeps his word and returns to Jerusalem satisfied that this overt act has proved their faithfulness.

Moreover, at the beginning of the Absalom rebellion in 2S.15, Ittai the Gittite seems to have great affection for David. He is willing to follow David rather than stay in the land and wait for Saul. No reason is given why he should show this loyalty to David rather than to Saul. David tells him that he does not have to flee since he is a stranger that just came and may dwell in the land. David tells him to think of his brethren.

You just came yesterday Should I today force you to go with me?

I go where I shall go, and you should return and take your brethren with you, and may the Lord show you (reading with the Septuagint) faithful kindness (chesed v'emet) (20).

David seems to be saying almost that Ittai's first loyalty should be to his brethren. Ittai, however, chooses to follow David with his brethren. It is of great significance that later on (2S18:2-5) David shows his confidence in Ittai, giving him command of troops and entrusting him with the mission to stop the rebellion of Absalom, but by no means to hurt David's son.

A leader's need to find faithful helpers is brought out in

Nehemiah also. When Nehemiah returns from Babylon and finds that Eliashib and Tobiah had prepared a chamber in the house of the Lord and were not paying the Levites who had, for this reason, left the service, he went out of his way to appoint men who could be trusted.

For they were considered reliable (ne'emanim) and it was upon them to apportion unto their brethren (Ibid: 13:13).¹⁰

Actually when the leader picks a man in whom he can place his confidence, if that man is to deal with the people, one would expect that the people can also put confidence in him. In fact, the question arises, in general, on what grounds will people put confidence in those that lead them?

If you could ask the author of Proverbs 29:14, he might say
If y
that the people will support the king who is fair in judging. For he said

^{The}
"King who judges the poor faithfully (b'emet), his throne will be sure forever."

If you could ask the author of 20:28, he might say that the king who is constant in his kindness to his people will lay stable foundations for his reign. For this author said:

Steadfast kindness and faithfulness (chased v'emet)
preserve a king; for his throne is supported by
steadfast kindness.¹¹

We know what God would expect of leaders (Numbers 11:12). When the people are rebellious in the desert and are not satisfied with the manna, Moses, usually considered the prototype of leader, complains to God. In his complaint he mentions what God had said to him. God used

a particular metaphor to show Moses how he should consider himself in relation to the people he was leading.

Did I conceive all this people, did I bear them that you should say to me, carry them in your bosom as the nursing father ('omen) carries the child...

The full importance of the word ('omen) with its natural connotation of tender, loving care becomes sharpened when one realizes that the Hebrew word for nursing father comes from 'amen and has the added connotation as we saw above (p.61) of a stable support and sure source of reliance.

We have seen how important the preservation of the moral order is for the stability of human relationships. Naturally, the court has as one of its main functions the preservation of this stabilizing moral order. It is, therefore, not surprising that in two cases when men pick judges (leaders), that is, pick men whom other people must follow, men in whom others must put their confidence, we find that one of the grounds for picking these men is that they are stable. They must be without iniquitous desires, rather filled with faithfulness.

When Moses, on Jethro's advice picks judges, the advice which Jethro gives, contains the ground upon which Moses can decide whom to pick.

Provide for yourself from all the people able men, fearers of God men of faithfulness ('anshe 'emunah), who hate unjust gain, and place such over them to be rulers...
(Exodus 18:21).

Jehoshaphat too, in picking judges, after warning them that they should judge for God and not for man, tells them to use God as their guide, for God does not respect persons, nor take bribes (2Ch. 19:4-7). And when he appoints the Levites in Jerusalem who will judge

there, he commands them saying

Thus shall you do with fear of God, in faithfulness (b'emunah) and with a whole heart (9).

But a new situation is developing. For in setting up grounds for confidence between men and men we have begun to see that a man's relationship to God is also important. In both the above references, though the basic purpose of the leaders was to establish judges on whom the people could rely, and though in each case their morality and faithfulness were stressed, in each case fear of God was also mentioned as a criterion for deciding the trustworthiness of the judge.

Relationship Between Man and God

When Nehemiah picks men to guard the gate at night (7:2), he picks a man to watch over Jerusalem

Because he is a faithful man ('ish 'emet) and fears God more than many.

The author of Psalm 12 feels that the falseness and flattery which weaken the bonds of stable human relationships is a direct result of the fact that

...the god-like man has vanished and reliable men ('emunim) are no more to be found among mankind (2).

