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LIGHT ON EARLY ISRAELITE PROPHECY
FROM COMPARATIVE RELIGION

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Ordination

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CHAPTER ONE

THE INITIAL CONNECTION:
THE UNIVERSAL SHAMAN AND THE
EARLY ISRAELITE PROPHET

The great similarity between early Israelite Prophecy and the phenomenon of shamanism, found throughout the world and in many different religions, has scarcely been recognized. There has been discussion of the connection between the modern day dervish, the Arabic kahin, and the ancient Hebrew ecstatic prophet.¹ The dervish and the kahin show great similarity to the shaman. The dervish has been seen to be the spiritual descendant of the ancient Hebrew ecstatic, and in the understanding of that connection has allowed us to learn a great deal about early prophecy.²

The connection between the early Israelite Prophet, the kahin, and dervish was in large part the similar approach used in the reception of prophecy. The seer, like the kahin, opened his soul and his spirit, ready to receive the first impression given him by outward appearances.³ This was done primarily through the sense of vision, though hearing played a lesser role. The persistence among the bedouin of this phenomenon, makes it likely that men of God or inspired persons appeared as seers among the nomads declaring divine instructions primarily on the basis of dreams and presentiments. Thus the patriarchs or Balaam (Nu. 22-24) may correspond to the Arabic Kahin.⁴

One scholar has shown a direct relationship between the early Israelite Prophet and the shaman. Theodore Gaster believes the Ish-Elohim is the virtual equivalent

of the shaman. Some of the men called Ish-Elohim are Elijah, Moses, Samuel, Elisha, as well as anonymous messengers of Yahweh who came to Eli at Shiloh, to Jeroboam at Beth-El and to the parents of Samson.

The term characterizes men subject to suprasensuous experiences; it is the virtual equivalent of shaman, and it is significant that in the cases of Elijah and Elisha, it is applied to them in connection with quasi-magical performances on their part.⁵

The direct connection between the shaman and the early Israelite Prophet which will be reviewed is a startling one. It will become clear that the early Israelite Prophet and the shaman act in a very similar manner. Most significantly, both the shaman and the early prophet, use the same techniques in order to communicate with the deity. But the function and purpose of the shaman and prophet are at times similar, yet often different.

Given this close connection, is direct borrowing involved? This question is magnified by the fact that shamanic knowledge is basically the same cross culturally; it appears all over the world, where no direct borrowing seems to be possible. The only answer that seems probably, is that ecstatic shamanistic phenomena developed independently in many places, and are not the result of any particular historical movement, produced by a certain form of civilization.

Rather we would consider it fundamental in the human condition and known to all

archaic humanity; what changed and was modified with the different forms of culture and religion was the interpretation and evaluation of the ecstatic experience.⁶

Over many thousands of years, through trial and error, people in different climates and cultures came to the same conclusions as to the basic principles and methods of shamanic power. This remarkable worldwide consistency in basic shamanic knowledge has been noted by many anthropologists. Wilbert, for instance, writing on the nature of shamanism among the Warao Indians of Venezuela notes, "It will be immediately apparent to anyone familiar with the literature of shamanism that the Warao experience contains much that is universal." Shamanic methods are strikingly similar the world over, even for peoples whose cultures are quite different in other respects, and who have been separated by oceans and continents for tens of thousands of years. "The basic uniformity of shamanic methods suggests that through trial and error, people arrived at the same conclusions."⁷ "The ancient way is so powerful and taps so deeply in the ancient mind, that one's usual cultural belief systems and assumptions about reality are essentially irrelevant."⁸ It seems that the early Israelite Prophets possessed the same basic knowledge that the shaman understood, but used this knowledge to sometimes similar and sometimes different purposes.

The Shaman Defined

Almost as many people who have written about shamanism, have offered definitions as to exactly who the shaman is.

Among the definitions offered are those of Harner, Hitchcock, and Eliade. It is Eliade who has most thoroughly explored the subject, so it is his definition that is presented here. Asiatic shamanism is an archaic technique of ecstasy, whose original underlying ideology is the belief in a celestial supreme being with whom it is possible to have direct relations by ascending into the sky.⁹ The shaman has immediate, concrete experiences with gods and spirits; he sees them face to face, talks with them, prays to them, implores them -- but he does not control more than a limited number of them.

Shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia. The word comes from the Russian, from the Tungusic saman. Shamanism is a technique of ecstasy.¹⁰ Any ecstatic is not a shaman; the shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld. A shaman controls his spirits in the sense that he, a human being, is able to communicate with the dead or demons, without becoming their instrument.¹¹

Generally the religions of the areas where shamanism is most prevalent, despite ethnic and linguistic differences, are similar. In the religions of the Arctic, Siberia, Central Asia, a degree of nomadism is typical of them all. The Chukchee, Tungus, Samoyed, and Turko-Tartars, to mention some of the more important groups, know and revere a celestial great God, an all powerful Creator.¹²

The names vary from Chief, to Master, Lord, and Father. We see this similarity in all forms of shamanism. For instance in South Asia and Oceanian Shamanism, the Supreme Being of the Semang has all the characteristics of a celestial god and is known as Kari, Karei, or Ta Pedn. Indeed Kari means thunder or storm.

Harner and Hitchcock in their definitions of shaman only differ in that they emphasize that the shaman is a man or woman who enters an altered state of consciousness, at will, to control and utilize an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire knowledge and power to help other persons.

Path To Becoming A Shaman

There are two basic ways for a person to be recruited as a shaman in Central and Northeast Asia. Often there is a hereditary transmission of the shamanic profession. The second is by being called or elected by a divine being. There are also those who choose to be a shaman by free will, but these are considered much less powerful.

Whether it is by hereditary or divine choice that a person becomes a shaman, there is a definite initiation process during which the candidate forgets his past life. All the ecstatic experiences that determine the future shamans' vocation involve the traditional initiation ceremony: suffering, death and resurrection.¹³ More or less pathological sicknesses, dreams and ecstasies

are means of reaching the condition of shaman. Sometimes this shows only a choice from above, but usually sicknesses, dreams, and ecstasies in themselves constitute an initiation, that is they transform the pre-"choice" individual into a technician of the sacred. It is the ecstatic experience that transforms the individual.

The content of the first ecstatic experiences almost always includes one of the following themes: dismemberment of the body, followed by renewal of the internal organs and viscera; ascent to the sky and dialogue with the gods or spirits; descent to the underworld and conversations with spirits of the souls of dead shamans; various revelations.¹⁴

The central theme of all the initiation rites are: dismemberment of the neophyte's body and renewal of his organs; ritual death, followed by resurrection.¹⁵ Among Alarsk Burgat studied by Sandschejew, the vocation is manifested by dreams and convulsions, both manifested by ancestral spirits. There are also "sicknesses", attacks, dreams, and hallucinations that determine a shaman's career in a very short time. These experiences justify the vocation. For example, a Yakut shaman Sofron Zateyev, states that as a rule, the future shaman "dies" and lies in the yurt for three days without eating and drinking. A Tungus shaman relates that he was sick a whole year. During that time he sang to feel better. His shaman ancestors came and initiated him. They pierced

him with arrows till he lost consciousness and fell to the ground; they cut off his flesh, tore out his bones and counted them; if one had been missing he would not have been a shaman. During this operation, he went a whole summer without eating and drinking.¹⁶ The initiation of an Australian medicine man is a long ritual, conducted in a solitary place, where the candidate submits to an operation performed by two old medicine men. "They rub his skin with rock crystals to the point of abrading his skin . . . Finally his forehead is marked with a design called erunchilda, 'the devil's hand.'"¹⁷

The most common rites of initiation are: a) Period of seclusion in the bush (symbol of the beyond) and existence like the dead; prohibitions imposed on the candidate by the fact they are assimilated to the dead; b) Face and body dabbed with ashes or certain calcerous substances to obtain the hue of ghosts; c) Symbolic burial in the temple or fetish house; d) Symbolic descent to the underworld; e) Hypnotic sleep, drinks that make candidate unconscious; f) Difficult ordeals: beatings, feet held close to fire, suspension in the air, amputation of fingers, other cruelties.¹⁸

Besides ritual dismemberment, the shaman can also be consecrated by the ecstatic experience of ascent into the sky, including instructions by celestial beings. Often this is found in Siberian, Australian, and Central Asian shamanism. One of the commonest forms of the future shaman's election is his encountering a divine or semi-divine being, who appears to him through a dream, a

sickness, or some other circumstance, tells him that he had been chosen, and incites him thenceforth to follow a new rule of life. More often it is the souls of his shaman ancestors who bring him the tidings. In South America, "seeing spirits" in dream or awake is the determining sign of the shamanic vocation.

