LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

INSTRUCTIONS TO LIBRARY

Statement by Referee

The Senior Thesis of Joseph H. Levine

Entitled: "A Psychological and Semantic Analysis of the Rabbinic Descriptions of God"

1) May (with revisions) be considered for publication ( ) yes (✓) no

2) May be circulated ( ) to faculty ( ) to students ( ) to alumni (✓) no restriction

3) May be consulted in Library only ( ) by faculty ( ) by students ( ) by alumni (✓) no restriction

5/10/60 (date) Robert L. Katz (signature of referee)

Statement by Author

I hereby give permission to the Library to circulate my thesis (✓) yes ( ) no

The Library may sell positive microfilm copies of my thesis (✓) yes ( ) no

March 4 1960 (date) Joseph H. Levine (signature of author)

Library Record

The above-named thesis was microfilmed on _____ (date)

For the Library Miriam Steiner (signature of staff member)

A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

OF THE

RABBINIC DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD

...as Reflected in Selected Midrashim
Drawn from Konowitz's Ma'amar Ha'Elohut

by

JOSEPH H. LEVINE

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the

Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters Degree

and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio
February, 1960

Referee:
Professor Robert L. Katz

Digest

The main point of the thesis is that the Midrash is mythical literature, and that like all myths, it has two strands: It is a symbolic record of unconscious memories of childhood experiences with parental love and authority; and it is a record of the deeper, universal idealistic longings of its authors. These two strands are the "biographical" or "familial" and the "teleological." The former tells us about man's recollections of his past; the latter, of his aspirations for the future. In the course of the thesis, I discuss the pertinent contributions of Freud, Jung, Cassirer, Langer, and Fromm, to clarify my treatment of Midrash as myth.

The primary source material is some 350 Midrashic and Talmudic passages in Konowitz's anthology: Ma'amar Ha'Elohut. The images of God in these passages are organized into basic psychological and semantic categories. Chapter I is a discussion of the basic symbols in these images. Chapters II and III analyze the human motivations underlying rabbinic images of God's authority and love. Overtones of childhood dependency and of the basic reactions, impressions and attitudes of the child that become imbedded in the unconscious are discussed. The child's need to cope with his parents' authority and to secure their love is seen as the basis for much of the symbolic imagery of the Midrash.

Another contention, developed to some length in Chapter IV is that there is also much about the rabbinic imagery and symbolism that cannot be explained in terms of unconscious recollections of childhood experiences. God is not only a Divine Parent toward whom one re-channels the feelings he first directed toward his earthly parents. God is also

a source of ultimate ideals, supporting man in his efforts towards self-realization. There is much that is important for our "wishing and willing, our hope and anxiety": (quote from Cassirer); material of a teleological nature, that re-enters consciousness in symbolic form in the Midrash.

In the fifth chapter I suggest that Mordecai Kaplan's "trans-naturalistic conception of God" is a logical outgrowth of the teleological element in the Midrash. The rabbis pictured God as both Personality and Process. Kaplan weighs the latter more heavily. God in the Midrash is both a Divine Parent and a Source of Salvation. Kaplan redefines salvation in humanistic terms; but he has a plausible theology just the same.

Joseph H. Levine

Acknowledgments

The writer wishes to express his indebtedness to his thesis advisor, Professor Robert L. Katz, for his many hours of constructive and intensive guidance.

The writer also expresses his gratitude to his typists, Mrs. Miriam November and Mrs. Rissa Alex for their patience and thoroughness.

Dedicated to my mother and father

"הנוטלים פנס לפני"

They, too, shed light upon the way.

OUTLINE and TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUTLINE and TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

CHAPTER I

A. INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

This paper is a study of the images of God. These images are found in a body of literature: the rabbinic literature. For that reason this study is a literary one. But we approach this literature with a goal in mind. That goal is to unravel or to explore what the rabbis felt about God. When we discuss feelings, emotional responses, we are in the realm of psychology. In this sense our study is a psychological one. It is a psychological study of elements of the rabbinic literature.

One way of characterizing the rabbinic view of God is to say that it is a composite or kaleidoscopic view. By this we mean that the rabbis did not confine themselves to any one view of God. What we have of their writings in the Hagaddah is a reflection of their imagination playing upon the subtleties of feeling that were aroused within them as they wondered about God. The rabbis - viewed as artists - used the world as their landscape; their canvas became all of the varied emotions one might experience toward a power both sacred and dear; their brush was what Braude has called the מליצת השיר,[1] the poetic impulse and the quest for the universal.

The rabbis did not try to analyse God rationally; though their literature - (in this instance the rabbinic images of God) - is not irrational. The language that is used is the language appropriate to feelings: the language of poetry, allusion, apt metaphor and analogy. The rabbinic images of God are analogical rather than logical studies.

The rabbis drew upon their own inner imagination and focused on what they could see with the inner eye. Mostly the rabbis saw God as the Heavenly Father, and Israel and mankind as His children. At other times the rabbis visualized God as the Transcendant King, and men as His earthly subjects. Because the rabbis were focusing on a God who was very personal to them, and to whom they were very intimately related, many of the rabbinic images contain a strong subjective element.

The experience of God for the rabbis was a living experience, and thereby necessarily involved a considerable element of what Kaddushin has called "non-communicable feelings":

> "Any living experience...has an aspect to it which is purely private, incommunicable.... Is this not also what the rabbinic concept of God comes to? ... that is to say - non-expressible to oneself, non-communicable to others?....." [2]

Certainly many of the images discussed in this paper present that "non-communicable" facet; what Kaddushin further describes as the

> "immediate and incommunicable recognition of the 'rightness of the look' and 'feel of textures and consistencies and combinations.'" [3]

We run into some problems when we study a highly symbolic and creative literature such as the Midrash. In analysing the images we apply an organizing principle which inevitably is superimposed in a formal way upon an informal literature. We encounter problems similar to those encountered in an analysis of poetry. We always run the danger of reading into the poem what the poet might or might not have meant to say. Yet the beauty of great poetry is in the many and varied responses it elicits from its readers. So it is with Midrash.

It was difficult for the rabbis to come right out and say what

they felt about God, just as it would be difficult for any of us to put many of our feelings toward someone ~~who~~ we love very intimately into words. The rabbis didn't intentionally disguise their feelings, yet the light of God's activity was too glaring for a prolonged gaze. The rabbis would avert their glance from things too wonderful and feelings too intense, and return to the kind of imagery drawn from everyday life that would enable us to experience some of their feelings along with them. Because their feelings toward God were intimate and complex, the rabbis could only intimate, in a somewhat indirect or poetic fashion, the meaning that God held for them in their lives.

The images of the Midrash are a kind of dream language, the uninhibited expression of the deeper feelings of finite men letting their minds and hearts play upon their relationship to an Almighty, Infinite Power. What the rabbis tell us about God reveals in many ways their deepest yearnings, fears, aspirations. The Midrash may be viewed, in a similar light, as folkloristic literature, tapping the wellsprings of the deeper hopes and motivations of the writers.

Though the relationship to God was a very highly personal one for the rabbis, it was not totally an unshared or indescribable experience:

> "yet the rabbinic experience of God is not altogether ineffable ... there is the personal relationship to God that enables man to address God." [4]

It is this latter element this paper focuses on: the personal relationship to God when man addresses God or feels that God addresses him. We must understand right along that because the rabbis did not philosophize about God, but had a living experience of Him, much of their relationship was of a mystic "ineffable" nature. Also because

the rabbis were men, they felt at times that God was essentially incomprehensible to them; and that consequently the personal relationship to God was indescribable or incommunicable. Yet we are interested in those writings which reveal their attempt to write or tell about their experiences with God in an effort to share their feelings and to inspire others towards a faith similar to their own.

We have to ask then: What went into this personal relationship? What kind of a God did the rabbis picture? How did their own needs and feelings affect this picture? How did they interpret God's reactions towards them? How did they feel they could strengthen or enhance the relationship?

As suggested on page 1, there are really two basic images of God that may be culled from the Midrash: The Omnipotent King and the Loving Father.

One assumption basic to this discussion, is that the rabbis projected onto the screen of their relationship to God, all of the emotions a child normally feels towards his parents. God at times could be far removed, detached, stern, foreboding, inspiring fear and uncompromising obedience, the מלך אל עליון ונישא "exalted and elevated King" or אל רחום וחנון "a merciful and gracious God". We shall have occasion to discuss later on the concepts of the authoritarian and humanistic conscience as presented largely by Erich Fromm, and we will hope to show there that the experience of God as the stern ruler has its roots in the authoritarian phase of conscience; and that conversely, God when experienced as a gracious and compassionate deity, is a development of the humanistic conscience. The child's feelings towards

his parents suggest a co-mingling of freely offered love and involuntary obedience.

It will of course be seen, however, that God's authority, even when exerted in the most forceful manner, is not an irrational, repressive authority, but an authority based on the moral law. God is mostly not concerned with man's obedience of Him per se, but of Israel's loyalty to what God represents, a code of behavior which in turn is designed to build a more perfect human fellowship premised on love and mutualism.

We will trace many of the subtelties of emotions Israel felt toward God, and try to draw the parallel between these feelings and those a child expresses in relationship to his parents. Israel, for example, (in the rabbinic view) wondered, as a child may wonder, if God's love for him was so deep and pervasive, that no matter what he might do to provoke God or to incur His wrath, God would not reject him. Israel might feel at times that God did not really love him, but only tacitly approved of him or tolerated him when he conformed to God's wishes and commands. We can readily see how this parallels the child's feelings towards his parents. A child may feel overwhelmed by his parents' power, and obey them out of fear. He may also realize that if he angers them unduly, that they will subject him to a very uncomfortable loneliness and to the punishment of rejection and the withdrawal of their love. He may feel in other words, that their love for him is conditional and may be retracted if his behavior is not commensurate with their expectations.

Yet on the other hand, a child may feel that he is precious to his parents, essentially lovable, and that they could not bring themselves

to reject him no matter how much he may earn their rejection by overstepping the bounds of their controls. For Israel: חוק נתן ולא יעבור "God has set a law, it cannot be overstepped," and yet ישראל אף על פי שחטא, ישראל הוא "No matter how Israel sins, he is still Israel" he is still the lovable child of God, ingratiated to and beloved by the Almighty. Israel may be both the בן סורר ומורה "The stubborn and rebellious son" and also " ילד שעשועים " the darling child," and like חני המעגל Honi the Circle Maker, may draw circles in the sand and not budge until God fulfills his wishes.

A child may indeed feel, at times, that he has control over his parents, that they need him because his love means so much to them that they could not endure life without him. He may use his own love as a weapon and threaten to withdraw his affection should his parents provoke him unduly with unrestrained demonstrations of their power. So it is sometimes as we shall see, with Israel and God. Yet the situation is complicated by the fact that the reverse sort of picture is also true. Often the child is afraid of losing his parents' love, and this fear is utilized by the parents to achieve control over the child. This tool when used by the parents, consciously or sub-consciously, is all the more effective because it builds onto the child's innate feeling of dependency, his sense of helplessness and powerlessness. It is an emotion which has deep roots early in life. The concept of dependency may help us explain some of the phenomena of the religious experience, though by no means does it exhaust the motives for religious experience. I would go along with Gordon Allport when he says:

> God may represent power, a source of security, or cosmic perfection. When we need love, God is love, when we need knowledge, God is Omniscient ... consolation he becomes "The peace that surpasses understanding" ... [5]

Two somewhat dissimilar views of parental authority may exist side by side in the child's mind. The seemingly dissimilar phases of the rabbinic God-idea really form contrasting sides of one and the same coin. Because the rabbinic view of God is a composite view, it is hard to study any one image of God in isolation. No Midrash can successfully be viewed as a hermetically sealed, self-contained statement presenting one and only one view of God. To draw a comparison with a symphony, in each Midrash there are both major and minor motifs. No matter how authoritarian God may seem to be represented in a particular Midrash, if one looks hard enough, he is bound to find overtones of the compassionate God.

In the very same Midrash, a number of related or even "antagonistic" concepts of God may be interwoven. Kaddushin has analysed the complex, interrelated nature of rabbinic literature, forming what he calls an "organismic, coherent, system of value concepts":

> Value concepts are integrated by being elements in a dynamic, organismic process; each value concept in itself is an integrative agent; a value concept fuses everything in a Midrash (and in turn) each haggadic statement or unit has a way of unifying others (It is like the relationship between forms developed by an art and materials which the form shapes. An aesthetic form overcomes difficulties impeding potential unification of dissimilar elements." [6]

We study the parts of the rabbinic view so that they might help us more fully understand the whole. The task of the first chapter is to answer the basic question: What kind of a God did the rabbis picture? Though there are the broad categories of a Stern Judge or King and a Compassionate Father, (and these are appropriately the first two images to be discussed), there are other subsidiary images to be illustrated. The second and third chapters will then offer an analysis of

these images in greater detail. Chapter II first presents a brief study of the prophetic background of the rabbinic view of God, and then considers two related questions: What God demands, and Why He demands (scope and basis of authority). This chapter also goes into the development of conscience and the concept of childhood dependency, which are basic to the consideration of the Midrashic images. Chapter III takes up the images of the Authoritarian and Compassionate God, and asks "How does God demand either obedience or fear?" In other words - what are the sanctions (in the instances of the authoritarian images of God) and the loving appeals (in the images of a loving God) which serve as God's methods for evoking the desired responses from man. Chapter IV is a further discussion of the significance of the images; the concepts of symbolism and the unconscious as it affects a psychological approach to this literature. Chapter V forms a kind of appendix and is a comment on a naturalistic concept of God as developed in Reconstructionist thinking, and a study of this thought in contrast to the rabbinic view of God.

First then, the question is: What kind of a God did the rabbis portray in the images we find in the rabbinic literature?

We may for conveience group these images into nine essential categories:

The Benevolent Father
The Stern Judge or King
The Omnipotent Force in Nature
History
Conscience
The Creator
The Lawgiver
The Lover
The Shephard

The Midrashim presented for consideration here are the more graphic or representative of all those which might be conceivably grouped together under one particular category.[7]

B. IMAGES

1. The Benevolent Father:

Images of the Benevolent Father appaer, as we would expect, primarily in Midrashim which reveal the nature and extent of God's love for His people. The love of the Benevolent Father is both unconditional and highly protective. God, in one particular Midrash, insists that Moses adopt a similarly protective view toward Israel, God's most precious child: "Be careful how you deal with My child!" God warns Moses: "For he is dear to Me.... He is admittedly troublesome and rebellious, but I cannot reject him." 8.

There are certain psychological overtones to this view of God which we will not fully discuss here. But suffice it to say, that God is seen by the rabbis to experience a real conflict of wishes: God would like to reject or punish Israel for his disobedience; but God is swayed by an even stronger attachment to Israe l. God experiences a conflict, as it were, between a father's natural anger and a father's unbounded love. The seeming dichotomy in God's approach to man is never fully resolved. Each of the different views of God, as we contend frequently in this paper, strikes flint on the bedrock of different basic human emotions. In this view of God as the Benevolent Father, the sparks that are struck are sparks of a deep, involuntary, enduring love. God and Israel are so intimately involved that their different lives become

almost fused into a single life. God becomes so deeply concerned with Israel's life experiences, that all that seems to matter to God is what occurs to Israel in the course of his history. One must know Israel and share in Israel's experiences in order to understand God. Conversely God's nature becomes apparent only in His interactions with Israel. One may appreciate the logic of Israel's history only through an appreciation of God's involvement with His people. (This whole question of the empathetic, almost mystic tie which unites God and Israel is a separate theme to be explored at greater length in Chapter II, section C.)

כביכול אסור אנכי ביניכם!

God said to them: "I am imprisoned, as it were, in your midst!"[9]

The benevolent God assures His child that He will never leave him, that He will always be there when Israel wants Him. This bond of devotion reaches toward an unsurpassed height of joyous involvement, beyond the level expressed in the thought:

ומתוך חיבתן של ישראל הקב"ה כובש כעסו עליהם.

And because of Israel's preciousness, God subdues His anger.[10]

2. The Stern Judge

In other places, God is pictured in a different vein, as a God of Justice, capable of exerting extreme pressure to bring Israel to conform to His mandates. Oftentimes God feels that His rebuke will have a salutory effect on Israel's growth. God acts severely then, to discipline His children. We must be careful, however, to distinguish between two kinds of chastisements: the chastisement of love, which is designed to purify Israel for his heroic

historic task, in other words, sufferings of a servant people; and punishment which is the result of God's normal impatience with a disobedient child. We are primarily concerned here with the latter; in another place we will discuss the former.

אמר לו הקב"ה אין אתה יכול לעמוד א"ל יכול אני
לעמוד. לא עשה מעט עד שבחנו הקב"ה ולא עמד בא
ליסוט, והתחיל צווח ואמר: תמון אשורי במעגלותין
בל נמוטו פעמי . . . . .

God said to him: 'You cannot stand (the test alone). He (David) said to HIm (God) 'I can stand.' He had only acted (in this way) for a short while when God tested him, and he could not stand the test.....God said to him: 'Didn't I tell you so?' [11]

God in a way almost fosters man's dependency, reinforces for man his sense of dependence upon God, causes man to be submissive in recognizing his human limitations. God "puts man in his place". Though this image is not so much a judgment on man, it is certainly an image of an authoritarian father indignant over man's pretentions to have more than human powers.

שאם עשה אדם תשובה שלימה שלבו עקור עליו הקב"ה
מוחל לו. וכן הוא אומר גם אלה תשכחנה אלו
העונות, ואנכי לא אשכחך אלו המצות. לכל נאמר
אשרי נשוא פשע.

R. Jose said in the name of R. Judah: "If a man completely repents so that his heart is uprooted, God forgives him." .....and so he says: 'these also shall I not forget'. Those which I shall not forget, these are the commandments (or good deeds) therefore it is said: 'Happy is the one forgiven of sin.' [12]

One phase of God's judgeship is his impatience with human arrogance

and pride. God expects contrition and reverent humility in the presence of the court. This thought is echoed in another Midrash:

ה"ד גאות אדם תשפילנו ושפל רוח יתמך כבוד.
כיצד? בשעה שעבר אדם על צוויו של הקב"ה
ואכל מן האילן, ביקש הקב"ה שיעשה תשובה
ופתח לו פתח. ולא בקש אדם. . . ואמר אדם
אי אפשי. א"ר שמעון בן לקיש כוון שיצא אדם
מן הדין התחיל מחרף ומגדף-הוי גאות אדם תשפילנו, לפי שנתגאה
לפי שנתגאה על הקב"ה מעשות תשובה השפיל אותו
וגרשו מגן עדן.

" 'The pride of man will be his downfall' - this (pertains) to Adam. How is it so? When Adam disobeyed God, and ate from the tree, God asked him to repent, and opened the way for him. But Adam did not seek repentance. For Adam said: 'Lest (perhaps) it be impossible.' .... Since Adam went outside the law, and began acting shamefully and blasphemously.... 'the pride of man is his downfall', for he elevated himself above God (being unwilling) to do Teshuvah, and so God lowered him, and drove him from Paradise...." [13]

This Midrash seems to suggest overtones of the concept of Original Sin, but the discussion of this parallelism is not within our immediate province. Adam here is the prototype of man struggling to be more than man, coming face to face with the limitations of his humanity. God's authority is absolute, and not to be contested. God's relationship to His child is like that of a father who may be very intimate, but nevertheless draws a definite line of authority beyond which the child may not go in asserting his independence. In asking God to test him, Adam asked for more freedom than he could handle. God humbles Adam on his dependence upon God. This theme is a subtle nuance in the Midrash, which may be explored at greater detail later. Interwoven here with the

picture of God as Judge, is the picture of the Father who is reluctant to allow his child to achieve full independence.