When Moses wants the people to accept God's law, he has the Levites utter curses on such as commit immoral acts, and the people say 'amen after each curse (Deuteronomy 27:15-26). As they say 'amen, each person makes an oath to accept these curses upon himself conditionally, 1,2, should he commit any of the immoral acts which the Levites have mentioned.

God is made the warder of these oaths. But with the exception of the first act which is idolatry and the last which is impiety to God, the others involve relationships between people. Thus, as the people say 'amen here, they not only put their confidence in God as the warder of oaths, but also, they put their confidence in God as the warder of society. What gives each member of the society added confidence in the other members is the confidence that God will be responsible for the proper execution of the curses.¹²

What Nemehiah's criterion for picking judges, the psalmist's explanation for the iniquity of society and this public avowal have in common is that all see that the presence of God in the mind of man makes that man a more stable source of confidence.

Thus it is that men will be more ready to conclude bargains with men if they know that the purpose of the compact is in harmony with God's desires. They will be quicker to place their confidence in the other person carrying out his part of the bargain if they know that the other person has an awareness of this harmony.

The woman who hides the spies in Jericho makes a bargain with them not to report their whereabouts to the authorities if they will promise not to hurt her family when they conquer the land. While it is true that here again God is made the warder of their oath, how does she know that God might be concerned with these men also? She "believes" in fact that these men have the backing of the Lord. Thus she is sure also that they will conquer the land because she has heard that God is with them (Joshua 2:9-11).

And now swear unto me in the name of Yahweh, for we have done steadfast kindness (chesed v'emet), that you will do also with the house of my father (the same favor)¹³ (12).

And they answer that if she does not give them away, she can trust them to be faithful to the agreement.

Our life for yours, if you do not tell what we are doing here then it shall be that when Yahweh gives us this land, that we will deal with you in a steadfast and faithful manner (chesed v'emet) (14).

Similarly, when Eliezer asks Rebecca's family to make up their minds whether or not he can take her back to Isaac (Genesis 24), saying:

And now if you want to make a faithful agreement (chesed v'emet) with my master, tell me, and if not tell me (so that I know where to turn) (49).

their answer is indicative of why they are willing to trust Eliezer:

"The thing comes from God, we (have no say in the matter) (50).

How they know this is another question; what is important here is that their confidence in the man Eliezer is based on the grounds that they "believe" him to be carrying out God's plan.

In the previous situations, men are seen to have confidence in other men because they "believe" that these other men have the confidence of God.¹⁴ We shall see in what is to follow, that men place their confidence in other men because they "know" that these other men have the backing of God.

The most obvious examples of such divine backing comes from the Exodus. When Moses is first getting his commission to lead the people, he is fully aware of the problems he might have in getting their confidence in him. He says to God (Exodus 4):

And if they do not believe me (lo ya'aminu li), and do not harken unto my voice saying God did not appear before you?(1)

God tells him how they can be assured (made to believe) that God did appear, which would mean that God is behind Moses, which means that they can rely on God.¹⁵ First he shows Moses how he can turn a rod into a snake before their eyes and says

In order that they will believe you (ya'aminu) that the God of your fathers appeared to you...(5).

And, of course, he then gives Moses the second proof which is Moses' ability now to make his hand leprous by placing it in his bosom, and says again to Moses:

If they do not put their confidence (ya'aminu) in you and do not harken to the first sign, they will have confidence (ya'aminu) in the second sign (4:9).¹⁶

Moreover, God is prepared in case they will not "believe" in both the signs:

And if they will not put their confidence (ya'aminu) in the two signs and do not harken unto your voice...(9),

and he gives Moses the ability to perform a third sign, making water turn into blood.

Later, in the desert, when the people should be used by now to having things happen when Moses is around, Moses still needs the visible proof of God's being behind him, in order to get the people behind him. For God says to Moses as they are nearing Mount Sinai (Exodus 19):

Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud in order that the people will hear my conversation with you and also in you will they put their faith (ya'aminu) forever... (9)¹⁷

It is also a miracle which is the clinching factor in the woman having confidence in Elijah. It is only after he revives her dead child that she says to him (1K 17:24):

Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of God in your mouth is a faithful ('emet) word.