The Early Prophet

Heredity for the prophet as the shaman, might play a part in the prophet's election. Jehu, the hozeh, was a son of Hanani, presumably the same Hanani who was himself a ro'eh (II Chron 16:17; 19:2; IK 16:1,7).

Prophetism is generally something which must be learned.¹⁹ The same is true for shamanism. Among Israelites, we know that the young rallied around an older leader and that they experienced the ecstatic state together. This was a very common occurrence.²⁰ When Ahab consulted the prophets they all stood in ecstasy and spoke in one voice (IK 22:10-12). In I Sam 19:19-24 all fall to ecstasy together.

Apparently prophets learned their craft in a master-disciple relationship. Elisha ministered to Elijah (IK 19:21) and Elisha had an attendant (mesharet) himself (IIK 4:43; 6:15). A synonymous term na'ar is also employed for the servants of Elijah (IK 18:43; 19:3), of Elisha (IIK 4:38; 9:4) who was attended by Gehazi (IIK 4:12,25; 5:20; 8:4), and of the attendant of the

man of God (IIK 6:15). Samuel at Ramah also fits into this pattern as the master prophet over a group of disciples.

Everything would seem to indicate that the prophet belonged to or issued from a society in which he was taught the prophetic experience as an art (also Am. 7:12f).²¹ The new shaman also learned his art from older shamans or groups of shamans. The experience aimed at in both shamanism and early Israelite Prophecy was the ecstasy in which the divine became dominant and the profane self disappeared.

Members of the prophet societies regarded the leader as their master whose will they obeyed absolutely and before whom they prostrated themselves (2K 2:15; 6:3,5). Sometimes the members acted with the master's authority (2K 9:1). The members lived with the master and had their meals in his home (2K 4:38; 6:1). Members of prophet societies were found in all the cities of the land, and probably they lived together in a type of monastery. It has been thought that with the term nayoth or newayoth (I Sam 19:18,22), we have a term for prophet's monasteries.²²

Ecstasy: A Central Connection

It is with the phenomenon of ecstasy among prophetism that we see the very close connection between shamanism and the prophetic movement. Shamanism has been defined

by Eliade as "techniques of ecstasy." Throughout the Near East prophetism is found, often grounded in ecstasy in its original forms. We find the phenomenon in Mari, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Canaan. Ecstasy for both the shaman and the prophet essentially consists of going out of oneself in order to communicate with the divine. Through certain identical techniques both prophet and shaman were able to release themselves from and overcome the various powers which bound them to natural phenomenon, and as a result they were no longer dominated by what they perceived through their senses.

Prophetic Ecstasy at Mari

It is at Mari, that we have the first evidence of the ecstatic prophet, closely related in outward form and technique both to the early Israelite Prophet and to the shaman. "It is thus clear that the term mahhû denotes the ecstatic, while its connection with the verb mahû, 'to rave' can now be shown by an Ishtar ritual from Mari in which the verb expresses the function of the mahhû."²³

This word means "frenzied", one out of one's senses, which exactly corresponds to the ecstatic.²⁴ The ideogram al-e-de suggests that ecstasy does not consist merely of the departure of the mind, rather in its place comes the "breath" from God.²⁵ This implies that it is God himself who speaks through the priest through the "breath". These God inspired charismatic individuals appear spontaneously before the King to deliver an oral message at the command

of their deity: Dagon, god of Terqa and Tutul; Adad god of Kallassu and Aleppo; or Annunitum of Mari. These individuals are termed mahhum (fem. mahhutum) the equivalent of the Hebrew mashuga (2K 9:11; Jer 27:26; Hos 9:7), or apilum "answerer." The latter appears to be somewhat similar to the court prophets such as Gad and Nathan.²⁶

Since we have a special functionary with a name denoting an ecstatic and oracles surviving which describe this activity, we must necessarily assume that the Sumero-Accadian religion embraced ecstatic phenomena. At least certain forms of sacred dance seemed to have occurred in ancient Mesopotamia, in addition to which cultic music played a very important part. Moreover, there was nothing in the Sumero-Accadian religion to prevent these dances being of an ecstatic nature, or the priests or priestesses taking part in such rites from announcing oracles during them. Furthermore, it is a fact that šikaru (beer) and other alcoholic drinks were an important factor in the cult, so that we must also allow here for the possibility of alcoholic ecstasy.²⁷

In one report a certain Shelibum, an assinu "in the temple of the Goddess Annunitum, on the third day . . . became ecstatic" (ARM X:7). In another report the temple administrator supplied information "in the temple of Annunitum of the inner city, Ahatum, the young woman of the man Daganmalik, became ecstatic and spoke as follows saying, 'O Zimri Lim, even if you despise me I will make sweet noises over you'" (ARM X:8).²⁸

Tablets transcribed and translated by von Soden,

show a prophet transported by Dagen in ecstasy uttering an oracle that sacrifices must be offered to Yahdunlim, the King's dead father.²⁹ The term used for the prophet here is muhhûm.

The ecstatic at Mari functions in many ways besides simply announcing the oracle. They function as physicians as well (asû) and this applies to both bārûs and muhhûs. Their political functions are perhaps more important than any other, and in fact surviving sources are richest describing this function. These oracular priests accompany the army in war and play an important part too: they could even lead the troops. Evidence survives showing their role in royal succession.³⁰

These ecstatic prophets at Mari often speak using the same formula as the Israelite Prophet, a well known "messenger formula": "thus he spoke to me; the God (personal name) sent me". The Hebrew Bible uses similar expressions, "Thus saith Yahweh, Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews sent me" (Ex 7:16; Jer 26:12).³¹ Also at Mari we hear of a group of āpilum, who might correspond to the groups of prophets mentioned in the Bible.³²

There are of course many differences between the prophet at Mari and the Israelite Prophet. Unlike the Israelite Prophet, the prophet at Mari does not come with any social or ethical demands, but concerns himself with cultic and political affairs of a limited significance. His message is primarily to the King. And the Israelite

Prophet's word doesn't seem to have the same importance to the King as prophets at Mari.³³

Ecstasy Among Egyptian Prophets

Ecstatic prophecy was also known in Egypt. We have an 11th century story of an Egyptian Wen-Amon which takes place in Byblos. It relates that

while he (Zakar-Baal, King of Byblos) was making an offering to his gods, the god seized one of his youths and possessed him. And he said to him, 'Bring up (the) god! Bring the messenger who is carrying him! Amon is the one who sent him out! He is the one who made him come. And while the possessed youth was having his frenzy on this night. . . ³⁴

Prophetic Ecstasy in Greece

Ecstatic prophecy was also a phenomenon in ancient Greece. The Pythia in Delphi as well as the Sibyls are described as divinely inspired persons or ecstasies. Ecstasy distinguished them from soothsayers, who obtained their knowledge by means of signs and omens. Cassandra in the Agamemnon is depicted as an ecstatic. She trembles like a wild beast and appears to be mad. Plato tells us about ecstasy in the Phaedrus when he says, "the greatest blessings come to us through madness." He goes on to say that madness when it comes from God is superior to sanity.

Philo, the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, when speaking about prophets in the Hebrew Bible says:

he says nothing of his own, but being seized by God and being in an ecstatic state of mind, he does not himself comprehend what he says. He is enraptured in ecstasy.³⁵

Ecstasy During the Roman Period

Lucian says "the priests were very numerous and among them were 'flutists' and 'pipers' and various ecstatics, 'Galli' and 'women that were mad out of their wits.'" Lucian also gives an account of Spring Festivals to which great numbers of people came from Syria and surrounding regions,

On certain days the Galli in great numbers perform the ceremonies, some playing on the pipes and others beating drums. During these rites the Galli sing and celebrate their orgies. Frenzy falls on many of them and even rites of castration are performed.³⁶

We have other reports from this period of processional dances, and dances around a sacred object that were ecstatic.