This next Midrash carries the concept of God as the Stern, Uncompromising Judge to its logical extreme: the ultimate use of God's disciplinary power in destroying the disobedient. Generally, the persuasive tool which God uses is emotional rejection and the threat of withdrawing His love as punishment for disobedience. This particular Midrash represents something of an extreme picture of God, which would hardly be normative, even for those images which treat the authoritative powers of God:

> אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל: אם עשיתם רצוני הרי הטוב לפניכם שנאמר אם תאבו ושמעתם טוב הארץ תאכלו (ישעיה א-יט) ואם לאו הרי החרב, שנאמר אם תמאנו ומריתם חרב תאכלו.

> "In this vein God spoke to Israel: 'Should you be willing, and hearken, you will eat the good of the earth (Isaiah 1:19), and if not the sword (will consume you) as it is said: 'If you refuse and rebel, you will feast on the sword.' ..." [14]

3. Images of God as an Omnipotent Force in Nature:

There are a number of Midrashim with images that portray God as an omnipotent force in nature, guiding and chanelling the natural elements in order to establish the kind of a world which would be most conducive to man's growth and happiness. These images overlap or impinge upon images that deal with God as Creator, or Stern Judge. Looking upon these images another way, we could say that they might be included in a broad category of images dealing with God as a benevolent force working on man's behalf. But I have decided to analyze those Midrashim for the time being

within a separate category. Admittedly, the breakdown of categories as it stands is somewhat arbitrary.

God is first of all seen as an omnipotent force coercing the reluctant sun and moon to appear according to God's pre-established will. There is a fixed order in nature, a regular harmony and design which involves the cooperation of natural bodies responding to God's command. God is seen as the power making for reliability and consistency in nature, though He is also seen as a Being personally seeing to it that nature does its work:

בכל יום ויום הקב"ה יושב בדין על גלגל חמה
ולבנה, שאין מבקשין לצאת להאיר לעולם.
מה הקב"ה עושה להם? יושב עליהם בדין
ויוצאין ומאירים לעולם בעל כרחן.

"Each day God sits in judgment over the course of the sun and moon, that they do not want to go out and light up the world.....What does God do to them? He sits upon them in judgment and sees to it that they light the world, though they be unwilling. ...." 15

In two other Midrashim, man's imagination is turned back to the Creation, to the majestic, over-aweing work of God, effortlessly and magnificently bringing an ordered world into being:

הוו יודעין במי אתם בוטחים; במי שברא שני
עולמים בשתי אותיות-כי ביה ה' צור עולמים
העולם הזה והעולם הבא. . . . כך בלא עמל
ובלא יגיעה ברא אותה . . .

"Recognize who it is you place your trust in! In the One who created two worlds with two letters ... this world and the world to come ... neither with effort nor toil. ..." 16

איך ברא הקב"ה את עולמו? רבי יוחנן אומר:
מלך בשר ודם בונה פלטין, משהוא בונה את
התחתונים אח"כ הוא בונה את העליונים, אבל
הקב"ה ברא את העליונים ואת התחתונים בריה אחת . . .

"How did God create His world? Rab Jochanan said: 'When an earthly king builds a palace, he first of all builds the lower levels and then builds the upper levels, but God created the upper spheres and the lower spheres as one creation'..." 17

Unlike a shipbuilder, who must in sequence lay cedar wood upon beam, God creates the ship (world) and its pilots (man).[18] The world is an ordered cosmos, moving according to a pre-established harmony, springing into being ex nihilo by the fiat of an all powerful, Creator - God, whose thrilling powers imbue man with awe, inspiration, and humility.

4. God Experienced as an Omnipotent Force in History

God is deeply involved in all history, but particularly in the history of Israel. First, God helped inspire and shape Israel's history; therefore, God is naturally concerned with the outcome. Second, what Israel finally becomes is the outcome of God's loving care. Then, too, God is so intimately concerned with Israel that God finds His own personal fulfillment enmeshed with Israel's fortunes.

Every proud achievement of Israel's is God's proud achievement; He suffers in their despair, feels the pain of their sorrows in a personal way, protectively nurtures Israel's potentialities so that Israel will grow into the people that God hopes he will become. The emotions that God is seen to feel as he lives through Israel's history along with him are the emotions that a father feels as he relives his own life through the life of his child, object of all his fondest hopes. Later I will explore the underlying emotional framework of these images:

כל ישועה שבאה לישראל היא של הקב"ה, שנאמר עמו
אנכי בצרה . . . בכיכול הוא נושע . . . כביכול
כשישראל נגאלין הוא נגאל.

"Each experience of salvation that comes to Israel is also experienced by God ... as it is said, 'I am with him in his suffering,' as it were, God himself is saved. .. it is as if when Israel would be redeemed that God would find redemption..." 19

אמר רבי אלעזר בן פדת: יוסף ראה ברוח הקודש
ששני בית המקדשות עתידן ליבנות בחלקו של בניסין
ועתידין ליחרב, ויתן את קולו בבכי. וכשם שלא
פייס יוסף את אחיו אלא בבכיה כך הקב"ה אינו
גואל את ישראל אלא מתוך בכיה . ׳ .

"Rabbi Eliezar ben Padath said: Joseph saw with a God-given insight that the two Temples would in the future be built upon Benjamin's inherited portion, and that they were destined to be destroyed, and so he gave way to tears. And just as Joseph did not pacify his brothers except with tears, so God does not redeem Israel except through tears." 20

Israel's history follows a course that involves both pain and joy. It is not God's wish to circumscribe His child's life so that it will be free of sorrow and tragedy. The discerning viewer (in this case Joseph) realizes that God is a responsible, involved, caring Father helping His child adjust to the reality of tragedy, but not shielding His child from this reality.

The care that God feels for His people cannot be characterized simply as empathy. It is more than that. God's experience of Israel's pain is a constituent part of the pain that Israel endures. And the pain and glory that Israel feels compose to a great extent God's agony and triumph. In this sense God is present in Israel's history: an actor and participant as well as the author and director:

בוא וראה כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב"ה שבכל
מקום שגלו, שכינה עמהם. גלו למצרים שכינה עמהם
. . . ואף כשהם עתידין ליגאל שכינה עמהם . . .
מלמד שהקב"ה שב עמהם מבין הגליות.

"Come and see how precious is Israel in God's sight. For in every place where they were exiled, the Scheinah was with them. ... And God will be with them in the anticipated redemption to come ... to each you that God returned with them from exile..." 21

After enduring Israel's sufferings with him, God is entitled to the joy of seeing Israel come through it all victorious. God can only fully attain His Godhood as Israel experiences the full vigor of His humanity. Israel's disillusionment is the cause of God's unhappiness - Israel's rejuvenation is an incentive for God to renew His hopes.

5. God as an Omnipotent Force in Man's Conscience:

Actually, it appears that the voice of God speaking to man as portrayed in the Hagaddah is not unlike the voice of an all powerful and concerned parent speaking to his child, cautioning him, challenging him, even threatening him, and inspiring him.

God speaks to man:

אמר הקב"ה, אני עשיתי את יצר הרע, הזהר שלא יחטיאך, משהחטיאך הרי זהיר לעשות תשובה, ואז אשא עונך.

"I have made the evil inclination. Be careful lest it lead you to sin. But once it leads you to sin, be careful to repent ... for then I will forgive your sin." 22

God is very much aware of man's frailties, and anticipates that there will be times when man will give way to his "evil inclination" and appear in God's eyes to be quite different from the ideal image of the child which God has formulated; the obedient, well disciplined child who always conforms to His expectations.

But in another Midrash we have a qualifying note:

The voice of conscience is not necessarily the stern, prohibiting voice. It is also the comforting voice, reassuring man that God has not rejected him. In this Midrash, the Misquan may be taken symbolically to represent man's conscience. God's intrusion into man's conscience need not be brutal, but may be gentle and tender:

יום שהוקם המשכן נכנס משה והיה שומע קול הדר, קול נאה, קול משובח. אמר משה: בקושי הוא מדבר? ברחמים הוא מדבר? אשמעה מה ידבר האל ה'? א"ל הקב"ה: משה, שלום אני מדבר.

"Upon the day the Misquan was built Moses entered and heard a still, pleasant voice ... Moses said: 'Does he speak harshly? Does He speak mercifully?' God said to him - 'Moses,I speak peace'." 23

Whereas the activity of the conscience is generally thought of to be punishing, repressive - while the general vocabulary of conscience is usually thought of as guilt, shame, rebuke, God expresses Himself through man's conscience in an opposite way: He is the loving, evocative, peaceful voice in contrast to the expected voice of protest and admonishment. God is compassionate, calls man back to himself when he has become estranged from the truer nature God has imbued in him. God is not pitted against man; God does not win out while man becomes subordinated. Man does not have to match himself against God, to try to out-do God in order to achieve his freedom and independence. God is a cooperative agent, desiring harmony, not arbitrary control.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of the psychoanalytic movement was convinced that God's authority as man conceived it, was a repressive authority, and that a belief in God fixed limits to the full unleashing of man's creative powers.[24] In this Midrash a different concept of religious authority is suggested: an authority that lovingly works on man's behalf rather than in restless competition with him.

God speaks to man via his conscience in other ways, too. God appeals to the "better nature" of man to resolve conflicts that sever relationships. God is that impulse inspiring us to realize that beneath the stratum of our disagreements with others, there is the substratum of our affectionate regard for one another and need for communication and the interchange of love. Human discord is distressing to God as well as self-defeating for man.

בוא וראה כמה קשה מחלוקת לפני הקב"ה!

"Come and see how distressing conflicts are before God!" 25

כך שנו רבותינו: עבירות שבין אדם למקום יוה"כ מכפר. שבינו לבין חבירו אין יום הכפורים מכפר עד שירצה את חבירו. וכן אתה מוצא כל ימים שהיה איוב מקפיד כנגד חביריו וחביריו כנגדו . . .

"And so our rabbis taught: Transgression between man and God, the Day of Atonement resolves ... those between man and man. Yom Kippur will not serve to atone until man placates his fellow man...." 26

6. God as Creator

One of the most powerful and edifying images of God as Creator in the Midrashic literature is the one where God debates with Himself on the question of whether man should be created from the celestial or terrestial elements. This Midrash reminds us of those where man is

challenged to "Equate the created object with the Creator's intent." God creates within man the tendency to reach upward linking his own finite life with the Infinite Reason and Intelligence operative in the universe. Man is gifted both with the nobler spark of the Divine, and with the biological, animal instincts -- instincts of concern simply for self-preservation. Man must balance the conflicting tendencies within himself, what we might call broadly the hedonistic and the teleological. This is admittedly a more expansive view of the Midrash, which will have implications for a consideration of the view of God as the edifying or teleogical process in human personality inspiring self-realization.

אם אני בורא אותו מן העליונים עכשיו העליונים רבים
על התחתונים בריה אחת, ואין שלום בעולם; ואם אני
בורא אותו מן התחתונים עכשיו התחתונים רבים על
העליונים בריה אחת, ואין שלום בעולם. אלא הרי אני
בורא אותו מן העליונים ומן התחתונים בשביל האדם,
וגו' עפר מן האדמה. מן התחתונים ויפח באפיו נשמת
חיים, - מן העליונים.

"Were I to create him from the celestrial elements then the celestrial elements would predominate over the terrestrial...and there would be no peace in the world. And were I to create him from the terrestrial...then the terrestrial would be in excess of the celestrial and there would be no peace in the world....but behold I will create him from the celestrial and the terrestrial.. as it is written: "And God fashioned man" (that is from) the dust of the earth...."And he breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life" (this springing from) the celestrial....." 27

While man is the crowning glory of creation, but nature must obey God's laws, not simply serve man's wishes:

אתה מוצא שכל מה שברא הקב"ה בששת ימי בראשית
לא ברא אלא לכבודו ולעשות בהן רצונו.

"You discover that everything God created during the six days of creation, he created simply for his own honor, and to do his will." 28.

Representative of those numerous Midrashim which treat the question of whether God used any primordial matter, or whether creation was ex nihilo is this one which asks: What was it that went into the creation of heaven and earth? One of the purposes of these Midrashim is to develop the idea of creation as an act incomprehensible to man, a supreme example of the unbounded absolute power God possesses over nature:

שמים מהיכן נבראו? מאור לבושו של הקב"ה שהוא
לבוש לקח ופרש כשמלה והיו מותחין והולכין עד
שאמר להם די! -- הארץ מאיזה מקום נבראת? מן
השלג מתחת כסא כבודו לקח וזרק על המים ונקפאו
המים ונעשו עפר הארץ.

"What were the heavens created out of? God would spread out his own garment and its light would radiate as it would move about and expand until He would say: 'Enough.' And how did the earth come to be? From the snow beneath the throne of glory...God took from this snow and sprinkled it upon the waters, and the waters coagulated and were made into the dust of the earth..." 29

In another beautiful allusion to creation, God involves the angels in the process of deciding whether or not man should be created:

וכשביקש הקב"ה לבראות את האדם נמלך במלאכים
ואמר להם: נעשה אדם . . .

"And when God desired to create the world, he said to the angels 'Let us make man.'" 30

One more Midrash remains to be cited in this section. God, in this next Midrash, almost dares man to equal or surpass God's unprecedented and unparalleled powers. It often seems that man is dissatis-

fied with being simply man, and there are moments when man would rather be God. This might be an elaboration of the child's wish to be like father, to have his unrivalled power and heroic ability to do so many wonderful things. God invites man to test out human strength, and if it be found that man has powers like God's, man may indeed become like God. This Midrash addresses itself, or more correctly, echoes this primordial wish in man, which rises to the surface in the Genesis epic of man's attempt to be like God, to know right from wrong, and to gain eternal life. It is a fertile theme and the reader's attention is directed to an article by an Israeli psychiatrist, Alex Fodor, entitled "Genesis and the Fall of Man" where it is explored more completely.[31] Fodor describes the emotional underpinnings of the myths that portray man's quest to surmount his finitude and attain Divine status. It would be too great a departure to discuss at this time the fascinating parallels in Greek mythology of the attempt of man, mythologically speaking, to dethrone the gods and deify himself. It would also be another thesis to unravel the mythological overtones in the Bible and Midrash which spring from this latent quest of man to be like God. But this Midrash converges on the theme, and for that reason it is especially interesting.

וכן אמר הכתוב השמים מספרים כבוד אל . . . משל
למלך שהיו הכל מקלסין אותו שהוא חכם וגבור ועשיר.
בקשו לראות מה היא חכמתו ומה היא גבורתו ומה היא
עשרו, מה עשה? נטל וילון וקבע בו כל אבנים
טובות ומרגליות ותלה אותו על פתחו ואמר כל מי
שיכול לעשות כמותו הרי הוא כמותי. כך הקב"ה הוא
חכם החכמים ולו הגבורה והגדולה והעושר והכבוד
מלפניו, וברא את העולם בחכמה. . . ביקש להוריע
שבחו לבריות. נטל וילון קבע בו חמה ולבנה

כוכבים ומזלות, כל כך למה? להודיע לבני אדם גבורותיו.
ואמר להם כל מי שיכול לעשות כמותן הרי הוא כמוני. . .

> "And so Scripture says: 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' ... Let us draw an analogy to a king, whom everyone praised because of his great might, wealth, and wisdom. ... this king took a curtain and set upon it all kinds of precious stones and pearls, and hanged it over his door, and said: 'whosoever can do this, will be like me.' So God is the wisest of the wise, and he has the power and greatness and wealth and honor, and created the world with wisdom. ... He wanted to make his praise known to mankind, he took a curtain, placed upon it the sun and the moon and the stars and the planets. Why all this? To make known to man his mighty deeds. He (God) said tothem: 'Whosoever can do this kind of a thing will be like me'....." 32

God's creative powers are unrivalled, unequalled, unsurpassed.

7. God as Lawgiver

The opening Midrash I cite reminds us of Leo Baeck's remark in the Essence of Judaism.[33] "There is no place without commandment and no commandment without a place in which to fulfill it." God pervades the cosmos with law, so that within these limits, man may profitably utilize his endowments and the resources of nature. Stating the basic theme of this next set of images a little more simply: whom one loves, one limits. As much as these images I am about to discuss deal with law, which symbolizes authority, power, possibly suppression, they could be included under the framework of God's benevolence. For it is a benevolent and concerned authority who looks out for the welfare of His children by providing them with guideposts to lead them on life's journey:

זרע הקב"ה את התורה ואת המצות לישראל להנחילם
חיי עולם הבא לא הניח דבר בעולם שלא נתן בו
מצוה לישראל.

"God sowed the Torah and commandments for Israel in order to lead them to the life eternal, and He did not allow anything in the world to rest devoid of meaningful challenge to Israel." 34

תנו רבנן: מאן דאמר אם בחקותי תלכו אין אם אלא לשון תחנונים.

"Our rabbis taught: On the view of the one who says; 'If you walk in my ways.' The use of the word "If" implies a persuasive appeal." 35

God invites man to accept the restrictions which in turns enable man to reach a greater freedom and fulfillment. God has provided a kind of potential equilibrium or tendency toward harmony which man may make his own or appropriate for himself. There is a fund of purposefullness in the world from which man might draw. The Mitzvot have this connotation of potential energy or constructive limitations designed for man's benefit. To use another analogy,man may draw from a deep, rich mine of precious ore, and refine this ore of its alloys so that it yields a pure metal to be hammered on the anvil of his own spirit:

אתה כוננת ישרות בעולמך. יש לו לאדם דין עם חבירו, והוא נכנס עמו לדין, והן מקבלין עליהם, מיד שהדין יוצא ועושה שלום, הוי אתה כוננת מישרים.

"Thou has established a purposeful equilibrium in your world. If a man has a dispute with his neighbor, and comes to court with him...as soon as the judgment is enacted, peace is established, and so it is that Thou art the One who established righteous limits." 36

רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצות.

"God wanted to bestow a real privilege upon Israel, therefore He gave them a rich measure of Torah and commandments." 37

Man is entitled to enjoy the highest happiness, providing that his own happiness involves the well being of others, and that it not be garnered at their expense. Conversely, the only real joy is that joy which is the outcome of companionship in moral effort. The Mitzvot, which are laws, are then pathways to freedom. God the Lawgiver, is also the Author of Liberty. The family of man is bound in loving ties and in emulation of the loving Father, who sets limits to promote human love, and human love bespeaks of the wisdom of His limits.

8. God as Lover

The theme of God's love is amplified and embellished in this next set of Midrashim, which cull again from the familiar realm of the family circle:

כך חביב הקב"ה את ישראל וקרא אותם בתי, ולא
זז עד שקרא אותם אחותי, ולא זז עד שקרא אותם
אמי . . .

"So endeared is God of Israel, that He could call them 'my daughter' ... but beyond this, He called them 'my sister,' but He did not rest with this, until He called them, 'my mother.' 38

Israel holds a very special place in God's favor, while God loves all His children; the love He feels for Israel is most sublime and intensive:

אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחאי: אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל,
אלוה אני על כל באי עולם, אבל לא יחדתי שמי
אלא עליכם. איני נקרא אלהי עובדי כוכבים
ומזלות אלא אלהי ישראל.

= "R. Shimon ben Yochai said: 'God said to Israel:
I am the God of all those who live on earth, but
I united my name only with you!'" 39

אשריכם ישראל האיך הקב"ה חיבב אתכם!