I translate the word 'emet here as faithful for the following reasons: Elijah has already performed a miracle by feeding them both from a jar of meal that was not spent (16). At this point the woman might "believe" that he is a man of God. But then the child dies. What good is a man of God to her if this is what he causes her? (14-17). It is only when, by reviving the child, Elijah shows that he means her no harm, that she can truly put her confidence in him.

This willingness to put confidence in a man only when he uses God's powers for your benefit can become dangerous...especially if you are a leader...and especially if the man is a prophet. The situation is vividly illustrated in 1K 22 (also 2Ch 18). The professional prophets have all told the king to go to battle and prosper. Micaiah warns them beforehand that he will speak only what God speaks to him (Ibid: 14). Evidently, only what the Lord speaks can be true. But Jehoshaphat, when he sees Micaiah try to dodge an answer by mimicking the prophets' answer, says to him:

How many times have I adjured you to tell me only faithful ('emet) things in the name of the Lord (16).

But, of course, when Micaiah gives the answer which Jehoshaphat asks,

but probably does not really want to hear, and tells him that he should not go to war, but rather return in peace, the King's servants smite him, and the king has him thrust in prison. Micaiah must choose between faithfulness to God and faithfulness to the king. He chose the former. The king had to choose between putting confidence in the man who told him what he wanted to hear and putting confidence in the man who told him what he did not want to hear. He also chose the former. Unfortunately Jehoshaphat's ultimate criterion for deciding in whom to place his confidence was his confidence in what he, himself, thought. Micaiah's parting words are significant

If you really do return in peace then God did not speak through me (28).

In other words, God speaks the truth, for He carries out what He says. It is as if Micaiah were saying, "I thought God was speaking through me. If what I said that God said does not happen, since the ultimate criterion for the 'true' prophet is that his words come true, God was not then speaking through me."

With these words, Micaiah plants the seeds for the development of a way of knowing which prophet to trust. These seeds flower in Jeremiah. In Chapter 14, we hear him tell God what other prophets are saying:

...behold the prophets say (to the people) do not fear destruction and famine will not come to you. But a peace upon which you can rely (shalom 'emet) will I give to you (13).

Jeremiah tries to persuade the people not to rely on the prophets who said these words because God, who will decide about this peace, did

not say these words to them. He says that God told him:

The prophets speak falseness in my name (for) I did not send them nor command them, nor speak to them. A false vision, a divination, foolishness, the deceit of their lips (is the source of) their prophesying unto you.

Jeremiah, thrust into a situation reminiscent of the situation into which Micahiah was thrust, finds that his words are not relied upon because he tells the people what they do not want to hear (26:11). He proclaims that without doubt, God has sent him:

...faithfully ('emet), God has sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears (15).

The word faithfully is used because of the possibility of a double entendre. Not only can 'emet here mean that the idea is true that God did send Jeremiah, but that also, since he was sent, Jeremiah must be faithful to his mission on which he was sent. He must say exactly what was said to him.¹⁸

Though the people do believe Jeremiah, and put their confidence in him, no explicit reason is stated why they do. The problem is naturally a difficult one. How can a man who has not received the word of God directly (else he had no need for a prophet) decide in which of two prophets to place his confidence, if these two prophets say contradictory things? In Chapters 27 and 28, Jeremiah comes into sharp conflict with the prophets who tell the people that they will not have to serve Babylon. They claim, as he does, that their word comes from God. Shall the test of a man's words be his oratorical ability? Should it be how many people agree with him? Obviously, the answer in both cases is no. But neither can the answer be that the prophet states that his word

is from God. The true measure for whether or not to place one's confidence in a prophet cannot be that statement, "really God did send me." It is to be expected that the prophet who is the 'true' one will feel quite frustrated as he sees the false prophets say with him that God sent them and receive as much confidence for their saying it as the 'true' prophet. It is amid such frustration that Jeremiah comes up with the formula

When a prophet prophesies peace, at the moment that his word comes to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord really sent him¹⁹ (Ibid:28:9).

In phrasing this formula, Jeremiah gives as the ground for confidence in a prophet what we have already seen is, for the most part, the general ground for confidence between men and men. Whether it was in the court, or in everyday inter-relationships between human beings, empirical evidence and not the claim, "I have God on my side," was the ultimate test for the truth of a man's words and for placing confidence in his actions.