Ecstasy Among The Early Israelite Prophets

There is a common opinion that Israelite ecstatic prophecy derived in origin from outside Israel, which took over this phenomenon from the Phoenician-Canaanite world.³⁷ This is a possibility, but it is equally probable that the

phenomenon of ecstatic prophecy, like the phenomenon of shamanism to which it is so similar in technique and form, might have developed independently, precisely because the techniques involved were ones which were found to "work."

There is clear evidence that many prophets in the Hebrew Bible received their message from God in a state of ecstasy, much as the shaman did and continues to do so today. The law was given to Moses under conditions that suggest alteration of consciousness: upon a mountain top, in fire, and earthquake.³⁸ Self preparation in the form of prayer, fasting, and even self-mutilation were practiced, and a special garment of skin or hair was worn, all in proper ecstatic preparation.³⁹ The prophets received their revelations under abnormal conditions of consciousness, in states of ecstasy, trance and dream, and they spoke under the spirit of Yahweh and the hand of Yahweh. The chief business of the early prophetic movement was engaging in ecstatic exercises and delivering oracles in a state of inspired exaltation.⁴⁰ What we read about the Israelite prophets, fully corresponds to what ecstatic men and women the world over have to say.⁴¹

The ecstatic nature of some groups of prophets is foreshadowed in Nu 11:16f, a narrative whose purpose may have been the legitimation of the phenomenon of ecstatic prophecy.⁴² Moses gathered 70 of the people's elders and stationed them around the tent of meeting.

"Then the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke to him. He drew upon the spirit that was on him and put it upon the 70 elders. And when the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in ecstasy" (Nu 11:16-27). Abraham's vision in "deep sleep", the vision and audition at the burning bush, the wrestling of Jacob at Penue! all bear marks of ecstasy.⁴³

The prophet often being pictured as a madman, is clear evidence of the ecstatic nature of prophecy. In IIK 9:11, when Elisha goes to Ramoth-Gilead to anoint Jehu King of Israel, Jehu was asked, "Is all well? Why did this madman come to you?" The juxtaposition of madman and ecstatic prophet is found in Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7. The Hebrew term for madman, meshugga, in these passages may very well be a terminus technicus, related to the Akkadian muhhum, found in Mari.⁴⁴ In fact the denominative verb hitnabbe denotes the externals of prophetic experience, the dervish rites and ecstatic behavior, often indistinguishable from the conduct of a madman, which is occasionally denoted by the same verb (1 Sam 19:10; IIK 9:11; Jer 29:26).⁴⁵

Lindblom sees a relationship between prophetic ecstasy and two terms, "the spirit of Yahweh" and "the hand of Yahweh". For "the spirit of Yahweh: in its relationship to ecstasy see: 1 Sam 10:6f; 19:18f; IK 22; IK 18:12; 1 Chron 12:19; II Chron 15:1f; II Chron 20:14f; Neh 9:30. For "the hand of Yahweh" see: IK 18:46; IIK 3:15.

As was seen in the Numbers passage, prophetic ecstasy

can often occur in groups. In IK 22, four hundred prophets rage in ecstasy before King Jehoshaphat and Ahaz on the eve of their attack against Ramoth Gilead.

Elijah provides a good example of the ecstatic early Israelite Prophet. In IK 18:46, he runs in front of the King's chariot, seized by the hand of Yahweh. In 18:12, he is carried from place to place by Yahweh's spirit. In 19:8, he wanders from place to place after eating only one meal. In 18:42, he has visions while squatting with his face between his knees, or standing with his head covered 19:13.

Ecstasy In Classical Prophecy

The phenomenon of prophetic ecstasy was seen in the classical prophets much as it was in the early Israelite Prophets.⁴⁶ The ministries of both Isaiah and Amos began in states of ecstasy (Is. 6; Am. 7-9).⁴⁷ Isaiah at times shows signs of babbling incoherently (Is. 28:10). The term meshugga, "mad," used in II K 9:11, is also used in Jer. 29:26 and Amos 9:7. Jeremiah declares, "I am like a drunken man" (23:9). His vision of desolation, sky darkened, hills moving, earth deserted, is clearly ecstatic (Jer. 4:23-26).⁴⁸

Ezekiel is subject to trance and catalepsy, speaks of spirits lifting him, falling upon him, transporting him and entering into him (2:2; 3:14, 23-27; 8:3; 11:1,5;

37:1). After his first vision, he lay for seven days staring before him, after he had been in violent agitation. Sometimes he clapped his hands and stamped his feet (6:11; 21:19). Daniel too is beset by trembling and shaking (Dan. 10:10). At times Daniel becomes dumb (Dan. 10:15).

CHAPTER TWO

THE TECHNIQUES OF THE
PROPHET AND SHAMAN

It is with the techniques used by both the prophet and the shaman that the comparison between these two phenomena takes on added significance. Both the shaman and the prophet use almost identical techniques in order to establish their communication with the deity. The specific physical techniques of music, dance, dreams, fasting, seclusion, self-mutilation, intoxication, sleep deprivation, ritual nudity, and special dress are used by both prophet and shaman to aid in their communication with the deity. Also the shaman and early Israelite Prophet both make use of the ritual journey, the holy mountain, often become new people, and they both often have power over fire. From the evidence which will now be reviewed, showing the almost identical techniques used by both early Israelite Prophet and shaman only one conclusion seems possible. These techniques were discovered and developed in both the ancient Near East by the prophet and all around the world by the shaman precisely because they work. Through the use of these techniques both physiological and psychological changes occur in the body allowing the mystical process to begin.

Music

Music has the effect of helping the shaman or prophet fall into ecstasy. Laboratory research by Neher has demonstrated that drumming produces changes in the

central nervous system. The rhythmic stimulation affects the electrical activity in "the sensory and motor areas of the brain, not ordinarily affected, through their connections with the sensory areas being stimulated" (Neher 1962:153).¹

Recent research on the shamanistic spirit dances of the Salish Indians of the Northwest Coast supports and expands Neher's findings on the capacity of rhythmic drumming to induce an altered state of consciousness. Jikek and Ormestad found that drum beat frequencies in the theta wave E.E.G. frequency range (4+) cycles per second predominated during initiation procedures using the Salish deer skin drum. This is the frequency range, Jikek notes, that "is expected to be the most effective in the production of trance states" (Jikek 1974:74-5).²

Singing also has some effect on bringing on ecstasy. The shaman typically has special songs that are chanted on these occasions. While the words may differ somewhat from shaman to shaman in a particular tribe, usually the melody and rhythm of the songs are not the invention of the individual shaman, but are shared in a particular tribal region. The songs tend to be repetitive and relatively monotonous, mainly increasing in tempo as the shaman approaches ecstasy. Songs may have the latent function of affecting the central nervous system activity in a manner analogous to yogic breathing exercises, though this has not to Harner's knowledge been determined by research.³

As Lehfisalo noted, the shaman falls into ecstasy using his drum and "yodel" and magical texts are everywhere

sung. "Magic" and "song", especially like that of birds, are frequently expressed in the same term.⁴

From a Korean shaman, we hear the following 20th century report:

When I heard the changgu (drum) I seemed to forget everything instantly and lose all sense of inhibition. I wanted to dance and chant to it. It is this helpless sense of being swept up and away in a weightless sort of a way that makes you dance and be a mudang (shaman) in spite of everything else. When you are in that state of mind, you can't think of anything else.⁵

From Japan we hear this 20th century report:

In nearly every example we saw that loud, rhythmically reiterated sounds were the prominent device used: Thunderous banging on a drum, deafening blasts on conch shell trumpets, clashing and rattling of iron, ringed croziers, clanging of bells and loud shouted chanting of familiar words of power.⁶

The early Israelite Prophets also used music in order to help bring themselves into a state in which they could receive prophecy. In I Sam 10:5, a band of prophets appears, making music and prophesying. In vs 10 Samuel meets them, and he too begins prophesying. The instruments used were: the harp (nebel) and lyre (kinnor), popular stringed instruments, the tambourine (top), a small double membraned drum that was carried and beaten with the hand. The clarinet (halil), though often wrongly translated "flute" was in fact a primitive woodwind, especially associated with occasions of extreme emotion.⁷

In I Sam 16:16, Sammel seeks a man who can play music in order to remove the evil spirit that bothers him. Though this is not necessarily a case of inducing ecstasy with music, the music has an effect on the spirits. In vs 23, David plays and the spirit goes away.