"See how fortunate you are, Israel - how God has
so endearingly singled you out!" 40

Commenting on the verse in the Song ofSongs, "Many wayers cannot extinguish love," the Midrash considers this the unique, intensive love between God and Israel. 41

9. God as Shepherd

Playing upon other themes and searching for other apt metaphors to describe God's love, the Midrash alights on the comparison of God to the shepherd who tends his flock with patient love:

ומי שיש לו שה אחד מאכילו ומשקה בעונתו שהוא אחד,
אבל מי שיש לו צאן הרבה אינו יכול להזדקק להם,
אלא מתייגע עמהן הרבה.

"Normally only someone who has just one sheep feeds
it and gives it drink regularly, for it is a single
one; but one who has a large flock cannot care for
them; but often tires of them. But yet see the en-
dearment with which God endeared Israel to Him, that
He called them sheep." 42

A parent who loves his children very deeply seems to have an unlimited amount of patience with them. God is able to hold up under the strain of personally tending to the needs of each individual child in the family of Israel, because His fondness for them makes the responsibility of caring for them all the more joyful. This is related to the thought that God's intense love for Israel overrides the normal

anger a parent might feel when a child abuses the trusting relationship by overstepping his bounds. (See above pages 5, 6). At times Israel may not deserve God's love, yet His overflowing acceptance of them causes Him to minimize their faults, and to see only their virtues.

The love of God for Israel, typified in the image of God as a Shepherd and Israel and His beloved flock reaches such a peak that the imagery spills over into other metaphors. The minds of the rabbis were creative and fertile, and their emotional responses to God might be compared to waters of a gigantic river that reach the headwaters quickly and overflow their banks. In at least one Midrash, the image of the shepherd we have been considering becomes co-mingled with the view of Israel as God's bethrothed lover. Israel says to God: "Be my God, and I will be your people!" ... Israel is at once visualized as the first born son, the bethrothed lover, the tenderly cared for flock of the Shepherd God.[43]

Yet another Midrash establishes the rationale for the image of God as shepherd and Israel as His flock:

לסה כצאן? אלא כשם שהרועה זהיר בצאנו ביום מפני החמה ובלילה מפני הזאבים, כך היה הקב"ה זהיר בישראל. . . נוראות הראות במצרים. חרונך שפחת עליהם. ימינך בלעה אותם. תהום כסית עליהם. רבי יהושע אומר: נפלאות עשית לנו. מירות נתת לנו. ים בקעת לנו. תורה נתת לנו. רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר נסים עשית לנו. חיים נתת לנו. ידך הראית לנו. תלוי ראש נתת לנו. וחכמים אומרים נביאים העמדת מסנו. מסידים העמדת מסנו. ישרים תמימים העמדת מסנו.

> "Why is Israel (likened to) sheep? For just as the shepherd is mindful of his flock, in the daytime because of the sun's heat, and at night because of wolves, so God guards Israel. ... You have showed wonderful things in Egypt...you poured out your warmth upon them ... your right hand swallowed them up ... the deep covered them ... R. Joshua said: You have done wonderful things for us ... you have given us Torah ... R. Eliezar Ha Modai said: You have performed wondrous deeds for us ... you have given us life ... and the sages said: You have raised up prophets from our midst ... pious ones, righteous ones, perfect ones you have raised up from our midst." 44

All of the rabbis want to have their voice in extolling God's marvellous work on behalf of His children. God is the most marvellous Father because He has raised the most outstanding children. God is the finest Shepherd, because no outside element has been able to harm his flock or escape his watchful eye. "The guardian of Israel sleepeth not nor slumbereth not." God's enduring task, all encompassing that which is charged with greatest meaning for him is to bring up children who have expressed their finer endowments, have lived up to His expectations, have fulfilled His deepest hopes.

These nine then form the basic categories of images of God in the Midrash. To summarize briefly, God is conceived of either as an All Wise King, a Transcendant Power beyond man's grasp, or as an Immanent Presence working on man's behalf, sustaining man's efforts, creating the climate and conditions for the unfolding of man's creative capacities for love and good will. God limits man out of His love, may at moments appear to judge harshly and according to uncompromising standards, but beneath it all, God has an unreserved affection for His people, causing Him to shower all kinds of affection upon them, ordaining a pre-established harmony in nature conducive to man's growth and spiritual attainment.

Out of His love, God commands the sun to shine forth on the earth, and the moon and stars to take their proper places in the orbit of the heavens. God is that force making for reliability and responsibility in nature. Man may depend upon God. God has given man good laws, which when followed, like signposts upon a trail, will lead man to his ultimate destination: the achievement of the true heights of his humanity and the reward of the deepest affection a father can bestow upon a child.

Later on I will offer some comments on the psychological significance of these images, but it will be the next immediate task to develop more elaborately the particulars of God's expectations and affections for Israel, and the needs that Israel brings to the relationship that cause Israel to view God in certain ways and not in others. We will see that God's love can be so extreme that He extends himself into Israel and interweaves His destiny with the destiny of people. Yet God may become angry enough with Israel to turn His eyes away, and painfully retract His love. We will see later on that at moments Israel may approach God as an ashamed, disobedient child, a mature co-agent with God, a reluctant prophet-people, a joyous lover. Israel tries out all of the possible approaches toward winning God's love that a child utilizes to win his parents' affection.

Conversely, and this is the first thought to be more elaborately developed), God approaches His relationship to Israel through all the various channels whereby the parents of a child approach their relationship with their children.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

1. Braude, William A., "The Relevance of Midrash," CCAR Yearbook, Vol. 65, 1955, p. 134.

2. Kaddushin, Max, The Rabbinic Mind, New York, 1952, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, pp. 201, 202.

3. Ibid., p. 201.

4. Ibid., p. 202.

5. Allport, Gordon, The Individual and His Religion, New York, 1957, Macmillan Co., p. 9.

6. The Midrashim utilized in this thesis are gleaned from many sources spanning a good many centuries. Primarily, many of the Midrashim are from noted Midrashic sources, both Tannaitic and other key Midrashic works, or from Talmudic sources. In other words, many of these images are from the pens of writers who were either Tannaim or Amoraim (First to Sixth centuries C.E.). Many of the homilies cited in Maa Mar Ha Elohut, are however from later post-Talmudic sources, from Midrashim as late as the 11th or 12th centuries, and in a few instances down to the 18th century.)

7. In most cases, simply the core of a Midrash is stated; or that phase of a total haggadic or homiletical statement is cited which is essential for our understanding of the image of God under consideration.

8. Konowitz, Israel, Maamar HaElohut, The God-Idea in Talmud and Other Rabbinic Sources, published by the author. New York, 1908. Ch. 61, sec. 2, p. 223. Midrash 46. Original Source: Exodus Rabbah, ch. 7, sec. 3; also, Siphre to Behaalotchah, Piska 81.

9. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 219, Midrash 18. Tanhuma to Tetsaveh, ch. 2.

10. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 2, p. 223, Midrash 45. Avodah Zara, 5A. See also Shochar Tov, Song 5, sec. 8; also in Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah, p. 40A, and in Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, Parashat Shuva.

11. Ibid., Ch. 64, p. 253, Midrash 12. Shochar Tov, Song 17, sec. 7.

12. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 143, Midrash 15. Midrash to Psalms, song 32, ch. 2, and in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Peah, p. 5A; also in several other Talmudic tractates as well as in the Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana Parashat Selichot, 163, sec.A.

13. Ibid., ch. 37, p. 146, Midrash 30.
Bamidbar Rabbah, ch. 13, sec. 3 occurs elsewhere among them, Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 7, and Bereshit Rabbah, ch. 19 and ch. 21.

14. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 7, p. 238, Midrash 115.
Sepharim, the closing of sec. 40, p. 70A, related thought in Vayikrah Rabba, ch. 35 and ch. 13.

15. Ibid., ch. 38, p. 151, Midrash 13.
Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 31, sub-heading 9, and in the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin, p. 110A, and in Tractate Nedarim, p. 39B.

16. Ibid., ch. 17, p. 56, Midrash 6.
Shochar Tov, Song 28, sub-heading I, and Song 114, sub-heading 3. References to this Midrash occur in a number of Talmudic sources, including Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 21, and Genesis Rabbah, ch. 12, sub-heading 14, and in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Menachot, p.29A.

17. Ibid., ch. 13, p. 60, Midrash 20.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 12, heading 12.

18. Ibid., Identical Midrash.

19. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 5, p. 235, Midrash 103.
Midrash Tanhuma, Ahere Mot, sub-heading 18; also Numbers Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 2, and in other Midrashic compilations.

20. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 8, p. 244, Midrash 145.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 83, sec. 12, and in Babylonian Talmud Tractate Megillah, p. 15, and in Tanhuma Va-Ye-Rah, the end of sec. 15.

21. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 5, p. 234, Midrash 100.
Babylonian Talmud Tractate Megillah, p. 29A.

22. Ibid., ch. 32, p. 131, Midrash 13.
Shochar Tov, Song 32, sub-heading 11.

23. Ibid., ch. 46, p. 166, Midrash 3.
Tanchuma Noaoh, sub-heading 25, Pesiktha Rabbati, sec. 5, sub-heading 11.

24. Freud's basic work on the subject of religion, the God Idea and its emotional underpinnings is The Future of an Illusion, Hogathert Press, 1943.

25. Konowitz, ch. 46, p. 167, Midrash 9,
Numbers Rabbah, ch. 18, sec. 4.

26. Ibid., ch. 31, p. 126, Midrash 26.
Tanhuma Va-Ye-Rah, sub-heading 30, and in the Rabbati, ch. 30, number 8; also may be found in the Tanhuma Yoma, ch. 5, number 72.

27. Ibid., ch. 46, p. 166, Midrash 8.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 12, heading 8; also Deut. Rabbah, ch. 5, sec. 12.

28. Ibid., ch. 17, p. 69, Midrash 66.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 17, heading I; also see Genesis Rabbah, ch. 5 and Exodus Rabbah, ch. 15; and Midrash to Psalms, Song 83.

29. Ibid., ch. 17, p. 62, Midrash 17.
Pirke D'Rebbi Eliezar, ch. 3.

30. Ibid., ch. 49, p. 183, Midrash 14.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 8, sub-heading 2, and Genesis Rabbah, ch. 17, sub-heading 4. Occurs in other sources including Pesiktha Rabbati (Parah), and Tanhuma Hukot, sub-heading 12, and Numbers Rabbah, ch. 19, sub-heading 3.

31. See Fodor, Alex, "Fall of Man in the Book of Genesis," in American Imago, Vol. 11, pp. 203-231, 1954.

According to Fodor, man represses certain infantile, primordial wishes; primarily wishes to take over the father's role, usurp his power, and appropriate it to himself. This primordial wish reasserts itself in the mythology of man, and makes its re-entrance in different forms of symbolic literature. The question of the symbolic nature of Midrashic literature, and the unconscious as a repository of repressed wishes which make their re-entrance through this literature will be taken up in ch. IV, "The Significance of the Images." Suffice it to say, that according to Fodor, man carries with him, in his unconscious, the traces of a repressed pristine hatred born against the father. The nucleus of this hatred is the enforced subjugation of the son to the father.

32. Knnowitz, ch. 17, p. 60, Midrash 19.
Midrash HaGadol attributed to Rabbi S. Z. Schechter, ch. 1, sub-heading 17; see also the Midrash to Psalms, Song 19, sec. 7.

33. Baeck, Leo, The Essence of Judaism, Schocken Books, New York, 1948. p. 158.

34. Knnowitz, ch. 47, p. 176, Midrash 20.
Tanhuma Shalach, sub-heading 28; also Numbers Rabbah, ch. 7, sub-heading 5.

35. Ibid., ch. 41, p. 156, Midrash 1.
Avodah Zara, p. 6A.

36. Ibid., ch. 46, p. 169, Midrash 19.
Shocher Tov, Song 89, sec. 3, and in Tanhuma Mishpatim, sub-heading 1.

37. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 2, p. 228, Midrash 69.
Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Maccot, p. 23A.

38. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 219, Midrash 20.
Tanhuma Pikude, sub-heading 8, and Exodus Rabbah, ch. 52, sec. 5; also see Pesiktha Hazit, ch. 3.

39. Ibid., ch. 61, p. 216, Midrash 3.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 29, sec. 4. See Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, sec. 12, and the Mechiltah to Mishpatim, ch. 20.

40. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 216, Midrash 1.
Tanhuma Va Yikrah, sec. 46.

41. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 222, Midrash 28.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 15, sub-heading 4; also in Exodus Rabbah, ch. 49, and elsewhere.

42. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 220, Midrash 28.
Tanhuma Bo, sub-heading 11, and in the Pesiktha to the chapter entitled "Ha Hodesh" and in Exodus Rabbah, ch. 32.

43. Ibid., ch. 66, p. 256, Midrash 1.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 23, sub-heading 1, and in other "Yalkutim" (anthologies of Midrashim).

44. Ibid., ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 220, Midrash 29.
Tanhuma Bo, sec. 15.

II - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Part I

A. The Prophetic Background

The primary question raised in Chapter I was: What are the basic images of God in the rabbinic literature? This chapter and the next ask a further question: What do the images mean or how may they be interpreted? What were the authors of the Midrash trying to tell us about the way in which people react to life by portraying God in the ways in which they chose to portray Him? If God is pictured as both demanding and loving: What does He demand and how does He Love? What considerations qualify God's demands and what are the conditions and limitations of His love? We presuppose that God and Israel are linked in an immutable Covenant, a ברית עולם . But is the Covenant truly immutable? Will God's patience run out, His love become exasperated, His anger become unleashed? Is Israel's love so precious to God that no matter how deeply Israel may vex God - He will not turn against him? In Chapter I, we suggested the parallel between the nature of these questions and those of a child who tests out the extent of his parents' love for him. Our basic task here is to unravel and interpret the shades of meaning implied in the various images enumerated and discussed briefly in Chapter I.

In this task of interpretation, we are consciously building up on one certain premise: God is primary experienced as kindly or exacting. One might challenge our selection of these two extremes or our breakdown all of the various images into one or another of these two categories. Why do we choose love and authority as the two primary headings in organizing our material? Might not other groupings serve equally as well or be even more appropriate?

Perhaps we would do better to approach the material from the standpoint of God's Immanence contrasted with His Transcendance, as indeed many writers on rabbinic thought have done. For that matter, the various Midrashim could be subsumed under the categories of "The Personal God" and "The Impersonal God." Admittedly, the choice is somewhat arbitrary, though not as arbitrary as might first be supposed. The evidence for this categorization we have chosen to use may in part be supplied by a cursory glance at the views of God suggested in the prophetic literature. The prophets provided the foundation upon which the rabbis constructed their own views. In a general way the prophets also inclined toward one or another of the two basic images of God we have been examining.

The God of the Pre-Exilic prophets (particularly Amos and the First Isaiah) is a God who demands absolute justice. This God is uncompromising in His demands, and threatens a disobedient people with severe punishment. These images are intense and graphic. Yet they are matched in intensity by the equally vivid and striking images of a compassionate and gracious God suggested by the Exilic and Post-Exilic Prophets. God, to the mind of these writers (particularly in the writings of the Book of Jeremiah that may be dated after the seige of Jerusalem in 587 and in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah) will redeem His people, and sympathetically enable them to participate in the Golden Age of universal unprecedented joy and freedom.

Whereas the earlier prophets spoke דברי תוכחות "words of admonition" levelled at a complacent and unjust people, Jeremiah spoke of הבן יקיר לי אפרים, אם ילד שעשועים, מדי דברי בו, אזכרנו עוד. "My precious one, Ephraim, the child of My delight, I yet remember him as I speak of him."[1] Isaiah spoke of עבדי אתמך בו, בחירי רצתה נפשי "My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth."[2]

Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah spoke דברי תנחומים "words of consolation" in the name of a merciful God.[2] Just as the earlier prophets were convinced that God would withdraw His love because of Israel's disobedience (or failure to fulfill the conditions of the ethical Covenant), the latter prophets were equally convinced that God would ever "draw Israel with chords of affection."[3]

The rabbis were conscious of the two basic images of God suggested in the contrast between prophetic words of admonition and words of consolation. In BabaBathra 14b, the logical order of the prophetic books in the Canon is discussed. "Destruction" (תוכחות) is linked with "destruction" and "consolation" (תנחומים) is linked with "consolation."

The rabbis inherited and worked with both prophetic views: God the Judge and God the Lover. Each view struck roots deep in the soil of human needs and aspirations, so no one view could ever totally predominate to the exclusion of the other. The rabbis, like the prophets of the Exile and after, sought for a comforting message to abate the suffering of their people, particularly after the tragedy of 70 C.E. (the desturction of the Second Temple) and 135 C.E. (the ill-fated Bar Cochba Revolt). In such moments, their natural sympathies predisposed them to view God as compassionate and forgiving by nature. Yet like the pre-Exilic prophets, they also realized that God could be pressed just so far, that He also had a more demanding, more uncompromising nature, and that His patience was not totally unbounded. No matter how benevolent, God placed certain demands upon man, and expected those demands to be fulfilled. In the end analysis, God was not, to the rabbis, either a Stern Judge or a Benevolent Father. It would be more nearly correct to say that He was pictured as a loving, though exacting Father.

In the perspective of the early Tannaim, God could be characterized by the מדת פורענות and מדת טובה the attributes of retribution and goodness respectively. The later Tannaim changed the wording somewhat, and viewed God from the vantage point of מדת הדין and מדת הרחמים "the Attribute of Justice" and the "Attribute of Mercy."

> As it is said: "And the Lord God called to Adam" (Gen. 3:9). The word God (Yahweh) refers to the attribute of mercy, as it is said: "God, God, gracious and compassionate Lord". (Exodus 34:6) God caused His attribute of justice to take precedence over His attribute of Justice..." [4]

Often the two views are interwoven in one rabbinic image, because the rabbis often actually felt both the emotions of awe and of love toward God simultaneously. All of us, for that matter, are so constituted that we will necessarily seek both love and limits from God. This tendency is a continuation of our natural desire to seek both love and limits from our parents.

Working then, with these two sets of needs - for both love and limits - viewing the images of a loving and exacting Father in light of these contrasting human needs, we may turn to a more detailed study of some illutrative Midrashim. Our first consideration will be those images of God related to the prophetic דברי תוכחות , and to the rabbinic concept of מדת הדין . We want to ask: What human feelings and responses prompted this view of God as an Exacting Ruler. Further on, the consideration will be those images of God related to the prophetic דברי תנחומים or the rabbinic concept of מדת הרחמים . The various Midrashim emphasizing one view over another are grouped separately for the convenience of the study.

One generalization we might make is that those images of God which suggest an Authoritarian Ruler in contrast to a Benevolent Father utilize the basic term: מלך - "King". Analogies are drawn from the מלך בשר ודם "The king of flesh and blood - the human ruler to מלך מלכי המלכים "The King of Kings" - the super-human Ruler. The Divine Ruler has wrapped Himself with light as a garment and in this way filled the world with light. God may take a great chain and link Himself to Israel, much in the way that an earthly king would fasten a key to a small palace by the use of a chain. God stretches out the constellations and works of nature upon the horizon - similar to the way in which a human king would display his most precious jewels on a great velvet curtain.

II B What God Demands

1. Unquestioned Obedience

Once God has demonstrated His super-human powers, He expects unquestioned obedience. God has presented His credentials, as it were, His right to rule men. No one can equal or surpass God's power; therefore His authority must be unlimited. Israel may only have a dim idea of what he is to accomplish, but God, in His all-knowing way has the answer. Man, or Israel, is alone and confused in the world. The way out of the dilemma is to depend upon God, to trust in Him, and He will show the way.