CHAPTER III

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN MANFOOTNOTES

- 1 Proverbs 3:3-4 see above page 57, of Chapter II.
- 2 Cf. Proverbs 11:8.
- 3 We have noticed before, page 2, that another quality of 'emet which allows one to have confidence in that which partakes of it is its longlastingness. Cf. the verse two lines later 12:19

The tongue of faithfulness ('emet) is established forever.
 The tongue of falseness (lasts) but a twinkling.
- 4 Notice also in the messianic passage of Isaiah 11:5 which describes the Messiah as coming with righteousness and faithfulness girded about him. In a time where security will be so firm that the symbol of the wolf and the sheep lying together is used, it is said that he will not judge according to what his eyes and ears tell him, but with righteousness and equity. A hint is found here also of empiric verification.
- 5 The aptness of verified as a translation of the niphal of 'amen is realized when one sees that they have similar etymological developments, verify coming from the Latin verus-truth.
- 6 David in turn is willing to do chesed and 'emet (2S 2:6) with the men of Jabesh-Gilead because they have already shown their loyalty by an overt act -- burying Saul. Perhaps they keep some ancient agreement about burying the dead.
- 7 Notice also from Numbers 11:12 (below page 70) an 'omen should act as though he had borne and conceived the child he cares for. We might here have aid in explaining the use of 'omen in Isaiah 49:23.
- 8 Verse 7 has been inserted between verse 3 and 4.
- 9 Compare Genesis 47:29; Jacob, on his death bed feels that he has to make his own son-who has certainly proved himself a loyal son- swear that he will keep his word to his father. Perhaps it is because Jacob will not be around to remind him.
- 10 Note also that in Nehemiah 11:23, the ordinance which is from the king over the singers in the temple service, it being a law that must be carried out faithfully every day, is talked about thus :

For the commandment of the king is upon (the singers) a firm ('amanah) ordinance on the singers for their daily routine.

Mention should also be made of the numerous reference to positions in society which require 'emunah. Usually they are positions such as apportioning or guarding, which require that all members of society, leaders and the people, place their confidence in them.

apportioning: 2K22:6,7; ICh 31:12,15,18

guarding: ICh 9:22,26.

others (perhaps skill?): ICh 9:31; ICh 34:12.

- 11 Cf. Esther 9:30. The king wants to assure the Jews that there will be no pogrom. He sends words of peace and faithfulness ('emet).
- 12 Cf. IK 1:36. 'Amen is used here to show affirmation, that one can have confidence in him who says it. The incident is that the servant agrees to anoint Solomon for David. Actually his agreement, his confidence in the value of the deed is that the deed is wanted by God.
- 13 Notice that she asks for a dependable sign (Joshua 2:12) and gets it (2:18).
- 14 Either because their attitude is the kind of attitude that God wants or because they are doing His will. See the discussion of the grounds on which God will put His confidence in men, above, Chapter II.
- 15 Here the ground for man's confidence in God is His overt showing of His might. See above, Chapter I, p.18.
- 16 Ultimately their confidence is in the sign.
- 17 On the subject of placing confidence in a man because we overtly see that God is his support, Cf. 2Ch 32:15. Here the servants of Sennacherib try to persuade the people not to support Hezekiah (not to have confidence in him) because of what he says God can do. They say it is not possible that God can do this, using as proof that no other god has been able to stop the Master, and thus, trying to make the people "believe" that Hezekiah's God is not worthy of confidence, show that Hezekiah is not worthy of confidence.
- 18 See above, Chapter II where one of the grounds for God's confidence in man is that man do God's bidding.
- 19 For more examples of the word of a man being true because he has that word from God, Cf. Daniel 8:12,26; 9:2; and Job 36:4.

such evidence.

CONCLUSION

Because the Table of Contents is in itself a series of conclusions, and because summary conclusions have appeared at the ends of the chapters and some of their sections, these concluding remarks will be devoted, in the main, to comparing and contrasting the various conclusions already stated. Thus we shall compare the grounds for man's confidence in God with the grounds for God's confidence in man; the grounds for God's confidence in man with the grounds for man's confidence in man; and the grounds for man's confidence in man with the grounds for man's confidence in God.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD AND GOD'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN

We have seen that the three major grounds for man's confidence in God are that God wants to keep His word, that God can keep His word and that God has kept His word. We phrased these ideas as God is sincere; God is genuine; and God is constant. We did not group the references concerned with God's confidence in man around the ideas of sincerity, ability and constancy. We might however apply these three ideas to man and see how the grounds for God's confidence in man compare with the grounds for man's confidence in God.