When King Jehoram asked Elisha for a prophetic word, the prophet had a minstrel brought, and through his playing he was thrown into ecstasy (2K 3:15). He then offered a prophecy, that by the power of God, a valley would be flooded, and it came true. Gray compares Elisha's dependence on music to induce ecstasy with the activity in I Sam 10:5. It promoted a monotonous rhythmic activity like the ritual dance of the Baal Priests at Carmel or the rhythmic swaying and chanting of the local dervishes at a dikr, or religious seance among the Arabs, the ultimate effect of which is ecstasy.⁸

In David's court we read of the sons of Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun, who could prophesy using lyres, harps, and cymbals (I Chron 25:1f; See also II Chron 29:30, 35:15).

Dance

As was the case with music, dance was also used by both the shaman and early Israelite Prophet to induce the ecstatic state. Among the Tungus and Samoyed shamans, the basic technique to induce ecstasy is dancing and singing. When the Tungus shaman's assistant does all

the drumming, the shaman does not use a rattle. Instead he sets the tempo by dancing, the rhythm of bells and iron trinkets on his costume leading the drumming and supplementing it with higher frequencies. This is a technique which provides body motion that complements the music used, the ultimate effect being to help create ecstasy.⁹

In South America, the Machi (shamaness) employs these elementary forms: dance, arm movements, accompaniment of rattles.¹⁰ With the Ghost-Dance religion in North America, there is a similar pattern: after long continued dancing and singing, they fall into trance and visit the regions of the beyond, where they meet the souls of the dead, angels, and sometimes God himself.¹¹

In Nepal, the jhakri (shaman) uses dance to enter the ecstatic condition.¹² For the Malayan shaman, dance is indispensable for the seance. The sibaso seance (Sumatra) takes place at night; the shaman drums and dances around the fire to envoke the spirits.¹³ The following report comes from 20th century Japan:

a rhythmic clamour was started on drums and conch in time to which the medium swished the great wand to and fro, and back and forth. Gradually the rhythm grew faster and the swishing of the wand more violent, until the medium was plunging frenziedly back and forth. . . . At the same time I became aware that the small boys who accompanied the procession were running around and around the medium in circles.¹⁴

This same pattern of dance to induce ecstasy is found today in the Middle East. Johnson notes that among the Rwala Bedouin of the present day,

One of their duties (disciples) is to carry little drums and other musical instruments, dirbas. If the sorcerer wants to call the spokesman-angel to him, he beckons to the disciples to play while he himself squats with his head bent down. After a while he begins to move, jumps about, contorts his body, puts his hands, feet, and even his head close to the fire, clapping his hands. When his enthusiasm reaches its climax, either Allah's spokesman, or some of the seer's ancestors appear.¹⁵

We saw how in the Book of Samuel the early prophets moved about in bands, carrying musical instruments as they prophesied. The evoking of prophecy by such bands required vigorous physical exercise, the dancing and whirling growing even wilder until a state of ecstasy was reached.¹⁶ Saul's involvement with the bands of prophets caused him "to turn into another man," and he too prophesied (I Sam 10:5, 6, 10, 11, 19, 20, 24).

One of the best examples of dance to induce ecstasy is seen with the prophets of Baal in their test with Elijah. In IK 18:26 they danced around their alter from morning until noon, trying to reach their God. After they cut themselves, they raved on until the time of their oblation, but their God did not answer them. Gray sees this same circumambulation of the alter attested to in Ps 26:6, and he also points out

that the circumambulation of the Ka'ba by the pilgrim at Mecca is performed with unnatural motion.¹⁷

David's dance before the ark was an example of the religious ecstatic dance performed by men.¹⁸ The Psalms exhorted people to "praise God's name in the dance", "praise Him with timbrels and dance" (Ps 149:3; 150:4). Guillaume notes that mahol in Ps 150:4 refers to whirling in the sacred dance.¹⁹

Fasting and Seclusion

Fasting and seclusion are used by both shaman and prophet to induce ecstasy. Among the Jivaro Indians of South America, the shaman does not eat for days in order to induce ecstasy. The Caribbean shaman from Dutch Guiana fasts for five days to see the spirits.²⁰ In Japan, the shaman gains power by abstention from certain foods: meat, salt, cereals.²¹ While in seclusion on top of the mountain, the shaman from Japan eats nothing, and only drinks water.²²

For the early prophets the tradition of fasting and seclusion is well documented. Moses fasted forty days in seclusion upon Mount Sinai. Elijah (IK 19:5) doesn't eat for forty days and forty nights and then the Lord appears to him. Clearly some form of fasting and seclusion occurred here, but the number forty is a conventional round number of Semitic folklore. Elijah's

journey of forty days and forty nights may be influenced by Moses' sojourn of the same period on the Mountain of God. This is also the number for the reign of David and Solomon.²³ In IIK 1:9 Elijah goes into solitude to seek God. Daniel (Dan 10:3) fasts for a full three weeks before he has a powerful vision. Even among the late prophets, fasting was still used to bring on ecstasy.

Ritual Nudity

The Eskimo shaman, and the shaman in Northern Siberia often hold their seance in partial, or complete nudity.²⁴ And according to 17th century authors and confirmed by folklore, Lapp shamans held their seances entirely naked.²⁵ In I Sam 19:19f, we have a story that shows remarkable similarity to this technique of ritual nudity. Saul sent three sets of messengers to get David, and when they came to the band of prophets prophesying, then they also prophesied. Finally Saul himself came there, and he too, like the others stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all day and all night. Though this clearly is a case of ecstatic prophecy very similar to the shamanistic phenomenon, caution must be expressed in equating all ritual nudity with shamanism. There are often examples of ritual nudity which are not shamanistic; among the Sumerians for example.

Special Dress

The shamanic experience does not take place with the shaman wearing his everyday dress. Even where a costume doesn't exist, it is replaced by the cap, the belt, the drum, and other magical objects which form part of the shaman's sacred wardrobe and which substitute for the costume proper.²⁶ As just noted, often ritual nudity is part of the seance. Radlov states that the black Tatars, the Shor, and the Teleut have no shamanic costume; yet it often happens that use is made of a cloth which is wound around the head and without which it would be impossible to shamanize. But the shaman does not always have special attire. In Nepal, the gurau (shaman) does not have any special attire. There is nothing either in his actions or his attire, which symbolizes shamanic flight, or a search for a lost soul.²⁷

The cap is the most significant part of the shaman's dress. In Siberia it has central importance. In certain tribes (for example Yaruk-Samoyed) it is considered the most important part of the dress. According to the shamans, a great part of their power is hidden in their caps.²⁸ East of the Ket, the caps sometimes resemble crowns furnished with reindeer horns made of iron. Sometimes they are made of a bear's head, with the principal parts of the skin of the beast attached.²⁹

The costume is not allowed to leave the clan, for

in a certain sense it concerns the clan as a whole. It is most often handed down from shaman to shaman. Not only because it is made or bought by contributions from the clan, but primarily because, being impregnated with spirits, it must not be worn by anyone who can't control them, for the result would be they would trouble the entire community. The cap being impregnated by spirits might in part explain the great significance it has for the shaman as a source of his power.

Sometimes a mark takes the place of a costume. Daubing the face with fat is one of the simplest ways of masking oneself, that is of incarnating the soul of the dead.³⁰

The early Israelite Prophet wore a mantle of skin with a leather girdle (2K 1:8; Zech 13:4). Perhaps the skin was from a sacrificial animal. This mantle was recognized as the insignia of the prophet and was the mantle of asceticism of John the Baptist (Math 3:4) and the sufis of Islam.³¹ The girdle of leather, or probably undressed skin was also part of the distinctive clothing of John the Baptist.³²

It was noted that there is a hereditary nature to the shamanic cap. In IIK 2:13 Elisha took over the mantle of Elijah when he ascended to heaven.