א"ר חייא: תלמיד הולך לפני רבו בלילה מי נוטל הפנס? הלא התלמוד לפני רבו, אבל הקב"ה נוטל הפנס לפני ישראל, שנאמר וה' הולך לפניהם יומם וכו' - הוי וענותך תרבני.

God lights the way before Israel.[5]

The first component or dimension of obedience then, is dependence. Man must rely upon God, acknowledging that without God, man is helpless. God is capable, conversely, of exerting authority over Israel, because of Israel's dependence upon Him.

At times, for that matter, God's commands may seem unreasonable, and Israel might tend to resist God's authority. Israel must, however, accept on faith what God asks, and this unquestioning trust forms a second, related component of obedience:

Accept the law, trust in your Creator![6]

קבל עליך את הדין, שאפילו אתה נעשה על שמו של הקב"ה חלל. . .

A third phase of this obedience is admiration for God's unsurpassed powers. God has arranged the stars in their heavenly courses, arranged the change of seasons, provided for the orderly succession of day and night. God therefore deserves man's loyalty. Obedience is simply one way of man's expressing his indebtedness to God for the various gifts in realm of nature which God has provided for him. Even if man does not feel obligated to God in other ways, even if he does not naturally feel warmly toward God, he (man) ought to act lovingly toward God in return for God's life-sustaining gifts.

זש"ה ואל מי תדמיוני ואשוה יאמר קדוש שאו מרום עיניכם וגו'. אמר הקב"ה ואל מי תדמיוני? בי"ו אם יהיה מהלך בחשיכה ואדם בא ומאיר לו. אינו צריך להחזיק לו לטובה? ואתם ישנים בלילה ואני מעלה לכם את האורה. אין אתם צריכין להחזיק לי טובה? -- שאו מרום עיניכם!

> God said: "To whom will you liken Me?" If a man walks in darkness, and a man comes and lights his way, should he not profer to this man all good? And while you are sleeping at night I cause the light to ascend for you. Should you not profer all good to Me? Lift your eyes heavenward![7]

Closely related to the admiration Israel must feel, is the gratitude God expects from him. God works to make the world a finer home for man. Man's obedience to God is simply a symbol of his gratitude for all that God has done.

We can see that these demands made upon Israel are very similar to the kinds of demands a parent harbors in relation to his child. Generally, a parent hopes that his child will rely upon him, be trusting, admiring, and grateful. It is only natural that the rabbis would project onto God the concern for similar emotional responses from Israel, His most beloved child.

Most parents would also hope, however, that there would be a rational basis to their authority, that what they would ask of their children would, after all, be reasonable, and would emerge out of the parents' concern for the child's own well-being. God, too, is concerned with the effects of man's reliance on His authority. The ultimate effect of obedience is holiness, which we might broadly take to mean: the expansive feeling of inner satisfaction that comes to the child when he realizes that he has lived up to the highest within him. The basis for God's use of His authority is His concern for the improvement of the social order. Man is not to conform to an arbitrary set of laws, but to obey those laws which are designed to promote a certain kind of social harmony.

Let us examine each of these two related thoughts separately. First, obedience is equated with holiness:

. . . אמר להם משה לישראל: הוו יודעין שאין הקב"ה מייחד שמו בישראל שהוא נקרא אלהיך, אלא בזמן והיה מחניך קדוש. ואותה שעה הוא משרה שכינתו ביניכם. . .

God only interlinks His name with Israel, to be called "Your God" when your camp is holy, and only in that hour does He cause His Schecinah to dwell among you.[8]

The second thought is that obedience is equated with responsibility toward one's fellow man:

Each person is responsible for the well-being of society at large. God cannot tolerate abusive acts between man and man. Stating the same thought in a positive way, the people whom God elects stands for the values He holds to be most sacred:

אמר הקב"ה התורה כולה שלום, ולמי אתננ? לאומה שאוהבת שלום. הוי וכל נתיבותיה שלום.

God said: The Torah in its entirety (is a document of) peace. Whom then shall I offer it to? To that people which loves peace.[9]

One of the most stirring and elevated Midrashim focusing on man's responsibility as a moral creature of God is the one in Genesis Rabbah, where the angels remind God of the weaknesses of man, and the possibility, that through man, God's absolute order of righteousness and truth may be imperiled. God entrusts man with the responsibility of enhancing rather than destroying those values. God takes the risk, again confident that His child will justify His trust. God is determined to place this trust in man. Before the angels may dispute further, God tells them that the creation of man is a fait accompli: Man will, according to the Divine hope, "raise truth from the earth".[10]

To this point, we have tried to give the impression that man is asked to obey God's will, that is, to follow the ethical dictates of the

Mitzvot, for his own enlightened self-interest. By implication, God is less concerned with the basis for the ethical life, the reasons why man obeys, but more concerned with the content and result of the ethical imperatives of religion. Yet this is only one side of the coin. Though the reason why man obeys is not to please God, but to further his own well-being, the ethics of human society are nonetheless rooted in "Imitatio Dei" in an absolute Divine ethic. What man does on earth is a reflection of what God wills in Heaven. Man is compassionate toward his fellow creatures-first - because God demands it, and second - because this kind of obedience contributes to the perfection of a more harmonious society. It is important to dwell on this point here, because in a later chapter, we will have occasion to treat the "humanistic" content of the ethical demands apart from their "God-centered" nexus. But the point will have to be established, that while we may draw certain linkages from present day humanistic and naturalistic religious outlooks to the ethical position of the rabbis, one may not honestly attribute humanistic or naturalistic thinking to them.

The following three rabbinic statements make one point. God wants man to obey Him because He demands it, not simply because man will be happier if he obeys these rules:

> If you despise another human being - know then whom it is you really despite - none other than the image of God. [11]

> מה הוא רחום - אף אתה רחום מה הוא חנון - אף אתה חנון

> Just as He is gracious and merciful, so be you gracious and merciful! [12]

שכתו רחמין מן הבריות אף הקב"ה שיכת רחמיו מהם.

Those who no longer act mercifully to one another assume the consequences: God no longer acts mercifully towards them. 13

2. Unreserved Affection:

While on the one hand we unmistakably have a view of God that sees Him imposing a fixed moral code upon man; yet on the other hand it is equally true that we have the contrasting view: God also elicits a warm, affectionate response. God lovingly persuades as often as He authoritatively demands. The people that is humbled by God's demonstration of His authority is also inspired by His endearing love. The obedient child is also the beloved child. God does not rely only on fear and acquiescence. He hopes that man will respond lovingly even as he conforms obediently. God is concerned with right, ethical conduct, to be sure, but He is also anxious to receive man's filial warmth and trusting devotion.

Various Midrashim dealing with the virtue of prophets and seers allude to God's concern for a "loving conformity".

While the prophet is often someone who must sacrifice his own love for the people in order to interpret God's authoritative edicts, in a very striking Midrash the prophet Isaiah is commended for his capacity to share God's unreserved love for Israel. Isaiah sees Israel, as it were, through God's eyes, or through the eyes of the Father: the child appears beloved and precious for all his faults:

א"ל הקב"ה: ישעיה! אהבת צדק-אהבת לצדק את בני, ותשנא רשע ששנאת מלחייבן, על כן משחך אלהים אלהיך. מהו מחבירך?

God said to him: "Isaiah - 'you loved righteousness' - you loved to vindicate My son - and ' you hated evil ' - that is, you hated to make them appear culpable, therefore God your Lord has annointed you." 14

Isaiah is visualized as a man of heroic temperament. He expresses an unbroken faith in Israel's capacities. Isaiah "loves righteousness," that is, he loves to make Israel appear righteous. Isaiah in other words sees Israel through God's eyes, and sees beyond his own private disillusionment with Israel's immediate failure to live up to his expectations. The one who "loves righteousness" in God's eyes is not someone who judges man harshly, according to the strict scales of justice, but someone who sees the deeper beauties of man's spirit. God realizes that man may appear selfish and unworthy, but there is a precious spark of goodness in him. The prophet is commended for this faith in man, a faith that surpasses anger and the natural tendency to reject the misbehaving child. God, too, resolves His own frustration and bitterness, His own "Attribute of Justice" and inspires man to bring out his inner loveliness and to nurture it. God and the prophet both inspire man to build a more worthy life and patiently and sympathetically reassure man that he has not once and for all fallen from God's graces, that there is still hope, that he will yet be forgiven; that Teshuvah is possible. Sp

God's love for Israel, and in this Midrash, Isaiah's love for the nation suggest that particular kind of parental love which is like the love a mother has for her child: a love which makes few demands, a love which is unconditional - and which is not withdrawn because the misbehavior of the child which hurts and angers the father. (This concept will be discussed in greater detail in connection with Erich Fromm's treatment of the authoritarian and humanistic conscience).

Conversely, man's way of expressing unreserved affection for God is an unqualified acceptance of God's mandates: implied is the unquestioning love Israel must feel. Once the child feels this love, it outweighs

or absorbs whatever frustrations he might otherwise feel in reaction to the father's limiting actions:

כך אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה, אם חסד אתה עושה עמי אשירה
ואם משפט אתה עושה עמי אשירה. בין כך ובין כך לך ה' אזמרה.

> David said to God "If you deal graciously with me, I will sing (Thy praises); but if you do strict justice with me, I will sing; either way will I sing unto the Lord. 15

The relationship between God and man ought be of a certain nature; it ought run deeper than the normal range of relationships. God in a way expects extraordinary things from man: when it comes to his relationship with God, nothing ought stand in the way of the honor the child owes to the Father. Man is not entitled to react impulsively, spontaneously to God, but to be in control of his feelings, sensitive to his reactions, so that his affection is enduring and his devotion overrides any feelings of anger or resentment that arise within him.

The ways in which relationship are to be developed and emotions between God and man are to be either expressed or suppressed follow the channels of the emotional reactions between parents and children. A father may sometimes feel that there are no bounds to his love for his child and may feel puzzled if his child's love for him seems to be limited by the child's own natural reactions of anger or resentment of the father's authority. There are other times when the father's love for the child is clearly conditional or limited, and when the child's unreserved affection for the father is of secondary importance. There are times in other words when the father is more dependent upon the child's love, just as there are fluctuations in the degrees to which the child is dependent on the father's love.

A child may also love his father because of all the care and concern his father has lavished on him, though he does not inwardly feel grateful or indebted or warmly toward his father. The son may so what he feels is appropriate or expected; he may try to be consistent with his ideal image of what a devoted son should be like, and in this way may mask some of his real feelings of envy, resentment, competitiveness, hostility, etc.

The Midrash quoted above treats one phase of the parent-child relationship projected onto the canvas of the God-man relationship. God feels, or the rabbis believe that He must feel in this instance, that there have been no bounds to His love for Israel, that there is nothing God would not do to enhance Israel's happiness. Man's love for God then ought to be boundless and total. Man ought to love out of gratitude, then, in a way similar to that which we pointed out earlier, when we showed how man must obey God out of gratitude.

II B 3 Self Denial

This leads us to a further emotional response expected from man: self-denial. God witholds or restrains His Attribute of Justice, His disciplinary faculties in order to perpetuate the love-contract between God and Israel. In return God expects that no sacrifice would be too great for Israel to make; Israel ought go to any extreme to enhance God's honor and prove his faithfulness as a son deserving of God's affections:

> לא תעשון כדרך שבני אדם נוהגין ביראותיהן. כשהטובה באה עליהן מכבדין ליראותיהן. . וכשפורענות באה עליהן מקללין ליראותיהן, שנאמר והיה כי ירעב והתקצף וקלל במלכו וגו . . .

> Don't do what men normally do in relationship to those who they worship: When good comes to them they honor their God, and when retribution comes to them, they curse him, but be among those who give thanks for the good as well as for the evil. 16

א"ר יהושע בן לוי: כל הזובח את יצרו ומתודה עליו, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו כבדו להקב"ה בשני עולמים - בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא.

R. Joshua ben Levi said: Whosoever sacrifices his inclination and acknowledges its (influence) - he is accredited with honoring God in two worlds: This world and the World to Come. 17

David was cited earlier as a prototype of the individual who accepts what God causes to come his way. Akiba's martyrdom in the hands of the Romans is viewed as a more dramatic and commendable act of self-sacrifice. Moses is not permitted to question the contradiction in God's justice, how it could be that Akiba, devoted as he would be to God's Torah, would meet this kind of a "reward" for his life. Yet this martyrdom is "God's inscrutable will" theologically, and psychologically, the suffering of the hero is a reflection of the intensity of the bond that unites father and son: the son will endure any kind of agony for the glorification of the father:

אמר לו אדם אחד יש שעתיד להיות בסוף כמה דורות ועקיבא בן יוסף שמו, שעתיד לדרוש על כל קוץ וקוץ תילי תילים של הלכות. אמר לפניו: רבש"ע! הראהו לי א"ל חזור לאחוריך! חזר ובא לפני הקב"ה אמר לפניו: רבש"ע! הראיתני תורתו הראני שכרו א"ל חזור לאחוריך! חזר לאחוריו וראה ששוקלין בשרו במקולין. אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם זו תורה וזו שכרה? אמר ליה: שתוק כך עלה במחשבה לפני.

God said to him (Moses): There will be a man who will live after some generations, and his name is Akiba ben Joseph, and he will be destined to interpret all of the particularities of the law. He (Moses) said to him (God): Master of the Universe! You have shown me his erudition, show me his reward! He said to him (Moses): Turn behind you. He turned behind him and he saw that they were combing his flesh with prongs. He said to Him (God): Master of the world: Is this Torah and is this its reward? He said to him (Moses) Quiet! In just this way it happened to occur to me. 18

Whom God loveth - He repoves. This is known as the doctrine of יסורים של אהבה "chastisements of love" and חביבין יסורין "The value of pain." It is a concept to which a number of writers have given considerable thought. The unreserved affection man feels for God is a kind of intense love which the world resents. The lovers: God and Israel want to maintain a closed circle, absorbed in one another's love. Akiba represents the quintessence of the lover of God who would gladly sacrifice his life for God. Yet he suffers for this love. Man has the choice of suffering, but of suffering together with God, or of being alone, utterly alone, though safe. Man choose, if he is of a heroic nature, to suffer with God, even to take the stigma of the shame of suffering off of God and assume it himself. God does not create the suffering man feels in this "exquisite pain." It is the natural consequence of the intensity of the relationship.[19]

Moving to a somewhat different phase of the theme of self-sacrifice, we come across the mention of Israel's humility. We might imagine that God has elected Israel as His favorite son because of Israel's obedience to the ethical code. Is it that Israel is most desirable because of its conformist, obedient nature, or is it that Israel manifests an intrinsic quality of humility before God?

לא מפני שאתם מרובים מכל האומות, ולא מפני שאתם עושים
מצות יותר מהם - - - בזכות שאתם מפעיסים את עצמכם
לפני לפיכך אני אוהב אתכם . . .

> It isn't because you've obeyed more laws than the others (God says to Israel) - but because you humble yourselves before me, therefore I love you.[20]

We were led to believe earlier (see sections A1 and 2) that Israel was to earn God's love by right conduct. Beyond this, Israel is to

exemplify a spirit of self-sacrifice and contrition that will be exemplary to the other children of God, i.e., the nations. The same philosophy is involved in the meaning of Israel's sufferings. Israel is to "bear its reproach without answering back" (נושאין חרפתן ואינן עונים) because it is this kind of exemplary conduct that befits God's most beloved child. In fact Israel is most beloved of God because of God's awareness that Israel, of all his children, could maintain such exemplary conduct. No wonder then that Israel of all nations does not succumb even to the severest of trials, and that his love for God provides him with an inner source of strength. Because the love is so intense that Israel will unflinchingly sacrifice his all for God, the love grows deeper and deeper - it accounts for Israel's closeness to God, just as in another sense Israel's closeness to God is its source of strength. The more Israel draws upon the relationship, the deeper the bond:

> ה"ד: מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את ההאבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה. מים רבים אלו או"הע. . . לכבות את האהבה - זו אהבה שבין ישראל לבין הקב"ה ונהרות לא ישטפוה - אלו מלכי או"הע. . .

> Commenting on the verse: "many waters cannot quench love and rivers cannot drown it out" - the many waters - these are the nations of the world; - to "extinguish love" - this is the love between Israel and God, and "rivers cannot drown it out" - these are the kings of the nation.....21

It may be seen from the foregoing discussion that while God commands absolute obedience, He also elicits unreserved love. The basis for God's demands is His concern for man's growth and for the well-being of Israel and the human community at large. God seems at times to have an implicit, unqualified trust in Israel, a confidence in Israel's inner

worth and integrity. At other times God wants demonstrable proof of Israel's fidelity to the moral code, and is satisfied with nothing short of arbitrary, consistent obedience.

We will see that one reason why God selects out a particular nation, and draws that nation close to Him, and reveals His will through this nation, is because God has limited powers, and needs man - His partner - to complete the Divine plan. God is visualized by the rabbis as placing certain demands upon man, anticipating certain affections from man, because of elements in God's own need-pattern. We cannot say that the rabbis viewed God anthropathically, that is - attributed to Him specific human-like yearnings and inclinations. But many of their own needs, representative human needs, found expression in the images of God which deal with His dependence upon man. God is seen to need an extension of Himself in the practical world of everyday affairs. God desires an intensely close relationship to His partner because of His own nature and need to manifest it, and because of His own limited powers. While each of these two thoughts is treated separately, one is closely related to the other.

II C Why He Demands

1. His Own Limited Powers

Man is necessary to complete the Divine plan. God needs an agent, a son, a gifted child to carry out His ambitions. God needs to have someone like Israel with whom He can share His ideals, someone He can depend on to promote His cause:

כל זמן שישראל קיימין הוא נקרא אלהי ישראל - נעקר ישראל אלהי מי נקרא?

As long as Israel exists, God is called the Lord of Israel. If Israel were to be uprooted - whose God would He be? 22

Heaven and earth, and all the contents of God's creation await the contribution of man - infusing creation with moral endeavor, cooperating with God in fulfilling the potential beauty and harmony of nature and the social order:

> ארץ ושמים - הן הן עיקר בריותו של עולם -
> ומהו גמר מלאכתן? מאורות. ושהתה ג' ימים,
> ונגמרה מלאכתה בששי. ומהו גמר מלאכתה? אדם.
>
> Heaven and earth seem to be the essential elements of Creation. Light was created to be the climax of creation. But it was not enough. God had to wait three more days, the third, fourth and fifth days, and then on the sixth, an was created - and man completes creation. 23

The very spheres are balanced by the fulcrum of man's moral effort:

> מי מעמיד העליונים והתחתונים? הצדקה שעושים בידי.
>
> What sustains the celestrial and the terrestrial spheres? Man's ethical hand work! 24

II C

2. His Own Inherent Nature

It is God's nature to love Israel. This theme has been developed to some extent earlier.[25] The tie of intimacy between God and man is an intrinsic intangible kind of closeness. Israel is רעי, אהובי "my friend, my beloved."[26] Israel is that nation which forms one solidified "chosen treasure of God" (סגולה).[27] As elucidated, God is almost "captive within Israel".[28] His Schecinah or "felt Presence" is evident in Israel's life and history.[29] Liberated when Israel is liberated; enduring Israel's pain along with him as if it were His own.[30] The relationship is

one (שאינו תלויה בדבר) that is grounded in an ineffable immediacy, an indescribable attraction. God simply loves Israel because He loves him - there is no simpler way of saying it. God would be hard pressed to rationally explain what elements in Israel's makeup account for the fascination Israel holds out for God. True, this is a far cry from the kind of Midrashim, in which God says: "Obey Me and I'll love you" (See Chapter I, section A, part 2). But right now we are looking in on the father and his child in a moment of ecstasy, of absorption in one another, and Israel is seen as the pristine, pure devoted child whom God cannot help but love. God in fact begs of the child: Love me, as I love you. "You have taken my Torah, take me too, to your heart."