For man, the fact that God is sincere is a basic premise. Man does not necessarily ask proof. God's creation of the world was purposive; He gave man a plan (Torah) by which man could follow His purpose; He stays sincere even after creation, not deflected from His purpose by the actions of men. Empirical evidence is brought in sup-

port of the latter idea, but the former ideas do not seem to require

Both man and God place their confidence in each other depending on certain

such evidence.

For man, the idea that God is a genuine God i.e. that He can keep His word is also a basic premise for much of his confidence in God. Again he does not necessarily ask for empirical proof. We saw that the evidence marshalled was to some extent empirical, but often the idea that God has what it takes to be a real God was accepted without the aid of past experience.

Past experience is, of course, by its very nature, the only kind of criterion that can be brought to bear when considering God's constancy. There is an abundance of proof. It should be noted that God's constancy is called upon to buttress the other grounds for confidence. Hence there is a tendency to consider empirical evidence for confidence in God as ultimately more reliable than other claims.¹

In contrast, God's confidence in man is based almost entirely on empirical evidence. It is true that God wants man to be sincere. But man must show this sincerity through his actions: by the way he does all of God's commandments, by the way he avoids all the commandments of the other gods, by the way he treats his fellow men. His sincerity and his constancy are thus amalgamated. No distinction is made. In fact, man must prove his sincerity through his constancy. The only case not requiring empirical proof, and it is a significant case, concerns man's ability to be reliable. This ability God accepts "on faith." This ability is never questioned.² It is a basic premise for all of God's confidence in man. It is almost as though God were saying, "I know you can, if only you will."

GOD'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN AND MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN

Both man and God place their confidence in man depending on man's

relationship to God and man's relationship to other men. The similarity between man's and God's confidence in man is striking. Both man and God require empirical evidence for the reliability of a man. When looking at men from the point of view of their relationship to other men, both man and God want to know if these men speak truly, are without devices, and are loyal. They are both wary of people who claim to be reliable. They want to know whether these men have been reliable. They want to know whether their actions have been constant, and they want to know if their words bear out investigation.

From the point of view of man's relationship to God, God wants empirical proof of man's reliability and man wants empirical proof of man's relationship to God. In other words, as God would not have put His confidence in a man just because the man said that he would be 'true' to God, so man would not have put confidence in a man just because he said that he had God on his side. God will judge man's reliability from his actions towards Him, and man will judge man's reliability from the performing of a miracle or the prediction of an event. Underlying this idea is, of course, the premise that God will be loyal to the man who has God on his side.³

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN AND MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Because of the identity of the grounds for man's confidence in man and God's confidence in man, this third comparison must be the same as the first (though the perspectives are different). One has but to substitute the phrase God's confidence in man for the phrase man's confidence in man.

The third comparison must be by nature similar to the first one for another reason also. And this other reason gives added under-

standing to the striking similarity of man's confidence in man and God's confidence in man.

Men will put their confidence in God as a guide. Therefore, they will put their confidence in what He seeks in man. Moreover, these thoughts about God's confidence in man were in the minds of men before they were written into the Bible, the Bible having been written by men. Therefore these thoughts are automatically what men considered to be good grounds for confidence in other men.

MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF

In any society, a person wishing to live and work with others must ask himself, what must I do, how must I act that my actions will inspire others to have confidence in me? In Biblical times men might have sought assurance that others would have confidence in them by identifying with those who were considered reliable. They probably could have also harkened to the adages, ideas, and traditions that later became passages in the books of Psalms and Proverbs and which tell men what to do in order to be considered reliable. For we have seen a definite pattern evolve. This pattern of criteria for grounds of confidence may or may not have been conscious in the minds of the Biblical authors. Still, the pattern is so defined that it must reflect definite values of the society out of which it came.

The question arises, did any Biblical author address himself directly to the problem of how a man may have confidence that others will have confidence in him? Did any Biblical author suggest how a man might have confidence in himself? It is true that self-confidence is a modern term. Though the Biblical authors may have expressed it differently themselves directly to the problem of how a man may have confidence

ferently, they were not unaware of its importance.