In IK 21:40 a mark on the head is mentioned that distinguishes one as a prophet, here covered by some type of headband. This mark might have some relation to the

shamanic tradition of daubing of fat upon the face.

The remarkable similarity between the mantle of the prophet and the cap of the shaman is clear. But to say that it is more than a similarity is questionable, as this would imply direct borrowing, for here we are dealing with a material object that seems to be rather unique. The psychological implications of the prophet needing a mantle and the shaman a cap could be the topic of further study.

Self-Mutilation

The use of self-mutilation by the shaman to help induce ecstasy is well documented. Probably the most well known instance of this practice was the Ghost-dance religion in North America. There cuts were inflicted as part of the continual ecstatic dance ritual. In the ecstatic initiation of the Araucanian Shamaness, cuts are made in the candidate's fingers and lips.³³ One of the central elements in the Samoyed seance is the shamans' cutting themselves.³⁴

We see this same phenomenon first mentioned as occurring among the Canaanites. In IK 18:28, the prophets of Baal, in their contest with Elijah cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances and then they prophesize. A striking coincidence is found in a description by Apuleius, where self-laceration is

followed by prophetic utterance (Metamorphosis VIII 27f).³⁵ This same phenomenon is known from the Attis Priests of Asia Minor.³⁶ Zech. 13:6 makes it clear that this same phenomenon was also practiced by the early Israelite Prophets.

Narcotic Usage

The use of narcotic substances to induce an ecstatic state is a relatively new phenomenon within shamanism and is considered a sign of the decadence of the present state of shamanism. Nevertheless, it is found in both North and South America. Ayahausca is used to induce the ecstatic state by shamans in Ecuador and Peru.³⁷ The Jivaro shaman in South America uses a species of Banisteriopsis.³⁸ The Sharanahua also use a similar substance in eastern Peru.³⁹ In North America, the Apache shaman utilized peyote to help achieve their ecstatic states.⁴⁰

It is doubtful that narcotic substances were ever used by Hebrew prophets. Pendersen and Rowley though, believe that intoxicating drinks such as wine possibly played a part in Hebrew ecstatic prophecy (Is 28:7; Mic 2:11).⁴¹

Dreams

Shamans' instructions often come in dreams. It is

in dreams that the pure sacred life is entered and direct relations with gods, spirits, and ancestral souls are re-established.⁴² Sometimes initiatory dreams are involuntary and begin even in childhood. It is typical for the future shaman to dream of spirits and ancestors, and hear their voices. It is always in dreams that the candidate receives the initiatory regulations for becoming a shaman. According to information furnished by Radcliffe-Brown, in the Northern Andaman Islands the medicine man Cokojumu, literally "dreamer", or "one who speaks from dreams" obtains his power by contact with the spirits. The spirits are encountered directly in the jungle or in dreams.⁴³

The Mari Letters frequently state that the ecstasies received the instructions (once the word oracle is used) of the deity in a dream; no distinction is made between dreams and visions which are also mentioned.⁴⁴

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, there are examples of prophecy coming in dreams. A few of the examples are: Abimelech (Gen 20:3; Gen 31:10-13), Jacob (Gen 28), Deut 13:2f links dreams and prophecy, Samuel (I Sam 3:5f), Gad (I Sam 24:11), Solomon (IK 3:5-14), Joel (3:1), Job (33:14-18).

Symbolic Journey

All over the world, shamans and sorcerers are credited with the power to fly, to cover immense distances in a

twinkling and to become invisible. The pre-eminently shamanic cosmic technique is the passage from one cosmic zone to another, from earth to sky or earth to underworld. The shaman knows the mystery of the breakthrough in plane. Thus the shaman can, when they please repeat what the first mythical men once did in the dawn of time -- go up to the sky and return to earth. Since the ability to ascend, or to fly magically is essential to the career of the shaman, shamanic initiation includes an ascension rite. Even if there is no direct reference to such a rite, it is, in a manner, implicit. It should be noted that it is not that the shaman actually flies, but rather, he can send out his soul at will to wherever he chooses.

With some, the shamanic vocation is directly related with an ascent to the sky. Thus a great Basuto prophet (Africa) received his vocation after an ecstasy during which he saw the roof of his hut open above his head and felt himself carried off to the sky, where he met a multitude of spirits.⁴⁵ The ecstatic experience necessary for a Caribbean shaman to be initiated can take place only in the course of a celestial journey.⁴⁶ In South America, among the Araucanians the illness that determines the career of the machi is followed by an ecstatic crisis during which the future shamaness ascends to the sky and meets God himself.⁴⁷ The initiation of the Australian medicine man of the Forest River region includes both the symbolic death and resurrection of the candidate and

an ascent to the sky.⁴⁸ Among the Niassans (Sumatra) he who is destined to become a prophet priest disappears, carried off by the spirits (probably the youth is taken to the sky); he returns to the village three or four days later.⁴⁹ Among the Mentawaians, the future shaman is carried to the sky by celestial spirits and there receives a marvelous body like theirs.⁵⁰

In the Hebrew Bible it becomes clear that certain prophets have the ability to send themselves, or some part of themselves through space and time. It is unclear whether the conception of soul existed in Biblical times. The word nepes most often meant the gullet, jaws, neck, and throat, or a term for the person himself. But in Ex. 23:9 and Job 19:2 nepes would appear to mean soul.⁵¹ By the time of New Testament the idea of soul as separate from the body had taken hold (II Corinthians 2:2-4).⁵²

When Gehazi, the servant of Elisha followed the Aramaean chieftain Naaman, in order to appropriate the gift which Elisha had refused, he was on his return greeted with the words that the heart of Elisha had gone with him, when he meets Naaman on the road (IIK 5:26). Elisha has the power to send forth himself or some part of himself, and let it take part in what happens a great distance away.⁵³ In his vision, Daniel is removed to the palace of Sushan and the river Ulai (Dan 8:2). Somehow the prophet is in two places at once. In Is. 21:6-9, the prophet leaves his body and acts as a watchman.⁵⁴

In Ezekiel 8-11, the prophet travels to Jerusalem, while he is also still in Mesopotamia.

Holy Mountain

Closely connected with the shamanic ability to transport the soul great distances in a moment is the conception of the Holy Mountain. The Holy Mountain was seen as an axis point through which the shaman could break through the cosmic zones, earth to heaven. Sometimes this same symbolism is expressed with the idea of a cosmic tree. In Japan the symbolic journey into other planes of the cosmos is still made by ascent of the mountains Omine and Haguro.

In the Hebrew Bible, Moses' ascent on Mount Sinai might fill a similar purpose, of allowing Moses to enter heaven. In the Bible there is no cosmos, rather we might see a synapse between earth and heaven. Eliade says that Mount Tabor might signify tabbur, "navel" omphalos.⁵⁵ Furthermore, he says Mount Gerizim, at the center of Palestine was invested with the prestige of the "center", for it is called the "navel of the earth" (Judges 9:37).⁵⁶ But both of these observations have been shown to be faulty by Dr. S. David Sperling.⁵⁷ What can be assumed in the Hebrew Bible is that mountain ascents have the covert purpose of helping the prophet communicate with, or pass into heaven. Mount Moriah

could be considered another of these critical points.

A New Soul

The predominant characteristic of shamanic initiation is that the shaman is reborn as a new person; he receives a new soul. With prophetic ecstasy in the Hebrew Bible a similar phenomenon occurred. Prophets were influenced by God; the divine took control of their body. Therefore the prophets did not deliver their sayings as their own, but Yahweh said the words they uttered; it is God who spoke through them.⁵⁸ It is a characteristic of false prophets that they spoke out of their own heart. I Sam 10:9 is a good example of the prophet, Saul, getting a new heart, and then he went into ecstasy (also I Sam 10:6).

Power Over Fire

"Fire" of whatever kind transforms man into "spirit"; this is why shamans are held to be "masters over fire" and become insensitive to the touch of hot coals.⁵⁹ Mastery over fire, or being burned is equivalent to an initiation. All throughout the world, shamans are masters over fire.