היתה התורה שלי ונטלתם אותה - קחו אותי עמה!

The Torah was mine, and you took it, take Me along with it. 31

Geddes McGregor, in his book "Aesthetic Experience in Religion" focuses on the kind of mystical union reflected in this and similar images.

> "Here is empathy in the fullest sense: One mind does not merely 'hold' or passively receive the delight of another in it ... but the great joy is in its reciprocity ... The mystic ... simply loves .... He loves God, being loved by God; and by an empathetic activity of the will he truly delights in God..."

Now, I would maintain, that even in the most mystical kind of a Midrashic statement where God says: קחו אותי עמה "Take me along with it" that Israel and God are not totally absorbed into each other to the extent that each loses His individuality. This kind of mystic absorption is not what I believe to be intended or even to be presumed as characteristic of the God-Israel relationship. But there is a certain ecstatic happiness found in the relationship - Israel and God become fascinated with each other and with the opportunities and beauties of the love

that grows up and flourishes between them. There is a certain element of that indescribable delight which is an end in itself and not a subject of which the Mitzvot or ethical deeds, e.g., contract - Covenant relationship is the predicate. God does not love Israel here because of what Israel will do for God - make holiness real upon earth, build the better society, etc. Nor does God love Israel because of Israel's utilitarian value as a partner with God שתפו של הקב"ה במעשה בראשית "in the on-going process of creation." Often the real crux of theGod-Israel relationship is this Civenantal or utilitarian base. Yet the contract Covenant aspect of the relationship is surpassed in Midrashim such as this one with which we are dealing.

Yet as we continue to look in on the relationship between God and Israel, we realize that it does not hinge simply on an ethereal, mystic tie. There is substance to the relationship, boundaries to the tie, it goes deeper than an instance of mutual fascination and absorption. When two lovers are united in the "closed circle" - they are impervious to the world around them. God realizes that Israel is part of the world. God has to guide Israel in this world. He must not only love his child, he must also instruct him, nurture his inner resources, and then publicly hold him up for recognition.

God takes an active role in the relationship, guiding man in the paths of life.[32] The more love: the more guidance and direction.[33] God guides man cautiously and protectively.[34] God whispers in Israel's ear as he is about to enter the contest with the rest of the nations. "Don't fail me now - I've counted on you right along, I know you'll justify my confidence."[35]

It is God's nature to love. Akiba also learned that it is God's

nature to expect the deepest love in return. Moses learned that the reward of this love is a feeling of inner tranquility, of the feeling of peaceful companionship with God. Over and over again we learn that this is an earned companionship. God chooses his friends carefully. Abraham is one of the dear friends of God. Abraham wonders why God has to prove him - Doesn't God realize that Abraham's feeling for him is so intense that he would willingly sacrifice Isaac? God has another purpose in mind. He wants the other children of men to know who has won the earned treasured companionship with Him. Perhaps then other nations or individuals may follow Israel's example or the example of its heroes:

באותה שעה ויקרא מלאך ה' ולמה קרא לו? -
לומר לו ומה אמר לו? אמר לו: אברהם,
אברהם! ולמה ב' פעמים? אלא כאדם כשהוא
ברך רחוקה הולך עם חבירו והניחו והוא קורא
לו: חברי, חברי. . . באותה שעה אמר אברהם
לפני הקב"ה: רבש"ע! אדם סנסה לחבירו שאינו
יודע מה בלבו של חבירו, אבל אתה, שאתה חוקר
לבות וכליות היית צריך לעשות לי כך? לא היה
גלוי לפניך שאתה אומר שאקריב את בני ואני
מזרז לשחטו בלב שלם? א"ל הקב"ה: להודיע
לאומות העולם שלא על חנם בחרתי בך שנאמר
כי עתה ידעתי כי ירא אלהים אתה.

Why did God call to Abraham twice (to withold the attempted sacrifice of Isaac). Well, it's like a friend leading another friend on a distant journey and every so often calling back, twice: My friend, my friend! ...At that moment Abraham said to God: Master of the World! A Person normally tests out his friend if he doesn't know his inner intentions, but you - who prove the innermost feelings of man - did you have to put me through this? Wouldn't you know that no sooner would you ask me to sacrifice my son, that I would immediately sincerely respond to the test? God said to him: I had to let the other peoples know that I knew what I was doing in choosing you.....36

Despite the fact that God has put Israel to tests, and has been selective in His choice of a favorite son, Israel is constantly unsure if He really merits all of this attention and loving concern. He feels sometimes that God is simply great-hearted and lavishes undeserved affection. "God does not see me as I really am" Israel seems to be saying at moments. "There was more than once when I could have antagonized or hurt him so deeply that He might have cast me out once and for all. The only way that I can explain thispeculiar fascination He has for me is that somehow, for all the times I've been disobedient, He just naturally loves me." Israel disputes the contention that God's choice is selective.

Out of His love, God is extraordinarily patient:

ומתוך חיבתן של ישראל הקב"ה כובש כעסו עליהם.

Out of His precious love for Israel, God subdues His anger for them. 37

God makes some kind of a provision in the love-contract, so that even when"the string is run out" Israel may be assured that the tie is not broken.

מלמד שעשה לו הקב"ה כמין מחתרת ברקיע כדי לקבלו בתשובה.

God made a kind of a "breach" in the firmament to receive back the sinful one in repentence. 38

Once more we are reminded of that plaintiff Midrash where God says "My acceptance of my child is unequivocable. You'll get nowhere by telling me of his faults. I'm aware of them - it makes no difference at all - You see, I just happen to love him."[39]

From a detached point of view, certain ambivalences appear in God's approach as viewed by man. On the one hand Israel's mettle is solid - God knows whom he's choosing and testing through suffering:

אמר רבי יוחנן: היוצר הזה כשהוא בודק את הכבשן
שלו אינו בודק את הכלים המרועעים. למה? שאינו מספיק
להקיש עליו אחת עד שהוא שוברו. ומה הוא בודק?
בקנקנים ברורים שאפילו הוא מקיש עליו כמה פעמים
אינו שוברו. כך אין הקב"ה מנסה את הרשעים אלא את
הצדיקים שנאמר ה' צדיק יבחן.

> Rab Yochanan said: When the potter examines the ceramic work, he doesn't test defective vessels. Why? For they crack at the slightest touch. Which does he test: solid jars that can stand a lot of abuse. So God does not test the evil ones but the righteous ones. 40

Yet we have the feeling that Israel would be the natural choice of God regardless of his endurance power, or consistent moral stamina. We are led to believe that the choice is an emotional subjective choice when we analyze those Midrashim where Israel is seen to be precious and innately lovable. We must conclude that God is seen to experience both emotions. God loves the conforming child - loves him perhaps for who he is - yet all the more intensely for what he does. Israel stands by God - he makes God's purposes all the more evident; he validates or authenticates God's choice. God may have "gone out on a limb" in choosing Israel to be his child. No matter - Had he been most scrutinizing in his choice of candidates - God couldn't have done any better.

"Why do I act so lovingly to this child whom I have chosen? When it comes to Israel does it make so little real difference how he behaves - whereas for the other children of the human family - another standard of judgment applies?" We come back to where we started. To ask me why I act mercifully, God says is like asking a gifted composer why he creates stirring works of music. I am a peaceful God - it's simply My nature. 41

The only answer is a tautology: "I am what I am!" When I choose to act mercifully, it's bedause I'm naturally merciful.[42] When you experience Me as peace-loving, you've recognized My true nature.[43]

In all of the various descriptions of God's demands, the rabbis provide us with apt descriptions of what causes people to turn to God. God is seen by the rabbis as demanding unquestioning obedience, and yet unreserved love. We contend that this outlook stems from man's essential need to look to God both for a father's discipline and a mother's unreserved love. Support for this contention is taken in part from Erich Fromm's: The Art of Loving.[44] Fromm speaks of the two dimensions of conscience: the authoritarian and the humanistic. His analysis of these two dimensions relates to our analysis of the two basic motivations underlying many rabbinic images of God: the need to obey (or its obverse: the need to exert authority) and the need to give and receive love.

3. The Authoritarian and Humanistic Conscience

Basic to Fromm's analysis is a distinction between two kinds of love: mother-love and father-love. We feel two influences in our conscience, Fromm maintains, the influence or recollection of our mother's outgoing love, and the influence of our father's restraining authority. When Fromm speaks of the authoritarian conscience, he has in mind our need for a father's discipline. When he speaks of the humanistic conscience, he draws upon our need for a mother's unconditioned love. Fromm would say that we continue to feel these needs through life, and they affect our images of God. We tend to count on our mother's unstinting love, and to hope that God's love will be similarly unreserved. On the other hand we also have the memory (reawakened via the authoritarian conscience)

of our father's threat of retracting his love should we be disobedient. We then also come to count upon God to limit us.

We may find overtones in the Midrash of both the authoritarian and the humanistic conscience. God is the "calm, pleasant, voice of peace," and yet also at times the unyielding voice of authority. For Fromm this distinction has a two-fold importance: it tells us something basic about human needs, and it helps us understand the history of religions: specifically the "matriarchal" and "patriarchal" elements of religion. To Fromm's way of thinking the "character of the love of God depends upon the respective weight of the matriarchal and patriarchal elements of religion."[45] The historical discussion in Fromm's writings is besides the point: he is saying that because we have expectations for both conditioned and unconditioned love from our parents, we also have both expectations when we turn to God:

> We can now return to an important parallel between the love for one's parents, and the love for God. The child starts out by being attached to his mother as the "ground of all being." He feels helpless and needs the all-enveloping love of the mother. He then turns to the father as the new center of his affections, father being a

> guiding principle for thought and action; in this stage he is motivated by the need to acquire father's praise, and to avoid his displeasure...in the stage of full maturity....he has established the motherly and fatherly principles in himself (underlining mine)....In the history of the human race we see the same development.... to a mature stage....where man has incorporated the principles of love and justice into himself, where he has become one with God.....[46]

Fromm of course believes that once this happens, God ceases to be an outside force and is only a felt presence in man's conscience. In the Midrashic images, God is yet beyond man, but man experiences him through the authoritarian and humanistic dictates of his conscience.

Summary:

In conclusion, several strands developed in this chapter might now be brought together before proceeding further in our discussion. In the opening pages of this chapter, we discussed the prophetic background of the rabbinic view of God. There it was shown that the prophets provided the rabbis with the nucleus of a two-fold idea of how God might be pictured. He was either authoritarian or lovingly persuasive in His approach to man. We have seen that there are several dimensions or criteria to God's demands which form rabbinic elaborations on the basic prophetic view. For example, gratitude and unswerving trust enter into both the demand for unreserved affection and the demand for self-denial.

The essential viewpoint one reaches that the God whom the rabbis pictured has far reaching powers over man. Yet these powers are limited, just as the authority of the parents over the child is limited, first by God's own needs, and by the disarming approach of man's appeal to his own weakness.[47] There are certain basic human needs which appear in symbolic form in the Midrash. Among these are the needs for a father's discipline

and a mother's unreserved affection. The need for authority and the need for love are constantly at work in the unconscious mind of the rabbinic authors. This last thought will be more extensively developed in Chapter IV: "The Psychological Significance of the Images."

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

1. Jeremiah 31:20.

2. Isaiah 42:1.

3. Jeremiah 31:3.

4. Tanhuma Tazriah, section 11.

> Note: The rabbis felt that the use of the name Yahweh in the Bible indicated the merciful God, and that Elohim implied God in His attribute of justice. Philo used the term theos (God in an unspecified sense - corresponding to Elohim) to indicate the good God, and kyrios or Lord - to refer to the named God - Yahweh - who exercises justice. The later Tannaim, addressing themselves to Gnostic challenges that the named God is in fact a lower deity of uncompromising justice, and that the higher God is the unnamed God who is merciful, reversed the terminology Philo had coined. In order to avoid the possibility of giving support to a Gnostic dualism, the rabbis (to wit - this Midrash in Tanhuma Tazriah) said that Yahweh, the named God, in fact refers to the unique, singular God who exercises compassion and restrains His attribute of justice.

By way of overall background see the following:

a. Genesis Rabbah, ch. 33.
b. Bialik and Ravnitski - Sefer Ha Aggadah, Sec. IV, part 10, "The Holy One Blessed Be He, and Between Man and God," pp. 383ff.
c. George Foote Moore, Judaism, Vol. 1, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927, "The Idea of God", pp. 357-442, particularly pg. 364.
d. A. Marmorstein: The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 1927, Sec. B: "The Attributes of God," parts 6 and 7, pp. 181-208.
e. Also see his Studies in Jewish Theology, Oxford University Press, 1950, "The Background of the Hagaddah," pp. 1-71.

5. Konowitz, Ch. 49, p. 183, Midrash 9.
   Midrash to Psalms, Song 18, Sec. 29.

6. Ibid., Ch. 47, p. 173, Midrash 3.
   Deuteronomy Rabbah, Ch. 1, sec. 17.

7. Ibid., Ch. 47, p. 177, Midrash 26.
   Tanhuma VaYaqhe 1, sec. 2, and in Exodus Rabbah, Va Yaqhel.

8. Ibid., Ch. 61, Sec. 4, p. 232, Midrash 87.
   Numbers Rabbah, ch. 9, sec. 7. See Avoth d'Rabbi Nathan, ch. 38, and the Siphre, ch. "Tetszeh", par. 1, p. 254 and 258.

9. Ibid., Ch. 46, p. 166, Midrash 6.
Tanhuma Yisro, sec. 9; also Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 9, sec. 9.

10. Genesis Rabbah 8:5; also b. Shabbat, p. 88.
God debates with the works of Creation, in this Shabbat passage, "If Israel accepts the Torah, you will be fulfilled, and if not, the world will revert to chaos."

11. Dispute of Akiba and Ben Azzai over the greatest single commandment in the Torah.
Siphra on Leviticus, 19A.

12. Konowitz, Ch. 31, p. 122, Midrash 1.
Tanhuma VaYerah, sec. 9, and Mishnah Berachot 8B, also Tosefta Berachot, ch. 3.

13. Ibid., Ch. 44, p. 164, Midrash 8.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 33, sec. 5.

14. Ibid., Ch. 35, p. 137, Midrash 8.
Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 10, sec. 2, and in Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 33, sec. 3; see also Konowitz, Ch. 31, p. 124, Midrash 14. (Deuteronomy Rabbah, ch. 2, section 1.)
"For behold Moses, the principle prophet approached God only in the spirit of lovingkindness."

15. Ibid., Ch. 47, p. 173, Midrash 2.
Midrash 2, Shochar Tov, Song 101, p. 1, Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, ch. 9, Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 24, par. 2.

16. Ibid., Ch. 47, p. 175, Midrash 13.
Yelamdenu Midrash, to Movah and Tanhuma Yisro, sec. 16.

17. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 144, Midrash 16.
Sanhedrin 53A.

18. Ibid., Ch. 65, p. 255, Midrash 7.
Babylonian Talmud, Menachot 29B.

19. Slonimsky, Harry. "The Philosophy Implicit in the Midrash," HUCA, Vol. 28, 1956. See sec. 2, p. 239.

20. Konowitz, Ch. 50, p. 186, Midrash 3.
Tanhuma Ch. Ekev, sub-heading 4.

21. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 222, Midrash 38.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 5, sub-heading 4. Exodus Rabbah, ch. 49.

22. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 221, Midrash 36.
Shochar Tov, Song 83, sub-heading 2. See also Midrashim 79 and 80 on p. 231 (sec. 3 of ch. 61).

23. Ibid., Ch. 17, p. 69, Midrash 69.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 12, sec. 4 and 5. Also Jerusalem Talmud Hagigah, ch. 2. See also Ch. 46, p. 166, Midrash 8. Genesis Rabbah, ch. 12, sub-heading 8; and Deuter. Rabbah, ch. 5, sec. 12.

24. Ibid., Ch. 43, p. 161, Midrash 18.
Leviticus Rabbah, Ch. 26, sec. 8.

25. See p. 10 above, also pp. 26 and 27, Sections H and G: Images of God as Shephard, Lover.

26. Konowitz, Ch. 61, sec. 2, p. 225, Midrash 52.
Tanhuma Bo, sec. 7, and in Pesiktha HaHodesh Rabbati, ch. 15).
Also see the entire first section of Ch. 61 in Konowitz, p. 216 ff.
Many of the Midrashim which have been discussed in chapter 1, section A (analysis of images) - may be reviewed in this connection - and the reader's attention is drawn to them. These Midrashim may again be referred to in connection with Chapter III, Section A: "Man's Relationship to God - What He Seeks."

27. Ibid., Ch. 51, p. 192, Midrash 19.
(Exodus Rabbah - ch. 17, sec. 2 and 3; also see Konowitz, ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 216 ff.

28. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 219, Midrash 18.
Tanhuma TeTzaveh, sec. 2.

29. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 218, Midrash 11.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 5, sec. 7; also see Numbers Rabbah, ch. 19.

30. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 5, p. 235, Midrash 103.
Tanhuma Ahere Mos, sec. 18, also see Numbers Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 2.

31. Ibid., Ch. 41, p. 156, Midrash 2.
Tanhuma Terumah, sec. 2. For other related Midrashim see p. 51 (I answer before they call); p. 56 (I give my love freely to them); p. 59 (I come near to whoever seeks intimacy with me); also see McGregor, Geddes Aesthetic Experience in Religion, McMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1947. pp. 150, 186, 194.

32. Konowitz, Ch. 41, p. 157, Midrash 4.
Babylonian Talmud Menachot, 89B.

33. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 216, Midrash 2.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 30, sec. 6.

34. Ibid., Ch. 39, p. 153, Midrash 10.
Tanhuma Va Yerah, sec. 18, Genesis Rabbah, ch. 51, sec. 3.

35. Ibid., Ch. 74, p. 275, Midrash 4.
Babylonian Talmud Sotah, p. 21B.

36. Ibid., Ch. 64, p. 252, Midrash 5.
Tanhuma VaYerah, sec. 46, and Genesis Rabbah, ch. 55, sec. 1.

37. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 223, Midrash 45.
Babylonian Talmud Avodah Zarah, p. 5A. See also ch. 32, Midrash 6, Konowitz, p. 130.

38. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 148, Midrash 40.
Sanhedrin 103A.

39. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 223, Midrash 46.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 7, sec. 3. Siphre chapter on Be Ha-alotchah, par. 81. Jerusalem Talmud-Peah, ch. 8.

40. Ibid., Ch. 64, p. 253, Midrash 8.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 55, sec. 2.

41. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 128, Midrash 25.
Occurs in Midrash Abba Gorion, ch. 1 and Esther Rabbah, ch. 3, sec. 9.

42. Ibid., Ch. 36, p. 141, Midrash 2.
Deuteronomy Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 12, Midrash to Psalms, Song 4 and Song 65, sec. 4.

43. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 129, Midrash 40.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 72, par. 1.

44. Fromm, Erich, The Art of Loving, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1956.

45. Ibid., Sec. II, "The Theory of Love," Part e, p. 62 ff.

46. Ibid., p. 81.

47. There are certain overtones of a tendency on Israel's part, as reflected in the Midrashic images, to manipulate God by the use of a mechanism which Karen Horney in her book Neurosis and Human Growth (W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1950) calls the "self-effacing solution". See ch. 9, p. 214 ff. Of course what Horney has in mind are the neurotic or pathological distortions of a normal human tendency we see reflected in the Midrash.