A hint of this awareness comes from two passages already cited above. Might not the passages which we translated

If you do not believe you will not be established
(Isaiah 7:9) /

and

Believe in God and be established (2Ch 20:20) /

also be translated

If you do not have confidence (in lo ta'amnu) in God
you will not be self-confident (lo te'amnu).
Have confidence (he'amnu) in God and be self-con-
fident (v'te'amnu).⁴

Similar phraseology is used by the authors of Job and Deuteronomy to say that men who can rely no longer on what had been their support lack internal security.

Job, talking about the strong man who will lose his strength to the wicked says that

...he (lo ya'amin) will not believe in -- not have confidence in -- his life (28:22).

And the author of Deuteronomy 28:66, talking about the people of God when they no longer have God's protection, says

...and (lo ta'amin) you will not believe in -- not have confidence in -- your life.

But it is to the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk that we must go for suggestions on the source of inner security. It is they who address themselves directly to the problem of how a man might become

self-confident. In worlds that are crumbling, they blend confidence and action, and speak of a confidence that not only comes from action but is defined and expressed by action.

Explaining to a nation rife with injustice what it must do to avoid panic, Isaiah says

which will...
Ha-ma'amin will not panic (28:16).

Ha-ma'amin might be translated variously as the one who has faith (the one who has confidence) or the one who keeps faith (the one who inspires confidence). It matters little which one of these translations we choose, if we realize that ma'amin contains the nuances of all of these possible translations. What is important here is that which makes a nation a ma'amin. The answer is to be found in the metaphor of the half verse which follows.

I will make justice the line
 And righteousness the plummet (28:17a).⁵

In other words, "a community whose "faith" stands the test when... measured against the standards of what is just and right will not be in a panic,⁶ has no cause for hysteria, is not threatened, and may under God, endure."⁶

But what if the community does not stand the test? How then shall a man act that he might feel secure? In an unstable world, characterized by unpunished evil-doers, Habakkuk answers

The righteous man will live by means of 'emunah (2:4).

Once again 'emunah can be translated variously as faith (confidence) or faithfulness (inspiring confidence). And once again what is important is not the particular translation which we choose but what defines the...

is not the particular translation which we choose but what defines the 'emunah of the righteous man. We have seen throughout this essay that a man's faithfulness is known by his deeds, more particularly his righteous deeds, those deeds which make a man reliable. How then shall the righteous man live but by being "true" to himself? The very actions which will inspire confidence in others must be the source of his confidence in himself.

Isaiah and Habakkuk answer the questions, how a man can have confidence in himself. They say, the man who acts in such a way that his actions inspire others to have confidence in him, he may be self-confident.

Compare the negative approach:

The fool will put his confidence (yitton) in everything.
But the craftsman looks before he lays (Proverbs 13:15).

See Blank, Psychotic Faith in Jewish Law, page 115. Notice how well this metaphor fits with what was said above concerning the relationship of truth and confidence through the basic idea of stability. The moral order which gives stability also gives the standards for measuring how "true" a man is to that order and hence how secure one might feel in putting his confidence in him. (This moral order gave to Isaiah concerning a people and, as we shall see shortly, to Habakkuk concerning a nation, and standards for confidence in oneself.)

6 See Git. p. 39.

CONCLUSION

FOOTNOTES

1 On this subject it is interesting to note the opiate effect of a miracle-based confidence. From the many passages in the Bible which tell of God's performing miracles for the people who soon forget them, as well as from the dialogue between God and Moses where they discuss the need for many signs, we see that a confidence in God based on the empirical evidence of His miracles requires the constant performing of miracles.

2 In ironical contrast to the fact that man often had to be shown that God had the ability to be reliable.

3 Much confidence seemingly placed in man is really placed in God. It is perhaps similar with those who put their confidence in men who fear God. In such cases we do not have stated reasons why these men fear God, though it is presumably because they have obeyed God's commandments (followed the moral order He established).

4 Compare the negative approach: *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1950-51.

5 The fool will put his confidence (ya'amin) in everything.
But the crafty looks before he leaps (Proverbs 14:15).

6 See Blank, Prophetic Faith in Isaiah, pages 37f. Notice how well this metaphor fits with what was said above concerning the relationship of truth and confidence through the basic idea of stability. The moral order which gives stability also gives the standards for measuring how "true" a man is to that order and hence how secure one might feel in putting his confidence in him. This moral order gave to Isaiah concerning a people and, as we shall see shortly, to Habakkuk concerning a person, the standards for confidence in oneself.

6 Op. Cit. p.39.

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