In the Hebrew Bible, fire was a visible sign of communication between the prophet and the deity, as in the burning bush in Exodus.⁶⁰ In IK 18:38 Elijah had such power over fire, that even when the burned offering

was soaking with water, with the help of God, he could ignite it. In 2K 1:10-12, fire came down and burned up the messengers from a king who intended evil for Elijah. In 2K 6:17f fiery hosts appeared and defeated an army hostile to Elisha. In 2K 2:11 Elisha saw Elijah disappear in a chariot of fire with horses of fire. Isaiah stood in a state of ecstasy and saw the Temple filled with the glory of God and a seraph came and touched his mouth with a glowing coal (Is 6:6) (See also Ezek 1).

CHAPTER THREE

FUNCTIONS OF THE SHAMAN AND PROPHET

The Function of The Shaman

The primary function of the shaman is healing. Shamanism represents the most widespread and ancient methodical system of mind-body healing known to humanity.¹ Archaeological and ethnological evidence suggests that shamanic methods are at least 20 to 30 thousand years old.²

The principal function of the shaman in Central and North Asia is magical healing. Several conceptions of the cause of illness are found in the area, but that of the "rape of the soul", is by far the most widespread. Disease is attributed to the soul having strayed away, or being stolen, and treatment is in principle reduced to finding it, capturing it, and obliging it to resume its place in the patient's body. The Eskimo shaman's principal function is healing.³ In North America, the shaman is the healer par excellence. In South America, healing is the essential, and strictly personal function of the shaman. And the shaman heals in part by using therapies which might have some basis in modern medicine.

Besides just healing, the shaman has several other critical functions. The shaman engages in divination, seeing into the past and future for other members of the community.⁴ A shaman is a seer; a clairvoyant, seeing what is going on elsewhere at the present moment. For this reason, shamans work typically in the dark, or at least with their eyes covered in order to see clearly.

By working in the dark, ordinary reality is blocked out, allowing the shaman to more easily come in touch with shamanistic reality, a world where intercourse with God and spirits is possible. As can readily be imagined, clairvoyance, the ability to see more than the five senses allow, and divination, the ability to predict the future, were highly valued by all communities.

Casonowicz emphasizes the shamanic function of divination and prophecy. He says that it is the gift of prophecy, or the art of divination that makes the shaman powerful and is the basis for his other functions.⁵ The shaman has direct intercourse with the spirits and actual access to the spirit world, and so obtains knowledge superior to that of ordinary man. By virtue of that knowledge he can foretell the future, find out what is going on in different places, discover secrets, detect thieves, and answer all manner of questions, for which men resort to the soothsayer or prophet.

In Nepal, the Sherpa shaman may use his contact with the gods to divine, to find lost objects, identify criminals and perform black magic such as killing enemies.⁶ The Eskimo shaman, among other functions, knows the future, makes prophecies, and predicts atmospheric changes.⁷ The North American shaman claims to have power over the atmosphere (they bring on and stop rain), know future events, discover thieves and so on.⁸ Some Paviotso (American Indian) shamans heal, utter prophecies and

interpret dreams.

Eliade, Casonowicz, and Hitchcock disagree sharply as to whether the shaman has any priestly functions.

Eliade says the shaman is not a sacrificer. "It is not among his functions to attend to sacrifices that are to be offered, at particular dates, to the gods of water, the forest, and the family."⁹ On the other hand, Eliade

makes it clear that the shaman is indispensable to any ceremonies that concern the experience of the human soul. The shaman, he points out, knows the road, and in addition has the ability to control and escort a "soul", whether that of a human or a sacrificial victim.

Casonowicz says that the ideal shaman unites in his person the offices of priest, healer, and prophet.¹⁰ As a priest he officiates at communal as well as private sacrifices and ceremonials. But his priestly functions are of secondary importance to and emanate from his other functions; there are many sacrifices at which his participation is not necessary.¹¹ In Nepal, in the Gurung district, either the shaman or lama can perform pai, an important funeral ceremony.¹² And there are other places in Nepal where the shaman functions as a priest.

Many feel that the shaman represents certain ethical positions. Casonowicz and Radloff both agree that the shaman certainly promotes and sustains certain ethical endeavors.¹³ The shaman works for the good of the community and the individual. In his role as healer, clairvoyant, and user of divination, he fills the role of a helping

professional, modeling his life around ethical ideals.

Shamans also have a relationship to politics. The Gurung shaman is essentially apolitical, but in his other roles as householder, farmer, villager, he often becomes embroiled in political affairs.¹⁴ It is when these other roles are affected by politics that the shaman may voice his opinion in this realm.

Functions of the Israelite Prophet: Political

Whereas the shaman's principal function is in the realm of healing, the Israelite Prophet most often and with greatest effect functions in the political realm, this being done through the giving of oracles. The paramount task of the early Israelite Prophets was delivering oracles, whether on individual, or national life.¹⁵ The prophet could be sought for anything, provided payment was made. But oracles would also be delivered whether asked for or not.

The special gift of the prophet is his ability to experience the divine in an original way and receive revelations from the divine world.¹⁶ The prophet belongs entirely to his God. In every respect he has given himself up to his God and stands unreservedly at his disposal. It is not that the prophet is in himself a politician or social reformer, but acts that way by God's instruction.¹⁷

The early Israelite Prophets acted as defenders of

the old social order and greatly influenced Israel's political destiny. Samuel chose both Saul (I Sam 9) and David to be Kings over Israel. Nathan castigated David for his conduct with Bath-Sheba and Uriah, her husband (II Sam 12:7f), and investigated the scheme to have David recognize her son Solomon, as the next King (IK 1:8f). Ahijah announced both the acceptance and rejection of Jeroboam as King of Israel (IK 11:29-39; 14:1-18; 15:29). And a prophet, a colleague of Elisha, annointed Jehu King (2K 9).

A prophet might censure the king's action, and he might be a source of danger to the kings, for his divine authority was accepted by the people.¹⁸ In the Book of Kings it is almost the rule that every king had his prophet who was to chasten him and announce Yahweh's doom to him (II Sam 12:9; 1 Sam 22:5; 2 Sam 24:11; IK 16:1-4). The relation of the king to the prophet was peculiar; the prophet was in the king's pay as his helper and servant; but the authority he had may well be greater than that of the king himself.¹⁹

There are many other examples of the political acts of the prophets. Elisha foretold the defeat of Moab at the hands of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram (IIK 3:16). One of Elisha's fellow prophets inspired Jehu to rebellion against Jehoram (IIK 9). A "man of God" declared to Jeroboam the future birth of Josiah, who would destroy the idolatrous priests of the high places (IK 13:1-2). Shemiah forbade

Jeroboam to attempt to regain the 10 tribes of the North (IK 12:22-24). In IK 22, both Ahab and Jehoshaphat turned to the prophets for an oracle as to whether or not to go to war and they received an answer from Micaiah. The wife of Jeroboam turned to Ahijah; in IIK 8:8 Ben Hadad (King of Aram) turned to Elisha; in IIK 22:13 Josiah to Huldah.

The prophets delivered oracles whether asked for or not. In IIK 1:3, Elijah stopped Ahaziah's messengers on their way to inquire of Baal-Zebub; Ahijah the Shilonite tore his new garment when he confronted Jeroboam and announced the division of the united kingdom (IK 11:29); and Shemiah announced to that same King that he should not go to war against his kinsmen in Israel (IK 12:22f).

The Prophet As A Healer

The early Israelite Prophet sometimes had the function of healer. In IIK 1:1f Ahaziah sent to Ekron to learn, not from Yahweh, but Baal Zebub what would be the outcome of his illness. This implies that those who divine for the god had some healing power. But Elijah saw to it that the king received the message of Yahweh, though he would rather have done without it. The prophet was the physician.²⁰ In IIK 5:10f Elisha cured a man of leprosy by his own power, by having him wash in the Jordon seven times. In IIK 6:18-21 Elisha, with God's help caused

people to be blinded and their sight to return. Gray points out though, that the rescue of the servants of God by the miraculous blinding of their adversaries, as in the story of Lot (Gen 19:11) is a typical motif of saga.²¹

Sometimes people did not want direct healing from the prophet, but merely to know the outcome of an illness. Jeroboam's wife went in disguise to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh to ask what would be the end of her son's illness, and received the stern answer that he would die for the sins of his father (IK 14).