CHAPTER III - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Part II

Having offered these remarks and observations, we will now discuss the methods whereby God wins His desired responses from man. It is now appropriate to go into God's sanctions and appeals, understanding that God draws upon man's needs for love and tendencies towards fear; that God evokes lovingly as a mother who loves her child regardless of his faults; that He commands authoritatively as a father who offers only a provisional love, threatening the child with punishment and rejection. We might first recall the observation offered some pages before: "In the end analysis, God is not either a Stern Judge or a Loving Father. It would be more nearly correct to say that, to the rabbis, God is a loving, though exacting Father."

A. How He Demands

1. Sanctions

a. offer of love and threat of withdrawal:

God's love is in one sense a qualified kind of love:

> When you live up to the designation of sons - you will be called sons; when you no longer act like sons, you will not be called sons. [1]

The lofty vantage point that Israel holds in God's favor is not automatically secured;it has to be maintained by a constant practice of behavior commensurate with the honor bestowed upon Israel. This knowledge that he may lose God's favor, fear of the withdrawal of God's support serves to motivate man to appropriate behavior: i.e., the faithful practice of the Mitzvot - God's ethical ordinances. In this instance, and in others like it, man or Israel obeys out of fear. God's voice is

experienced through the authoritarian conscience with its unequivocable demands: "Obey me, or else!" Man obeys because he dreads the loss of God's protective love. The need for God's love may be traced to the childhood dependency on the parent who is the source of warmth and love and whose praise engenders self-esteem. The loss of God's favor would be like the loss of the love object of one's childhood, a loss whose penalty is too great for man to afford the risks.*

---

* It is important to say here that we are not too comfortable with images of these types. We have a half conscious bias toward viewing the God of Judaism as a God of pure lovingkindness and compassion. We somehow feel that if we admit that there are rabbinic statements which portray God as an authoritarian judge that we will have no rebuttal to the 19th century invidious contrast with the Christian doctrine of a God of pure love. We have to be aware of our feelings on this level and let the Midrash speak for itself. As I have stressed, it contains ample references to both views - that of a God of justice and a God of love.

And it is similarly true, as I have stated, that no one view "wins out" - that both exist side by side, and at times interpenetrate to form one comprehensive view of a loving and demanding God, with variations accented in one Midrash or another. But it would be dishonest to obscure "vengeful" or "authoritarian" images that plainly exist, that is, to pretend that God could not be conceived of an exercising uncompromising retributive justice, if in fact He is at times so pictured. We must let the evidence speak for itself, confident that the intelligent reader will not be inclinced toward a narrow view of rabbinic thinking when he confronts images of one specific nature or another, but will be able to see the woods beyond the trees.

b. rewards for ethical conduct, repentance

Man obeys then, because the penalty for disobedience is too severe. He also obeys because the reward is great. Intensive as is the alienation that man incurs by disobedience, equally intensive is the joy of approval which is the reward of conformity to the ethical law:

אמר הקב"ה: פשטו ידיכם במצות ובטחו בי שאני משלם לכם שכר!

Lay hold of the commandments, and trust in Me, and I'll give you your reward! 2

God is anxious for man to both achieve the reward and avoid the penalty. God then makes it possible for man to regain His approval subsequent to encountering His anger. The "gates of repentance" are always open.[3]

ללמדך שכל העושה תשובה מעבירה שבידו הקב"ה מוסיף לו כבוד, וקורא לו שם חביב.

In order to teach you that whosoever repents from his transgression, God grants him additional honor, and calls him by a name of endearment.[4]

The greatest reward of all is the reward of God's sustaining influence, His own support in guiding man's footsteps and enabling Him to reach the proper moral destination. God accepts each person at his own level, and instructs man according to the stage of spiritual growth each particular individual has attained. Good deeds are rewarded by God in even a greater measure than the knowledge of Torah - in keeping with the idea that Torah ought lead to מעשים טובים - "good works".[5] The reward of one good deed is the capacity to do another: שכר מצוה מצוה. What seems most essential however is the desire to do good. God will provide man with the necessary skills to do good deeds. Man simply has to

be willing to take the initiative. These thoughts are eloquently expressed in a Midrash on Exodus 33:19: "I will be gracious unto whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy unto whom I will show mercy."

באותה שעה הראה לו הקב"ה למשה כל האוצרות של מתן שכר שהם מתוקנים לצדיקים. עד שראה אוצר אחד גדול א"ל זה של מי הוא? א"ל מי שיש לו אני נותן לו משלו, ומי שאין לו אני עושה עליו חנם.

> At that moment He showed Moses all the treasures that are the reward of each and every one of the righteous for their deeds. Moses asked: "Whose treasure is this?" He answered: "The masters of the Torah." - And whose treasure is this? "Those who honor them." Then He showed Moses a treasure greater than all the rest. Moses said: "Master of the Universe: whose is this great treasure?" He said to him: "He who has good deeds, I will give him his reward from his own treasure: and he who has none of his own, freely I give him from this." 6

God rewards man in other ways, too. Once an individual tries to act compassionately, God helps him Man finds in these situations that the love and kindness which he extends have an additional dimension and added strength:

שכל המרחם על הבריות מרחמין עליו מן השמים, וכל שאינו מרחם על הבריות אין מרחמים עליו מן השמים.

> For whoever acts compassionately towards his fellow man, receives God's compassion. 7

c. stern demand, appeal to authoritarian conscience

Just as God may say at moments "Love Me, take Me to your heart" or "Obey Me and I'll love you," He may also arbitrarily order: "Do as I've told you!"

הרפו ממעשיכם הרעים ודעו כי אנכי אלהים.

> Turn away from your evil deeds and repent instantaneously, and know that I am the Lord your God! 8

This thought is carried further:

מנקה הוא לשבים ואינו מנקה לשאינם שבים.

God vindicates those who repent, and does not do so to those who do not repent. 9

God consistently applies a method and standard of judgment. The child, Israel, cannot manipulate God. God uses man's fear of His authority as a method of exacting obedience.

2. Loving Appeal (offer of love contract)

I would like to proceed to give fuller treatment to some innuendoes and themes introduced earlier. The thought of God loving man despite all His faults, finding Israel essentially precious for all his shortcomings, has been introduced before. This expression of unreserved love takes several forms:

a. an offer of unconditioned love, unreserved acceptance of man with all his faults
b. loving evocation or "togetherness"
c. God's willingness to suffer with man
d. God's efforts in sustaining man's efforts.

In these Midrashim we are about to discuss, God is felt as the voice of loving appeal. The humanistic conscience, to use a distinction suggested by Erich Fromm (see above pages 57 f.) takes precedence over the authoritarian conscience. Here God is presented as a God of loving-kindness, deeply and intimately involved and concerned with His child. God's love is more like the love of the mother, who is impervious to the child's limitations, and loves him unconditionally. Whereas the authoritarian conscience expresses itself more in terms of "Obey me, or else," the humanistic conscience or the manner of the loving appeal relied more on the feeling: "I cannot help but love you - express your lovableness through cooperation." God invites rather than orders, stimulates in a

friendly way more than he coerces in an arbitrary way. The God pictured in authoritarian images compels and exerts pressure toward conformity through an insistent demand, threat of punishment, primarily in the form of emotional separation and rejection. The God portrayed in these next images awakens motivations toward correct or desirable behavior through a gentle outpouring of love.

a. offer of unconditional love, unreserved acceptance of man with all his faults

Recall again the images of God as a shephard, as Israel as the flock whom he loves and cares for.[10] God's people are the "upright" or "perfect ones", his עם סגולה chosen treasure, a people fortunate to be endeared to him.[11] God is impatient with those who suggest that He glosses over their faults because of a bias to view them favorably.[12] God admits that He is both "accuser" and "defender"[13] that he sees the total individual who comes before him, and does not judge him simply on the basis of his surface behavior. God loves to vindicate His people, to prove that His assumption of their preciousness is correct. For this reason when man comes before God - God moves from the "throne of judgment" to the throne of mercy"

> למען לצדק בריתיו ולא לחייב. וכן אתה מוצא באדם הראשון כשבראו הקדים לו מדת הרחמים למדת הדין - שאינו חפץ לחיים בריה.

> In order to vindicate his creatures and not to make them appear culpable....In the case of Adam God motivated him through His attribute of mercy...withholding His retributive nature in order to run less a risk of finding Adam guilty. [14]

No matter how the scales balance, God tips the scales in favor of man in the judgment situation. God is naturally inclined to view man

favorably, and distorts the outward appearance of man's guilt through His own earnest tendency to forgive, love and draw man closer:

כף מאזנים מעונין הוא, כאן עונות, כאן זכויות
מה הקב"ה עושה? חוטף שטר חיב אחד מן העונות
ומיד הכף מכריעות.

If the scales of balance happen to be evenly equated and the sins of a man stand in direct ratio to his merits, what does God do -snatches one of the sins off the scale and the balance is restored. 15

God insists that the love he expresses is a free, spontaneous, immediate kind of love:

ובשעה שעמד משה ואמר לפני הקב"ה הראני נא את
כבודך א"ל רבונו של עולם! הראיני נא באיזה
מדה אתה מנהיג עולמך? א"ל הקב"ה אינני חייב
לבריה כלום, אלא חנם אני נותן להם.

When Moses stood before God and asked Him: Show me with what attribute it is that You conduct your world....God said to him - I do not hold man guilty, but I give (my love) freely to them. 16

אדם עומד ומחרף ועושה גדושין של עבירות ואמר
הקב"ה יעשה תשובה וראוי לו כאלו לא חטא.

Man stands and acts shamefully and does a sequence of transgressions, and God simply says "let him repent, and it will appear as if he never sinned." 17

In His unreserved, unconditional love for Israel, he may provoke God continuously, and in an indulgent way God will not hold anything against him. We will see in the next chapter that man's awareness of God's need of him gives man a kind of tool to use in manipulating God.

Attempt to persuade God if you would, that He is acting indulgently, or that His love is unqualified and indiscriminate. God seems half aware that He would be justified in rejecting man, yet will not:

ר' אליעזר דרש את הפסוק נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו. אמר הקב"ה לתורה נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו. אמרה לפניו: רבון כל העולמים! אדם זה למה לך לעשותו? - קצר ימים ושבע רוגז ויבוא לידי עון, ואם אין אתה מאריך אפך עמו ראוי לו כאלו לא בא לעולם. אמר לה: לא על חנם נקראתי רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד . . .

R. Eliezar expounded on the statement: Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness....God said (this) to the Torah...The Torah said to God...Master of the Universe: Why do you want to do this? This man will be finite, impatient, prone to sin; and unless you love him unconditionally, he might as well not have been born. God said to the Torah: Why do you think I've been called a gracious and merciful God? 18

b. loving evocation, tenderness

No Midrash more beautifully expresses this capacity of God - this form of loving evocation and tender appeal than the statement:

עד שלא יקראני עניתי!

Before he even calls me (God says) I am there to respond![19]

God speaks to man in the language that he can understand,[20] uses the gentle language of appeal,[21] bands his people together in an אגודה אחת a comraderie of those who seek peace.[22] God and man share the great interest of the promotion of peace in the world, and this intensifies the relationship:

כל צדקה וחסד שישראל עושים בעולם הזה, שלום ומרקליסין גדולים בין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים.

All of the righteousness and lovingkindness that Israel does in the world contributes to peace...and this peace paves the way for the relationship of man and God. 23

God respects man deeply - this goes without saying.[24] This is almost a protective respect, and extends especially to the unfortunate and lonely.[25] Those who have none to comfort them may anticipate an abundant

share of God's tender mercifulness. God will be their comforter.[26]

When God thinks about man, it is to reflect on the good that man has done, his transgressions fade into the background. Man is transformed in God's eyes, under the influence of His tender affection, into a wholly worthwhile object of love. For God to reject man would be to reject a phase of Himself:

... שהקב"ה עושה אותם לו זכות והוא חי בהם.

For He transforms them into a lovable worthy group, and lives among them. [27]

Israel becomes more than a son - he becomes a friend, a faithful co-worker who is brought into a relationship where the respect and comraderie is so pervasive that the relationship is more than a father-son relationship - it is even a colleague relationship:

אל תיקרי בניך אלא בוניך.

Call them not sons, but builders. [28]

Press God for a rationale for all of this intimate affection - He may illustrate by referring to man's humility.[29] Yet any tangible rationale is subordinate and extraneous. God loves man tenderly, the love nourishes itself and seen from the perspective of these images is self-sufficient.

As an expression of tender love, God has given Israel the Torah as a "healing balm."[30] God, in His tenderness, greets the returning wayward son. God comes close to man, so close that man may experience God as an intimate element within himself, serving as an uplifting and healing influence:

אמר הקב"ה: אני ידי פשוטות לבעל תשובה, איני מחזיר בריה מי שנתן לי לבו בתשובה. לכך נאמר שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב. וכל מי שיבא אצלי אני בא אצלו ומרפא אותו.

> God said: My hands are ever extended....I restore people... in this context I have said: Peace, peace to those near and afar off. Whoever seeks intimacy with me I come near to him and heal him. 31

c. God humbles Himself, suffers with man:

As the outlines of God's intimacy with man become clearer, one more phase of God's character, as seen by the rabbis come into view. God humbles Himself. When one tries to characterize God he must of necessity refer to His attribute of humble involvement with man:[32] "God as it were, modifies his stature, to elevate man's worth by comparison."[33]

God is not too great nor too far removed to experience man's suffering along with him: Quite to the contrary, He participates with man in his suffering, as a father would live through his son's anguish along with him.

God's visible presence the Schecinah becomes detached as it were from God, so that man may feel that tangible, in an actual way he has a companion in history to share his ideals, joys, and disillusionments:

> בוא וראה כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב"ה שבכל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהם . . .
>
> Wherever the people was exiled, the Schecinah, so to speak was exiled with them. 34

God feels Israel's pain as a phase of the experience of intimacy:

> אמר עזר הקב"ה למשה: אי אתה מרגיש שאני שרוי בצער כשם שישראל שרוים בצער?! - הוי יודע ממקום שאני מדבר עמך, מתוך הקוצים, כביכול אני שתוף בצרן.

> God said to Moses: Certainly you must perceive that I share Israel's suffering; recognize by My act of speaking to you through the lowly thornbush, that I am not too proud to accompany Israel into the depths of despair. 35

"Their pain is my pain." Wherever Israel encounters calamity, God is distraught:

> אמר הקב"ה בשעה שמגעת צרה לישראל והם מבקשין אותי יהיו משתתפין כבודי עמהם. ומה טעם? עמו אנכי בצרה.

> God said: When calamity befalls Israel, and they seek Me - My honor safeguards them: Why: Because I am with them in their sorrow! 36

How could God help but feel this pain as His own? How could it be otherwise. After all, this is the father we're speaking of. God awaited Israel's arrival into the world, helped bring Israel into the world as a consecrated people. There is no intimacy that could be deeper or more thorough.

> יונתי תמתי שנתחסמו עמו בסיני ואמרו: כל אשר דבר ה' - נעשה ונשמע - - - בכל צרתם לי צר.

> This precious child that I warmly brought into the world at Sinai: when they said...We will hearken and we will obey...all of their sadness is his. 37

The pathos and stirring beauty of these images is scarcely to be matched - for their grandeur and sublime thought. God and Israel are partners in more than one sense - they are not bound simply in a contract based on law and the Covenant. They are not united simply in their common interest in implementing that legal Covenant. Israel and God are partners in a cosmic drama of sorrow - they have the principle roles in the noblest of tragedies. God goes into exile with His people - the Schecinah is in Galut and suffers with Israel. In a self-imposed experience of anguish - God mitigates the sorrow of His people by sharing

their anguish. He becomes an intimately compassionate God. Their pain is His - and in that way their pain is lessened somewhat. Hardly could it be seen more clearly - that the God of justice and the God of love are one. Through love - God's love for His people - the justice of their suffering becomes apparent. Suddenly there is justice, meaning sense to it all - God suffers too. The suffering of Israel is not simply a punishment arbitrarily meted out by an authoritarian God. Neither is it the result of the unbridled dominance of evil given license by an indifferent and detached deity. There is purpose to Israel's grief. It is all part of the cosmic drama of suffering - a stage along the way to the great moment of glory in which Israel and God will be reunited in joy; when men will cooperate in harmony and trust, and evil will be no more. Israel's suffering is both modified and ennobled as God suffers along with His people. His suffering is no loss to His dignity, neither then need Israel feel a loss of dignity in its suffering. Rather there is profound dignity in the way in which Israel meets the test, and humbly accepts God's "chastisements of love." (see below p. 88, f.).

d. God sustains man's efforts to do the good

A father helps his child along in life, tries to provide him materially and emotionally with the resources for growth and achievement. The kind father tries to provide the best possible home life - to introduce the child to new and broadening experiences ... to nurture his talents. In a similar way, God guides man's growth; When man is bewildered or uncertain, God helps him out of his confusion. When a problem becomes too deep for man to solve, God helps him with it:

הבו עלי כל מה דאתון בעי, ואנא טעין.

> Bring to me whatever is on your mind, I'll help you carry the burden. 38

God turns man onto the path of life.[39] He paves the way, provides a sense of direction,[40] points out to his child that he is uniquely endowed and must cultivate his inner capacities. Theologically, Israel is holy. Psychologically, Israel is the gifted child. God fosters the unfolding of this destiny. When man fulfills his endowments, God himself is fulfilled.[41] When man takes the first step, God leads him on, sustains the awakened interest, unleashes the deeper dimensions of man's capabilities.[42] What endowments man has, God enriches. What man is lacking, God provides.[43]

When the child embarks on a path that may lead to frustration and disillusionment, God keeps his faith that man will yet justify His hopes. When man thinks good thoughts and does noble deeds, God recognizes that his true character is shining through, and encourages man, builds onto his finer motivations, bids him make the most of his life:

מחשבה טובה הקב"ה מצרפה למעשה. אפילו חשב אדם לעשות מצוה ונאנס ולא עשאה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו עשאה. . .

> A good thought God links to action (God brings out the good in man). No sooner does man contemplate doing a good deed than God attributes it to him as an accomplished fact....God helps man let less noble thoughts go by the way....God arouses and stimulates man's finer thoughts. 44

Truthfully, God lights the way.[45]

Much of what I have been describing in this section may be summarized by referring to some remarks offered by Dr. Leo Baeck in his essay, "Mystery and Commandment."

> When man wants to be certain of his existence, when he therefore listens intently for the meaning of his life and life in general, and when he thus feels the presence of something lasting, of some reality beneath the surface, then he experiences the mystery: he becomes conscious that he was created, brought into being, conscious of an undetectable, and at the same time protective power. He experiences that which embraces him and all else....
>
> And when man looks beyond the present day, when he wishes to give his life direction and lead it toward a goal, when he thus grasps that which defines his life, and is clear about it, then he is always confronted with the commandment, the task - that which he is to realize... The one is from God..the other to be achieved by man. 46

God is sometimes revealed to man as a protective power, the voice of the comforting mother, offering unconditional love, protective security, unreserved warmth. Man may be passive as he basks in the warmth of this affection, satisfied with himself even as God is satisfied with him. God is undemanding and man expects little from himself and sees little real challenge in life.

Yet there are other moments when man feels restless and dissatisfied with himself, when he feels God compelling and propelling him onward to make more of his life and wrestle with his potentialities. Then man becomes active. God is the demanding, exacting, even punishing father. God loves, but this love must be earned. The way in which man earns the love is through obedient and sustained conformity to the moral law - the way that leads to the perfection of society. When man looks beyond himself, God is the commanding authority. It is only when man rests content with himself that God is only a loving and comforting presence.