The Prophet Revives The Dead

At times the power of the early Israelite Prophet went beyond mere healing to reviving the dead. In IK 17:20-4, Elijah cried out unto the Lord, and God brought back the nepes of a child. In IIK 4:32, Elisha brought a child back to life by praying to God. Gray notes that this second story may be borrowed from the first.²² The procedure described here is that the prophet stretches himself out upon the dead man to restore him to life. Harner mentions an almost identical procedure for shamanic healing when the shaman pushes his prone body up against the patient, shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, foot to foot.²³ Furthermore, Gray comments to IIK 4:35, that Elisha's walking about was probably an act of relaxation after intense physical and spiritual concentration, which had probably exhausted him. Shamanic healing almost always leaves the shaman in

a state of total exhaustion. In IIR 13:20-21, the Moabites buried a man, and just by touching Elisha's grave, the dead man was revived. Gaster might have the explanation for this, when he mentioned the conception found in many religions that a sick or dead person could be revived by having contact with the essence of a holy being.²⁴ This idea could explain all cases of "reviving the dead".

In I Sam 28:15, Samuel is brought back from the dead to utter a prophecy for Saul, though apparently only for that purpose, and he was not brought back to life permanently.

Prophetic Seeing

The early Israelite Prophet had the ability, just as the shaman does, to see what the future would be. The prophet could make himself contemporary with events, which to other people, had no direct connection to the present. He saw people in a state which is yet to come; he could examine people and see what their destiny would be.²⁵

"The faculty of the prophet is a fellow feeling with the souls, which permit him to see what they are going to be, what experiences they are bound to have".²⁶

The prophet could look right across distance and time; if some asses had run away, then the visionary could look through space and see them (I Sam 9:20). This is the exact same ability that the shaman possesses.

Other Near Eastern Prophets were known to be able to see into the future. In Assyria we know of ecstatic

prophecy, exercised by priestesses associated with the Ishtar Temple at Arbela, who could foresee the future. In the 15th century B.C.E., a letter of Rewassa of Taanak mentions the ummanu of Asherah who was an expert in magic and could foresee the future.²⁷ The inscription of Zakir, King of Hamath (about 800), speaks of seers and men who could foretell the future.²⁸ In Egypt, Pliny reported in his *Historia naturalis* viii 185, that during the cultic ceremony around the Apis bull, young men were seized by frenzy and predicted future events.

Among the early Israelite Prophets, there are many examples of the prophet being able to see and know the future. Ahijah knew Jeroboam was coming (IK 14). The prophet could see rain coming and tell future events (IK 18:41; 20:13). Elijah saw the coming death of Ahajiah (IIK 1:2). Elisha knew where water could be found (IIK 3:16-17). Elisha, by his own power predicts the birth of a son (IIK 4:15). Elisha knew that Gehazi was hastening after Naaman (IIK 5:25-26), knew where the Arameans were lying in ambush (IIK 6:9), knew that the kings had given orders to kill him (IIK 6:32), knew what the King of Damascus said in his bed chamber (IIK 6:12), and he knew that he must die, and Hazael be his successor (IIK 8:13). In IIK 9:36-37, the prophecy of Elijah came true: dogs ate the flesh of Jezebell. Even Jeremiah could see into the future; in Jer. 4:19, he heard the sounds of the enemy, and in 38:22 he saw the disaster to come.

The Prophet As Miracle Worker

As with the shaman, the early Israelite Prophet had the power to perform miracles. Some of these miraculous events were done by the word of the Lord, but some were performed with no mention of God, and seem to have come from the power of the prophet himself. The following events seem to have occurred by the power of the prophet himself. In IIK 1:10-13 Elijah, the man of God, consumed 50 men by a fire from heaven, and this happened twice, without any mention of God. In IIK 2:1f, Elijah went with a chariot in a whirlwind to heaven. In IIK 2:8, Elijah with his mantle was able to separate the waters of the Jordan. In IIK 2:13, Elisha took Elijah's mantle and was able to separate the waters also. In IIK 4:1f Elisha, by his own power, made the oil increase many times to fill the vessels. In IIK 6:6, Elisha, by his own power made an ax handle swim.

The early Israelite Prophets also performed many miracles that occurred only with the help of God. In IK 13:1-10, a man of God denounced Jeroboam, and as a result his hand withered and then the prophet reversed it.²⁹ In IK 17:2-6, ravens fed Elijah.³⁰ In IK 17:14, Elijah said by the word of the Lord that the flour and oil will last until rain comes, and it did.³¹ In IK 18:34f, Elijah brought fire to the altar after calling upon the name of God, and pouring water on it. In IIK 2:19f,

Elisha took salt and threw it in the water to heal it,
by the word of God.³²

The Early Israelite Prophet As Priest

Dr. Harry Orlinsky has shown that the early Israelite Prophet, or as he calls them seers, or diviners, were one and the same with the priests of the day.³³ Samuel was clearly a "priest and a diviner". In Judges 17-18, we are told of Micah, of the hill country of Ephraim who owned a house of God. The band of prophets Saul met, had just come down from the bamah, hence they obviously exercised certain cultic functions.³⁴ In IIK 4:18f, Elisha performs cult functions. All this can be compared to the arguments both pro and con as to whether the shaman can perform priestly functions.

Payment for Prophecy

Shamans were paid for their various functions, though this payment generally only made up a part of their income. Most often they held a variety of other jobs, and acted as shaman, only as a part time vocation. The early Israelite Prophet was also paid for his services. In I Sam 9:7f, the prophet received one quarter of a shekel of silver. In IK 14:3 ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey are brought to the prophet. In IIK 5:5 Elisha is given ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of

gold, and ten festal garments for curing Naaman. In IIK 8:9 Elisha is given forty camel loads of goods.

Sources

Finally, it is necessary to distinguish sources for the descriptions mentioned above. For the accounts of the shamans, all sources are from anthropological studies within the last two centuries. The anthropologists worked mostly with the shamans themselves, but at times village residents were also interviewed. Generally these stories are not in the realm of folklore; they are descriptions from witnesses to the events themselves. At times though, when talking about some great shaman of the past, the stories have overtones of folklore.

With the early Israelite Prophets, we have a very different situation; here our source is not anthropology, rather the Hebrew Bible. The following should be kept in mind while reviewing the texts cited. In the cases of prophetic healing, the texts consisted of prophetic speech. The cases of reviving the dead consisted of prophetic speech, with overtones of folklore. All cases of prophetic seeing consisted of prophetic speech. With the prophets performing miracles, both by their own power, and with the help of God, the style is often folkloristic. Specifically, IIK 6:6, IIK 2:8, IK 13:1-10, IK 17:2-6, IIK 2:19f could be described as folklore, even when they

do contain prophetic speech. The descriptions of payment for prophecy were examples of prophetic speech.

That the prophetic miracle stories often fit the pattern of folklore deserves attention. A study of the exact contexts of miracle stories would be helpful.

CONCLUSION

To equate the phenomenon of shamanism, a universal phenomenon found throughout the religions of the world, with early Israelite Prophecy would be imprecise. But this study has focused on some startling similarities between these two phenomena that need to be considered. It has been shown that the universal shaman and the early Israelite Prophet of the Near East, both used the same specific techniques to help bring themselves into a state best suited for the reception of prophecy. The techniques used in almost the same way were: music, dance, dreams, fasting, seclusion, self-mutilation, intoxication, sleep deprivation, ritual nudity, and a special form of dress. The fact that shamans throughout the world developed these same techniques, shamans who were isolated from one another in areas as removed from one another as Siberia, South America, to Africa, leads to only one possible conclusion. Since no physical contact in all probability could have existed because of the locations, these shamans must have independently developed the same techniques to help them shamanize, over a period of possibly thousands of years, through trial and error, precisely because both physiologically and psychologically these techniques were found to work. For the early Israelite Prophet this same reasoning applies. In the Near East, the Israelite Prophet too developed these same techniques because they worked and helped the prophet to communicate with the divine. I do not mean to discount the possibility of

local borrowing, such as from Mari to Israel, but to suggest that the prophet borrowed from the shaman seems unlikely.

Examining the mystical techniques used by prophet and shaman was the thrust of this thesis, but this led to investigating the complete scope of activities undertaken by the shaman and the prophet. There was one very significant difference in regard to the soul. Much of what the shaman does centers around the soul; he is really a master of lost souls and his healing ability and power as a seer are closely related to his connection with understanding and controlling souls. For the early Israelite Prophet there was as yet no conception of soul. Here our comparison does not hold, and we can only speculate because the phenomenon of shamanism, though perhaps thirty thousand years old, has only been recorded from the last two centuries to the present. Hence, it is impossible to evaluate when the shamanistic conception of soul developed; it may have happened only in the relatively recent past.

The activities of the prophet and the shaman appear at first examination to be quite similar, but upon closer investigation, the differences become more pronounced. As a hypothesis I would suggest that the reactions of the prophet and the shaman to the divine guidance they received were related to the needs of their respective communities and to the restraints put upon them by these

communities. Thus we find the shaman functioning primarily as a healer, and the prophet primarily as a giver of oracles. These must have been primary needs of their given communities, and these societies, over the years, defined the functions of their religious practitioners. Both the shaman and the prophet at times and to different degrees functioned politically and sacerdotally as seers, healers, and miracle workers. Strictly speaking, even among shamans, these functions differed from culture to culture. It seems that both the shaman and the prophet used the divine guidance they received in ways necessary to help their respective communities. It is for this reason that the use of the same mystical techniques could on the one hand bring us the healing shaman of Siberia, and the same techniques could bring us the likes of an Elijah, or an Elisha.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

1. J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pg. 6.
2. Alfred Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination Among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1938), pg. 302.
3. Georg Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion (New York: Abingdon Press, 1927), pg. 224.
4. Ibid., pg. 224.
5. Theodor Gaster, Myth Legend and Custom in the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pg. 498.
6. Mircea Eliade, Shamanism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pg. 504.
7. Michael Harner, The Way of the Shaman (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), pg. 1.
8. Ibid., pg. 12.
9. Eliade, pg. 507.
10. Ibid., pg. 4.
11. Ibid., pg. 5.
12. Ibid., pg. 9.
13. Ibid., pg. 33.
14. Ibid., pg. 34.
15. Ibid., pg. 38.
16. Ibid., pg. 43.
17. Ibid., pg. 47.
18. Ibid., pg. 64.
19. Johs. Pendersen, Israel Its Life & Culture, vol. II. (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pg. 159.
20. Ibid., pg. 159.
21. Ibid., pg. 108.

22. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., I Samuel (Camden City: Doubleday & Co., 1980), vs 19:18.
23. Alfred Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1945), pg. 22.
24. Lindblom, pg. 31.
25. Haldar, pg. 22.
26. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Prophecy".
27. Haldar, pg. 26.
28. The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Supplement, s.v. "Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," by H.B. Huffmon.
29. Lindblom, pg. 30.
30. Haldar, pg. 68.
31. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Prophecy".
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Lindblom, pg. 28.
36. Lucian, trans. Harmon (The Loeb Classic Library), vol. 43.
37. Lindblom, pg. 97.
38. Violet Macdermot, The Cult of the Seer in the Ancient Middle East (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1971), pg. 12.
39. Ibid., pg. 12.
40. Lindblom, pg. 82.
41. Ibid., pg. 58.
42. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Prophecy".
43. The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Ecstasy".
44. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Prophecy".

45. John Gray, I & II Kings (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), pg. 379.
46. H. H. Rowley, "The Nature of Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," Harvard Theological Review 38 (Jan. 1945): 1-38.
47. The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Ecstasy".
48. Ibid.

Chapter Two

1. Harner, W. of S., pg. 51.
2. Ibid., pg. 52.
3. Ibid., pg. 53.
4. Eliade, pg. 96.
5. Youngsook Kim Harvey, Six Korean Women (New York: West Publishing Co., 1979), pg. 31.
6. Carmen Blacker, The Catalpa Bow, A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975), pg. 276.
7. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., I Samuel (Camden City: Doubleday & Co., 1980), pg. 183.
8. Gray, comment on IIK 3:15.
9. Harner, W. of S., pg. 53.
10. Eliade, pg. 329.
11. Ibid., pg. 143.
12. John Hitchcock and Rex Jones, Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalayas (Warmister: Aris & Phillips, 1976), pg. 113.
13. Eliade, pg. 329.
14. Blacker, pg. 270.
15. Aubrey R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944), pg. 22.
16. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Dance".

17. Gray, pg. 397.
18. Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Dance".
19. Guillaume, pg. 309.
20. Eliade, Shamanism, pg. 129.
21. Blacker, pg. 86.
22. Ibid., pg. 280.
23. Gray, pg. 408.
24. Eliade, pg. 146.
25. Ibid., pg. 224.
26. Ibid., pg. 146.
27. Hitchcock, pg. 275.
28. Eliade, pg. 154.
29. Ibid., pg. 154.
30. Ibid., pg. 166.
31. Gray, pg. 464.
32. Ibid.
33. Eliade, pg. 124.
34. Ibid., pg. 228.
35. Gray, pg. 398.
36. Pendersen, vol. I, pg. 158.
37. Michael Harner, ed., Hallucinogens and Shamanism
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pg. 10.
38. Ibid., pg. 16.
39. Ibid., pg. 28.
40. Ibid., pg. 53.
41. Pendersen, vol. I, pg. 158.
42. Eliade, pg. 103.
43. Ibid., pg. 342.

44. Fohrer, H.I.R., pg. 342.
45. Eliade, pg. 141.
46. Ibid., pg. 127.
47. Ibid., pg. 141.
48. Ibid., pg. 131.
49. Ibid., pg. 140.
50. Ibid.
51. Compare Hans Walter Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament (London: S.C.M. Press, 1974), pg. 11f.
52. Compare Gershom Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, & Talmudic Tradition (New York: J.T.S., 1965), pg. 17.
53. Pendersen, vol. I, pg. 162.
54. Ibid., pg. 163.
55. Eliade, pg. 268.
56. Ibid.
57. Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Supplement, s.v. "Navel of the Earth," by S. David Sperling.
58. Pendersen, vol I, pg. 160.
59. Eliade, pg. 206.
60. Macdermot, pg. 224.

Chapter Three

1. Harner, W. of S., pg. 40.
2. Ibid.
3. Eliade, pg. 289.
4. Harner, W. of S., pg. 43.
5. I.M. Casonowicz, Shamanism of the Natives of Siberia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), pg. 426.
6. Hitchcock, pg. 147.

7. Eliade, pg. 289.
8. Ibid., pg. 299.
9. Ibid., pg. 181.
10. Casonowicz, pg. 425.
11. Ibid.
12. Hitchcock, pg. 207.
13. Casonowicz, pg. 434.
14. Hitchcock, pg. 211.
15. Lindblom, pg. 20.
16. Ibid., pg. 1.
17. Ibid.
18. Pendersen, vol II, pg. 128.
19. Further research is necessary to determine if there were distinctions between paid court prophets, cult prophets and herders like Amos, who had no choice but to prophesy.
20. Pendersen, vol II, pg. 119.
21. Gray, pg. 517.
22. Ibid., pg. 382.
23. Harner, W. of S., pg. 78.
24. Gaster, Myth, comment on IIK 4:32.
25. Contrast Pendersen, vol. I, pg. 141, with his use of the term soul.
26. Here we see Pendersen's viewpoint, vol I, pg. 140, that the concept of soul was known to the early Israelite Prophet. I believe this to be incorrect; the prophet was not like the shaman, a master of souls.
27. W. F. Albright, "A Prince of Taanach in the 15th Century B.C.E.," BASOR XLIV (1944): 12-27.
28. Fohrer, H.I.R., pg. 226.

29. Gaster notes in Myth that this is common in Christian legend and that there are three parallels.
30. Gaster notes in Myth that this is a common story in popular literature. Shamans often have power over birds, and the raven in particular, as it was considered a bird of omen.
31. Gray, pg. 381, notes that the unfailing supply was a motif in A.N.E. king ideology and here indicates the saga character of the story.
32. Gaster, pg. 516, explains that contamination is attributed to demons. Salt being an incorruptable substance is universally regarded as a potent against them.
33. Harry M. Orlinsky, Essays in Biblical Culture & Bible Translation (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), pg. 46.
34. Lindblom, pg. 79.

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