B. How Man Interprets, Responds to the Actions of God

Having discussed the various images of God that we discern upon an analysis of the rabbinic texts relevant to our subject, our next task was to ask the question: What is the basis, the method, and the rationale underlying God's relationship to man? In other words, how does the Authoritarian Judge or the Benevolent Father, whichever the case may be, approach His relationship to man? What did the rabbis feel God demanded, Why did God demand these particular responses (unquestioned obedience, unreserved affection, etc.) and how did He go about achieving these responses (offer of either conditioned or unconditioned love, etc.) The next question to be asked is How does man respond to or interpret God's actions and demands? What feelings and human responses are aroused in Israel and Israel receives overtures of warmth or threats of rejection?

In our discussion so far we have seen that God's approach to Israel incorporates the many different emotions and desires characteristic of a parent's relationship to a child. At times God's love is more like the conditioned love of the father, at other times more like the unconditioned unreserved love of the mother. At times God loves Israel with an overpowering love, loves Israel for all his faults, at other times God loves only that ideal Israel perfected into the obedient and dutiful child.

We have elaborated some of the psychological aspects of the father's love and the mother's love, which impinge on the authoritarian and humanistic images of God, that is God, exemplifying Midat HaDin and God exemplifying Midat Ha Rachamim. The task at hand now is to reverse the coin of the God-Israel relationship, and to see that again, through Israel's

response to God, reflected in the literature, we may see all of the attitudes and emotions a child might normally feel toward his parents. These images are like a prism, refracting the various lights and shadows of Israel's hopes and fears. Israel is faced with God's authority. This authority is overwhelming. God has many powers, and may use them harshly to discipline His child. This induces fear, and Israel may express this fear in several ways. God's authoritative demonstrations impress Israel with a feeling of unworthiness, of utter dependence upon God and helplessness. Beyond this Israel may feel that God needs to subordinate him, to reinforce this impression of dependence. Israel may at times take the blame for God's anger inward upon himself, insisting that he is inherently guilty and deserving of God's wrath. Or Israel may become philosophical and reason that the "punishment" which he seems to be receiving is not really punishment, but simply a kind of ethical purification for tasks that lie ahead. Israel also responds in diverse ways to demonstrations of God's love, and these responses will be developed in part 2 of this section.

1. God's authority

a. helplessness, dependence, unworthiness

In the Bible, in Ezekiel, we have a concept of "For the sake of Thy Name."[47] God must protect and enhance His own glory, and therefore redeem Israel, whether Israel be worthy of God's redemption or not. Moses, in the following Midrash, plays upon God's need to protect His own stature and reputation, and uses this persuasion as a kind of last resort when it is clear that Israel has not gained God's saving help in his own right. This particular Midrash is an admission of guilt, a petition for God to

be forgiving though logically He ought not be forgiving. Israel, through Moses, tries to manipulate God by appealing to His own sense of honor.

אמר משה: רבש"ע הט לבריית אבותם שנשבעת להם שתעמיד
מהם מלכים נביאים וכהנים. עשה בשבילך ויגצח מדת
הרחמים למדת הדין.

> Moses said: Master of the World: Recall the Covenant to the Fathers, that you swore to them, that you would cause kings, prophets and priests to rise from their midst...Do this for your own sake, and allow the attribute of mercy to overrule the attribute of justice...." 48

God is not immediately ready to forgive man, Israel has to show God how very afraid of God he is, to argue his unworthiness, to plead guilty, and to rely upon God's mercy.[49] Zion pleads before God: "Why must you be so conscious of my faults, and hold me to my commitment pledged at Sinai, concerning Yourself so deeply with any liberties I might take with my share of this agreement?"[50] To which God answers: "I may at times forgive, but I do not forget." Israel becomes all the more conscious of God's deliberateness, firmness in exacting obedience from His child.

Adam's great weakness was not simply that he sinned, but that he didn't realize how dependent he was on God's mercy and how important it was for him to acknowledge this dependence and ask forgiveness. Adam, who suffers for this pride happens to run into Cain, who has just completed his trial before God. Adam asks him: "Well, what happened?" and Cain happily says: "I repented, and I was acquitted." Adam admits: "Indeed, I had no idea repentance was so important!" [51]

b. man endeavors to control God

One way in which man may cope with his feelings of unworthiness and dependence is by trying to control God. A vivid example is recorded of Honi Ha Maagel - Honi the Circle Maker, who would draw a circle about him in the ground, and refuse to budge, until God would relent and allow rain to fall. In the Bible, Moses' eloquent cry: מחני נא מספרך "Blot me out then from your book" (Ex. 32:32) - represents an effort to manipulate God to change His position. Other figures in Jewish history and legend appear to express a similar " חצפה כלפי שמים " or arrogance toward God: from Abraham challenging God "Shall not the judge of all the world do justice?" to the plaintif Kaddish of the Berditchever Rebbi. Moses, in a particularly imaginative Midrash, reminds God that He promised to be more gracious and compassionate. In this Midrash in Deuteronomy Rabbah (commenting on Exodus 33:19 Moses endeavors to "catch God up" or to force His hand.[52] In reaction to feelings of unworthiness and dependence, man attempts to extricate himself from the web of punishment and to free himself from the anticipated demonstration of God's disciplinary powers.

c. inherent, unresolvable guilt

This particular response to God's authority, however (attempting to control God) is yet only one more way in which man copes with God's authority. Another way in which man copes with his feelings of unworthiness and dependence is by resorting to a feeling of complete unworthiness, by protestations of his inadequacies.

אמר רבי יוחנן מכאן אתה למד שאין לבריה כלום אצל בוראו. שהרי משה רבן של כל הנביאים לא בא אלא בלשון תחנונים. כך אמר הקב"ה למשה: מי שיש לו בידי ורחמתי במדת רחמים אני עושה עמו, ומי שאין לו בידי וחנותי במתנת חנם אני עושה עמו.

R. Johhanan said: We learn that man has nothing to stand on when he comes before God. Even Moses, the foremost of the prophets, had to approach God in a posture of relying upon God's gracious qualities. Rabbi Levi said: Why is that Moses approached in the spirit of seeking God's grace? So God said before Moses: "And I will be gracious unto those to whom I shall be gracious?"....He (God) said to him: "However has good works upon which to rely and comes before Me, I will act mercifully unto him; and howsoever has nothing upon which to rely, and yet his fate is in My hands, and I will gracious...that is, I will give him of the immediate grace of my freely offered love. 53

Man has no basis on which to plead his case before God. He must therefore depend upon God's "Achilles heel" - His own tendency to put aside His more just nature, and to act graciously. In a sense, this Midrash introduces an element of a theological doctrine of Grace. The utterly unworthy man, sinful as he is, having no good works upon which to rely, may be saved by faith in a God of grace and mercy. Grace is a reward by God where logically there should be no reward. God is kind and compassionate where He expects the opposite from Himself. But God may be swayed, He may redeem the utterly unworthy man though redemption is not indicated. God may act contrary to His own nature, because considerations of grace enter into the picture. Realizing that such considerations affect God's judgment and blur His reasoning, man manipulates God on the basis of this flaw in God's otherwise consistent application of justice.

Why man feels so guilty and unworthy in the first place, and so desperately to be redeemed by a saving grace, is in itself a separate

problem. But we all apparently carry with us a certain diffuse tendency toward guilt; we harbor a certain uneasiness, a certain vague, unspecified anxiety about our own worthwhileness which accounts for the religious experience of guilt and redemption.

At this point in our discussion, we will digress to introduce a basic psychoanalytic concept which throws considerable light on the meaning of the experience of unworthiness as we have encountered this response in the various Midrashim chosen for study.

The psychological basis for the feeling of unworthiness is what Sigmund Freud called the Oedipal conflict. The general outlines of this notion, one of Freud's more popular and better accepted theories, are undoubtedly so familiar that I need not belabor the point of tracing the outlines of this theory. To present a thumbnail sketch, however, Freud asserted that early in his childhood the young boy feels a certain erotic tie with his mother. This urge creates a sense of restlessness, because the father is more powerful than the son, and the son must subdue his hostility to his father, who possesses the mother as a sex object. Coupled with this, the son feels guilty for this "immoral" love he feels towards his mother. Generally, as each child matures, he frees himself of this rivalry by identifying with the father.[54]

We carry with us a certain residual element of the guilt we experience over the Oedipal situation along with us through life. This guilt is one source of a feeling of impurity, of sinfulness and it reappears in the religious protestations of unworthiness we find in the foloristic literature of the major religions in one form or another. In Totem and Tabbo, Freud explored this feeling at considerable length.

It enters into a study of primitive tribes, many of whom build elaborate magical-religious systems to compensate for this deeply rooted guilt, a guilt over the incestuous wish of the child to rid himself of the father to dethrone the father from his pinnacle of power, and to marry the mother. The feelings surrounding this Oedipal rivalry become intricate, and it is only natural to suppose that they leave a deep mark upon even the better integrated members of any society.

The Oedipal situation is so basic to the human situation that we may assume that is enacted and re-enacted in every life. Freud provided ample clinical evidence to back up this theory of erotic love for the parent of the opposite sex, co-mingled with feelings of guilt over these incestuous longings and intense hostilities toward the other parent. Freud considered the guilt feelings which are the residual emotional scar tissue of the Oedipal battle to be responsible for many of the neuroses of human society, its more exaggerated forms, unresolved guilt of this nature may be turned back in against the individual in the form of masochistic or self-mutilating tendencies. One of the function of primitive religions was to provide an acceptable outlet for many of these masochistic tendencies in initiation rites and other religious ceremonies (see Bronislow Malimowski Magic Science and Religion and other essays).[55]

In Judaism, the Yom Kippur ritual, with its emphasis on fasting and self-scrutinization in a way provides an outlet for human guilt feelings and the Confessionals serve as a valuable catharsis for these pervasive energies of guilt, which unless alleviated, often turn back in upon the individual in the form of self-punishment. God is asked to "Incline toward the Covenant, and not to focus upon man's evil."[56]

Israel, unworthy as he feels, attempts to persuade God to forgive, though God might be expected to punish him. The one and the same tendency operate in the Yom Kippur liturgy and in Midrashim of the nature of this one in Deuteronomy Rabbah which I have cited.

Teshuva or Repentance, forms another answer to the problem of inadequacy and unworthiness. There are a great number of Midrashim which deal with repentance, in its psychological and theological details. The more unworthy man feels, the more he feels the need to repent and rely on God's mercy. Representative of the many Midrashim dealing with Teshuvah or Repentance are those which Konowitz list in chapters 36 and 37 of Maamar Haelohut. Essentially, God becomes endeared to the one who repents, holds the gates of repentance constantly open before man, moves when necessary to the throne of mercy from the throne of justice, is more desirous of clearing man than of finding him culpable. God is so earnest about forgiving man that he may tip the scales in man's favor, or begin removing sins from the scale of iniquity until they balance. All that is necessary is that man realize how dependent he is upon God, and how important it is to rely upon God's mercy and to approach God with contrition.

In a gem of a book called Orot HaTeshuva, the late Rabbi Kook explored something of a psychology of the doctrine of repentance. His insights are relevant here, for he traces the emotional state of the individual who feels guilt stricken and the joy of reunion with God once the guilt is removed. Rabbi Kook also helps us understand the concept of empathy in the mystic union Geddes MacGregor has spoken of. Man seeks a reunification with the God-father from whom he has been alienated. The world seems foreboding and life treacherous and unbearable

with the absence of God's rewarding affection. When man meets God on God's ground and fulfills the pre-requisites of re-unification there is a return of what MacGregor calls "empathatic delight" and of what Rabbi Kook describes in the following way:

> ואדם שם חטאו נוכח פניו, ומתחרט עליו ומצטער על אשר נוקש בפה החטא, ונפשו מטפסת ועולה, עד שהוא משתחרר מהעבדות החטאית ומרגיש בקרבו את החרות הקדושה, הנעימה מאד לנפשו הנהלאה, והוא הולך ומתרפא, וזהרי אורה של שמש החסד, חסד עליון, שולחים אליו את קויהם והוא הולך ומתאשר, הולך ומתמלא עונג ודשן פנימי, יחד עם לב נשבר ונפש שחה מדוכאה, שהוא מרגיש בקרבו שגם רגש זה עצמו הנאה לו לפי מצבו, מוסיף לו עונג רוחני פנימי ושלמות אמתית.
>
> Man places his sin against him (it takes on an independent force) and becomes profoundly disturbed and regrets that he was ensnared in the snare of sinfulness, and his soul gradually catches hold and ascends, until he is liberated from the tyranny of sinfulness (guilt) and feels in himself a pure freedom...and he becomes increasingly healed, and the rays of the light of the sun of grace a higher grace (literally loving-kindness) send forth their rays to him, and he goes forth and becomes more fortunate, he goes and is filled with gladness and inner fullness; together with his humility and with his broken hearted spirit that he feels within him; he feels a surging happiness in proportion to his (new found) state, which increases or heightens his spiritual ecstasy, and his feeling of true integrity and wholeness. 57

The kind of guilt for which one seeks an outlet in repentance may hold a tyrannical grip over the individual. A number of Midrashim trace this feeling of unresolvable, inherent guilt which makes Teshivah so important emotionally, for the individual.

Man may not, for example, "believe in himself" until the day of his death.[58]

In a similar vein, when God comes to create man, He has to make a compromise with himself. He has to realize that man will be weak, subject

to sin, and that the world will only exist on the strength of God's mercifulness.[59]

Man's tendency to guilt is so inherent in his constitutional structure that Abraham must advise God:

> אם משפט אתה מבקש אין כאן עולם, אם עולם אתה מבקש אין כאן משפט.
> "If you want absolute justice, you'll have no world; if it is a world you want, you must relent on your expectations for justice." [60]

The pathos of man's pleas of inadequacy finally moves God, and He responds to the tears of a contrite and desperate defendant:

> אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה: רב"ש! ומה עשו הרשע שהוריד שתי דמעות נתמלא עליו רחמים מיד, אנו שדמעותינו תדירה ביום ובלילה כלחם על אחת כמה וכמה!
> Israel said to God: If it is true that once Esau shed two tears, Your were filled with compassion for him, then (seeing that) Our tears constantly pour forth day and night, should You not all the more forgive us... [61]

d. purification for tasks ahead

At times Israel interprets the disciplinary actions of God, not as the necessary consequence of his inherent, unresolvable guilt, but as a means of ethical chastisement or purification for tasks that lie ahead. In this vein, God does not send sorrow or suffering Israel's way to reinforce an impression of unworthiness of guilt, but to strengthen the people's moral fibre to withstand the tribulations of becoming a chosen, servant people. This kind of chastisement, what I have referred to before as יסורים של אהבה "chastisements of love" is not interpreted by man as an indication of inadequacy but as evidence of God's high esteem for His people. It is God's confidence that Israel really has the mettle and courage to serve as His emissaries, an assignment

which inevitably involves hardship and self-sacrifice, that causes God to invest Israel with this sacred responsibility. This theme brings to mind a Midrash which was cited before but which relates to this context: This Midrash is the well known one where the thought is brought out that the potter necessarily tests only the more perfect vessels.[62] So it is that God purifies Israel in this way. The spirit of the people is tested through the various hardships it must endure at the hands of the other nations.

The rabbis tired of interpreting suffering in negative - as indicative of the rejection by the Father. Instead the child (Israel) is encouraged to understand that life and growth involve hardship and pain, and adverse happenings need not be interpreted as symbolic of his own defects. The people becomes less willing to succomb to despair and self-castigation, and in a nobler way philosophizes about its experiences with pain and suffering. Israel recognizes the truth of the Proverb: דרכי חיים תוכחות מוסר "The ways of life afford the reproof of suffering." Proverbs 6:23. In the future the value and truth of Israel's patience under trial will become evident. Having withstood the chastisements accompanying its historic role; the people has earned another worldly reward.[63] The turning toward the future is a way of extrication from the limited perspective of the present. By a belief in another worldly reward, the people finds more courage within itself to endure the hardships of the present. It is not that Israel is at fault, nor is it true that God's chosen child has failed him and disappointed Him by its evil doing. It is that the world is at fault - mankind collectively is guilty of moral irresponsibility, and on a cosmic scale, the ground must

yet be paved before Israel may perform the role assigned to him. Israel is to lead man, as the prophet - people to a recognition of the widespread human responsibility all men must share in the building of the more perfect world. Israel shares the leadership with God as שתוף a partner of the Holy One, in this sacred ethical task. Leadership involves at times agony and loneliness. Israel's long range responsibilities not its weakness is accounted for its immediate unhappiness. But Israel's role is not simply to achieve happiness, but to perfect the character of mankind. By sacrificing his own pleasure and enduring pain in order to prove his worthiness, Israel teaches mankind the value of pain and self-sacrifice related to the promise of larger goals.

B. 2. God's Love

a. I am uniquely worthy to receive God's love

Israel has been catipulted to the depths of despair immersed in feelings of loneliness, guilt and despair - reflecting on his own unworthiness for the enormous tasks placed upon his shoulders, unqualified for the sacred and overwhelming privileges and responsibilities with which he has been charged. From there, Israel drew back several paces, and reflecting on his peril, philosophically dared to believe that all the suffering he was experiencing was not an outgrowth of his sinfulness and frailty, but part of an historic cosmic plan which involved moments of sadness and anguish. At first, Israel, as pictured by the rabbis felt only despair and fear in the presence of God. Moving from there the people ventured to surmise that God still loved Israel, though history seemed to indicate the opposite. The more the rabbis contemplated God's love for Israel, the more air they gave for a new doctrine to breath. Their feelings that God must be concerned, dramatically and consistently

concerned with Israel's fate and future led them to underscore and re-emphasize the deeper dimensions ofGod's love for Israel. As feelings of defeat and fear vanished or receded gradually into the background, the concept of a loving God and an endeared and beloved people moved ever closer to the foreground. At times both ideas existed side by side, one might recede a little and the other advance somewhat. To provide a complete picture of Israel's response to God's actions, we turn to those images in the Midrash where a beloved people warmly responds to a gracious and caring God.

The first response, perhaps the most natural one, that Israel experiences is the feeling of being uniquely worthy to receive God's love. God and Israel have experienced so very much together, have lived through so many vicissitudes of history from the מעמד הר סיני that it is only natural that Israel should be elected by God and honored to be the particular recipient of His affections. Israel, as alluded to before, is one of God's סגולות "prized possessions." God can become sanctified only in Israel's midst. In fact, the Schecinah only dwells באהלי שם "in the tents of Shem". Israel, chosen from all the nations, may be likened to the finer fruits of an orchard, worthy of being tended and nurtured by the Keeper. Israel is the people whom God finds "pleasant to praise Him."[64]

Beyond this, Israel is the very "life force" of the world:

> שהם חיותם של עולם בעל הבית זה הקב"ה, שכל העולם שלו, בן בית זה משה וישראל נמשלו לחטים - מה אמר הקב"ה למשה? תן דעתך בישראל למנות אותם!
>
> For they are the life force of the world. God is the master of the house...and all the world is his. Moses is a member of the household...and Israel may be compared to the wheat (that must be carefully gleaned). What did God say to Moses: Pay attention to count Israel carefully. [65]

God creates all the conditions to support and enhance life on earth. Yet he must have a precious seed to plant that will sprout from the soil and blossom forth with all its radiance and rich foliage to provide a calming restful shade and abundant fruit fro the tired and hungry of all nations.

b. undeserved greatheartedness of God

So extensive and pervasive is God's love that Israel may wonder if at times God is justified in expressing so much affection to His people. Israel may feel that God is overly indulgent, that it is simply His nature to be gracious, and that Israel is not nearly as meritorious as God would make him out to be. God constantly provides man with renewed opportunities to perfect his life and improve upon his behavior. God frees man of the weight of past misdeeds, allows him to begin anew each day as if the previous day's shortcomings were stricken from the record:

ונפשך עולה אצלי בכל אמש ואמש ונתנת דין וחשבון,
והיא חייבת ואני מחזירה לך, שאתה חייב. אף אתה, אף
על פי שהוא חייב, עד בא השמש תשיבנן לו.

And you soul ascends each night, and receives the reckoning and judgment, and is found guilty, yet God returns the gift of life, with the rising of the sun, life returns. [66]

"Were it not for the fact that God to begin with approaches us from within His attribute of mercy, unquestionably we could not hold up (under his justice) for one hour." [67]

God is pictured analogically as an employer who does not withhold the wages of his workmen even when they fail to work faithfully for him. [68] The rationale for this greatheartedness is simply that Israel is inherently precious to God. Were Israel the lowliest people, God would still befriend them. [69]

c. God's desire that I grow

God's love means something else too. It means that God is concerned with Israel's growth. We have encountered nuances of this theme earlier. God has given Israel multiple commandments to fulfill, so that Israel could become a productive people, earning the satisfaction of service. Israel is to be a light to the nations; God has in turn provided Israel with the light of the law so that Israel may better guide mankind upon its pathways.[70]

The critical Midrash in this connection is the one wherein God entrusts man with the responsibility of balancing the scales of civilization. Creation stands even balanced at the close of the first days of God's creative work. If God creates man from the celestial elements, these elements would predominate and thereby disrupt the essential harmony of the spheres. And were God to allow the terrestrial or earthly elements to prevail or to have the additional advantage, by making man primarily a biological entity, the implicit harmony of creation would be similarly imperiled. God solves the problem, as alluded to earlier, by creating man both of the biological elements of the earth and yet endows man with the Heavenly wisdom and reason, that when properly used, enable him to become the crowning glory of creation, to fulfill God's fondest intentions for all of life.

זכר ונקבה בראם. ברא בו ארבע בריות מלמעלה
וארבעה מלמלן. אמר הקב"ה הריני בורא אותו
בצלם ובדמות מן העליונים - פרה ורבה מן
התחתונים - - אם בורא אני אותו מן העליונים
הוא חי ואינו מת, מן התחתונים הוא מת ואינו
חי; אלא הרי אני בורא אותו מן העליונים ומן
התחתונים - אם יחטא ימות, ואם לא יחטא יחיה!

> God said:..."I will create him in the Image and Likeness from above, and (invest) him with the biological powers of procreation....Were I to create him (solely) from the upper spheres, he would live and not die; from the lower spheres, he would die and not live; but I create him herewith from the celestial and the terrestrial elements; if he sins, he will die, and if he doesn't sin, he will live!"[71]

God's desire that man grow persuades God to entrust man with the most sacred responsibilities: to link heaven with earth as it were, to make a unified substance out of the heaven and the earth by linking God's seal thrown to earth with the impression of the seal on high. Israel is to make the fashioned object "close to the intention of the fashioner."[72]

d. partnership relation

Israel is assigned these tasks in the partnership relationship, the relationship of a Covenanted people. As developed earlier, God and Israel are partners in what might be a never-ceasing process of creation. Man is שתופו של הקב"ה כמעשה בראשית . God forges a chain, similar to a chain a king might forge, and with this chain of love, forges His own name to that of Israel's.

> שיתף הקב"ה שמו בישראל. משל למלך שהיה לו מפתח של פלטרין קטנה. אמר המלך אם אני מניחה כמות שהיא היא אבודא אלא הריני קובע בו שלשלת, שאם אבדה תהא השלשלת מונחת עליה. כך אמר הקב"ה: אם אני מניח את ישראל כמות שהן הן נבלעין בעכו"ם, אלא הריני משתף את שמי הגדול בהם.

> ...God has identified His name with Israel's. One might draw a comparison to a king who had a key to a small palace. The king said: "If I leave it as it is, it will become lost. I had better link it to a chain, so that if it becomes lost, it will be together with the chain." So God said: "If I leave Israel the way they are, they will become swallowed up by the nations, so I had best link my great name together with them!" [73]

This interlinking of God's name with that of Israel's is symbolic of the depth of the Covenant relationship - it symbolizes Israel's consecration to God. Yet we might well imagine that the chain is forged only at one end and open at the other. More links, links of love and concern need to be forged by Israel to make the chain reach the full distance - to span heaven and earth. The more Israel tries to fulfill God's hope the stronger the chain becomes.

The way for man to achieve the fulfillment of the contractual relationship is through intense participation with God, through a fervent and total sharing of God's goals. God links His name to Israel's when Israel indeed seems to be the one child who most closely lives up to the moral challenges God places before all mankind:

> מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום, מה הוא חנון אף אתה חנון. . . וכביכול משתתף ומיחל שמו עליו. . .
>
> Just as He is merciful, so be you merciful...and as it were, He becomes a partner with you, and causes His name to rest with you. 74

God's participation with Israel, leading Israel throughout the desert for so many years seeing this people safely pass through imperiling experiences, provides the evidence that God and Israel have the most intimate kind of relationship.[75] God realizes and chooses to become closely identified with this one child, to become sanctified through them.

Earlier I spoke of the Oedipal conflict, and the rivalry that develops between father and son. This rivalry I pointed out, is in childhood development regarded generally as a rivalry for one love object: the mother. Erich Fromm correctly qualifies the Freudian theory by illustrating the fact that there may be other quests and aspirations involved in the Oedipal struggle other than sexual drives.[76]

There is the quest for power and independence. The son contests with the father who presents a threat to his freedom.

God, in many Midrashim we have studied, presents a threat to Israel and curbs or subordinates Israel's aspirations and intentions to His own. God does not often do this brutally, simply to demonstrate the scope of His power, but exerts a rational authority in order to involve man in a great ethical challenge. Yet this challenge and task impose self-sacrifices on Israel. The premise of the joint undertaking in which God and Israel are involved is that God's authority is not to be challenged, and that man is ever responsible to him and accountable to him for all of his actions.

Here, the Oedipal struggle seems to reach a resolution. God and Israel are not antagonists but partners in a cosmic drama. Love replaces hostility and rivalry. This is a natural process, for Freud himself spoke of identification as the most successful way of resolving the Oedipal rivalry. The son takes into himself as his own ideal of conduct the father and all the father represents. The son then wants to be like the father, not to do away with him. Here, too, Father and Son, God and Israel, become linked in a bond of unity and love. On a historical level as well as an emotional, Israel as a people and God as the father surrogate resolve their antagonism. Israel no longer fears God as such but shares with God in a noble vision and magnificent enterprise. Israel is merciful and ethical, not because God demands this arbitrarily, but Israel obeys out of love and comraderie. It becomes consistent with Israel's own image of himself to act mercifully toward his fellowman and to assume his leadership responsibilities with dignity and stature. The relationship to the Father is one of joy and is supremely rewarding.

One closing Midrash illustrates the depth of this bond and the joy that it brings to both participants, God and Israel.

אני אהיה לך דבר המתבקש לעולם

I will become for you an influence eternally worth searching for.

Beyond this:

אני אעשה דברך לך שנראה לעולם

My actions on your behalf will be apparent forever.[77]

The endearment of God and Israel becomes as constant and reliable as the processes of nature. The bond becomes assumed, implicit, inherent in the order of things. The relationship is in every way exemplary. God and Israel hold up before man a vision of how intensive and fulfilling a relationship between Father and son may be. Once more, the nations of the world may constantly refer to this relationship and use it as a point of departure for enhancing all human relationships. God is Eternal, so is His love.

Summary of Chapters I - III

We have considered a representative number of Midrashim which suggest various images of God. Our discussion is built on the premise that as the rabbis portrayed God, they also portrayed human emotions and responses to life. God, to the rabbis, demands obedience and evokes love. The rabbis felt this to be true because of their own needs for comfort and for challenge. The rabbis felt that God used certain sanctions to exact obedience to His authority, and certain appeals to elicit a warm response to His love. We have tried to trace the nature of those sanctions and appeals. We have also tried to distinguish some of the

various responses and interpretations offered by man (Israel) to those sanctions and appeals.

We have found that when God was felt to demand unquestioned obedience,that the method He would utilize to achieve this obedience might be the threat of the withdrawal of His love. Man's response to this threat might be a protestation of helplessness,guilt, dependency. When the rabbis felt that God requested love rather than obedience, their images portrayed God in a different light: tenderly evoking unreserved affection, suffering with the people, sustaining their efforts to do good. In such moments, Israel was seen to place a different meaning on God's actions: to interpret God's concern as an indication that man (Israel) might be uniquely worthy to receive God's love. In other words, Israel might reluctantly obey out of fear, or lovingly cooperate out of trust.

In this next chapter, we turn our attention largely to man's concern for ultimate ideals, and the view of God as a Source of our higher ideals. We will see that the unconscious embodies more than the memory of childhood experiences with parental love and authority. For this reason the Midrash, as symbolic literature, utilizing the resources of the unconscious, necessarily addresses itself to concerns which extend beyond man's relationship to God as a Heavenly Parent. Our effort will be to reach a more comprehensive view of the meaning of the images of God in the Midrash. We will move beyond the vantage point of childhood emotional attitudes to the "teleological perspective" of the Midrash as myth. We will contrast some of our new found information with the basic understandings of the Midrashic symbolism we have already reached.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. Konowitz, Ch. 61, sec. 4, p. 233, Midrash 81.
O.S.: Kiddushin 36A. See also Midrash to Psalms, Song 18, sec. 22 and Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 11, sec. 5. Exodus Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 2.

2. Ibid., Ch. 48, p. 157, Midrash 6.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 44, sec. 9. See also Tanhuma Shoftim, chapter Nosoh.

3. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 141, Midrash 2.
Deuter. Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 12. See Agadath Bereshis, ch. 76 and Midrash to Psalms, Song 4, and Song 65, sec. 4.

4. Ibid., Ch.37, p. 142, Midrash 10.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 18, sec. 3. See also Chapters 36 and 37 in Konowitz in their entirety.

5. See Pirke Avoth 3:22.

6. Konowitz, Ch. 31, p. 123, Midrash 7.
Tanhuma Tetzeh, sec. 16, and Exodus Rabbah, ch. 45, sec. 6.

7. Ibid., Ch. 44, p. 164, Midrash 9.
Erubin 80A. See also Genesis Rabbah, ch. 33, sec. 3, and Maccot 14B.

8. Ibid., Ch. 36, p. 140, Midrash 1.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 33, sec. 3. Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 51, Tanhuma Toldot, sec. 18.

9. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 143, Midrash 17. Shabuot 39A.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 32, sec. 2. Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1:5, Kiddushin ch. 1, Sanhedrin ch. 10 and in Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, ch. Selichot, 167A.

10. See Chapter 66, Konowitz.

11. Konowitz, Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 216, Midrash 1.
Tanhuma Va Yera, sec. 46.

12. See Tanhuma Tazriah, sec. 11, Midrash to Psalms, Song 5, sec. 8; Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh Hashanah, 41; Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, chapter Shuvah; also Midrash to Psalms, Song 4, sec. 5, Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin, p. 10; Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, Piska Shuvah; Lamentations Rabbati, ch. 3, sec. 9; Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 43; Tanhuma Metzorah, sec. 11.

13. Konowitz, Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 217, Midrash 8.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 15, sec. 29; also Numbers Rabbah, ch1 2, sec. 12, and the introduction in the Yalkut Ha Makiri to Isaiah (104).

14. Ibid., Tanhuma Tazriah, sec. 11 and Chapter 34, p. 134, Midrash 2. Midrash Tehillim, Song 30, sec. 4, Jerusalem Talmud Peah, ch. 1. Also see footnote 4 above.

15. Shochar Tov, Song 30, sec. 4; Song 76, sec. 2. Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 1A, Sanhedrin 10A.

16. Konowitz, Ch. 38, p. 149, Midrash 3.
Tanhuma Ve eschanan, sec. 3.

17. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 140, Midrash 1.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 33, sec. 3. Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 15 in its entirety. Tanhuma Toldot, sec. 18.

18. Ibid., Ch. 32, p. 134, Midrash 14.
Midrash HaGadol of S. Z. Schecter "Netzach Yisrael" ch. 1, sec. 26; also see Pirke D'rabbi Eliezar, ch. 11.

19. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 123, Midrash 8.
Shochar Tov, Song 4, sec. 5; also see Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin, ch. 10, and Pesiktha D'Rav Kahana, Piska Shuvah, also Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 17, Lamentations Rabbati, ch. 3, sec.9, and Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 43 and Tanhuma Metzorah, sec. 11.

20. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 2, Midrash 73.
Tanhuma Yisro, sec. 16, also see Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 21.

21. Ibid., Ch. 41, p. 156, Midrash 1.
Avodah Zara 6A.

22. Ibid., Ch. 46, p. 172, Midrash 30.
Tanhuma Mitzavim, sec. 4.

23. Ibid., Ch. 43, p. 159, Midrash 9.
Baba Bathra 14A.

24. Ibid., Ch. 35, p. 137, Midrash 5.
Numbers Rabbah, ch. 20, sec. 14, and Tanna d'Be Rabbi Eliyahu Zuta, ch. 14.

25. Ibid., Ch. 51, p. 192, Midrash 15.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 146, Sec. 9.

26. Ibid., Ch. 45, p. 165, Midrash 2.
Levit, Rabbah, ch. 9, sec. 9 and Numbers Rabbah, ch. 11, sec. 2.

27. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 143, Midrash 18.
Tanhuma Va Yetzeh, Sec. 22, Midrash Chazis, ch. 6.

28. Ibid., Ch. 43, p. 159, Midrash 5.
Yalkut Ha makiri to Isaiah54:3. See towards the end of Esther Rabbah, and the Midrash to Psalms on the sentence: "God is the doer of righteousness" (Psalm 103:6).

29. Ibid., Ch. 50, p. 187, Midrash 4.
Cholin 49A.

30. Ibid., Ch. 41, p. 190, Midrash 5.
Tanhuma VaYera, sec. 3. Agadat Bereshit, ch. 19.

31. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 143, Midrash 14.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 120, sec. 7.

32. Ibid., Ch. 49, p. 184, Midrash 19.
Numbers Rabbah, ch. 1, sec. 3. Tanhuma BaMidbar, sec. 3.
Also see Ch. 51, p. 193, Midrash 20. Megillah, p. 31A.

33. Ibid., Ch. 49, p. 185, Midrash 22.
Numbers Rabbah, ch. 11, sec. 6. Also see Jerusalem Talmud Peah, ch. 100 and Genesis Rabbah, ch. 39, sec. 12. Agadat Shmuel, ch. 8.

34. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 5, p. 234, Midrash 100, 101.
Megillah 29A. Tanhuma Beshalach, sec. 11. Also Midrash 97 of that chapter. Shochar Tov, Song 27, sec. 2; see Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 8; see Tanhuma Exodus, the end of sec. 12.

35. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 5, p. 234, Midrash 98.
Exodus Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 5; Pesiktha Rabbati, Piska 15, sec. 6; Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, Piska 5; Tanhuma Exodus, sec. 14; Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezar, ch. 40.

36. Ibid., Midrash 96.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 20, sec. 1.

37. See footnote 15.

38. Konowitz, Ch. 37, p. 142, Midrash 7.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 22, sec. 22.

39. Ibid., Ch. 41, p. 157, Midrash 4.
Menachot 99B. See also Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 30, sec. 12, and Numbers Rabbah, ch. 16, sec. 18.

40. Ibid., Ch. 40, p. 155, Midrash 7.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 1, sec. 22, and in Tanhuma Balak; also Numbers Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 10.

41. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 8, p. 243, Midrash 139.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 4, sec. 4. Jerusalem Talmud Rosh Hashanah, ch. 1; also in Pesiktha d'Rav Kahana, ch. Ha Hodesh and in chapter Ha Hodesh in Pesiktha Rabbati. Also Exodus Rabbah, ch. 15, sec. 20, and Deuter. Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 14.

42. Ibid., Ch. 36, p. 142, Midrash 3.
Lamentations Rabbati, ch. 4, sec. 23.

43. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 123, Midrash7.
Tanhuma Tetzrah, sec. 16; and in Exodus Rabbah, ch. 45, sec. 6.

44. Ibid., Ch. 35, p. 138, Midrash 11.
Kiddushin 39B, Cholin 142A; see Shabbat, p. 63B.

45. Ibid., Ch. 49, p. 183, Midrash 9.
Midrash to Psalms, Song 18, sec. 29.

46. Ibid., Ch. 47, p. 176, Midrash 20.
Tanhuma Shalach, sec. 28.
Baeck, Leo: Judaism and Christianity. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1958, IV - "Mystery and Commandment," pp. 171, 172.

47. Ezekiel 36:22 f.

48. Konowitz, Ch. 34, p. 135, Midrash 7.
Tanhuma Shalach, sec. 24, and Numbers Rabbah, ch. 22.

49. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 145, Midrash 26.
Shochar Tov, Song 51, sec. 2.

50. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 8, p. 241, Midrash 126.
Berachot 32B.

51. Ibid., Ch. 37, p. 146, Midrash 31.
Shochar Tov, Song 100, sec. 2; also see Deut. Rabbah, ch. 6, sec.5.

52. Ibid., Ch. 32, p. 130, Midrash 9.
Tanhuma Hosefet Shalach, sec. 14, and Numbers Rabbah, ch. 16.

53. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 124, Midrash 14.
Deuteronomy Rabbah, ch. 2, sec. 1.

54. See Patrick Mullahy: Oedipus, Myth and Complex, Grove Press Edition, New York, 1955, p. 16 f. "The Theory of Intantile Sexuality."

55. Malinowski, Bronislaw: Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, N. Y., 1954.

56. See "Morning Service for Atonement Day," Union Prayer Book, Newly Revised Edition, p. 169 f.

57. Kook, Rabbi Abraham I.: Orot HaTeshuvah, Jereisalem, Israel, Jerusalem Publishers, 1925, ch. 3, pp. 5, 6.

58. Konowitz, Ch. 64, p. 253, Midrash 10.
Avoth, ch. 2; see also Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat, ch. 1 and Tanhuma Miketz, sec. 15.

59. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 124, Midrash 11.
Numbers Rabbah, ch. 8, sec. 4. Shochar Tov, Song 1, sec. 2.

60. Ibid., Ch. 35, p. 137, Midrash 7.
Leviticus Rabbah, ch. 10, sec. 1, and Genesis Rabbah, ch. 39, sec.2.

61. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 128, Midrash 39.
Tanhuma Toldot, sec. 24.

62. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 218, Midrash 17.
Shochar Tov, Song 4, sec. 9.
(Correction) Ch. 64, p. 253, Midrash 8.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 55, sec. 2.

63. Ibid., Ch. 65, p. 255, Midrash 5.
Berachot 5B and Succah 45B.

64. See entire section 1 of Chapter 61, Konowitz, p. 216 f.

65. Ibid., Ch. 61, p. 222, Midrash 40.
See entire Song 2 of Midrash Tehillim.

66. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 124, Midrash 13.
Tanhuma Mishpatim, sec. 9; also in Exod. Rabbah.

67. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 125, Midrash 23.
Pesiktha Rabbati, ch. 1 and Tanhuma Tetsaveh, sec. 8.

68. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 124, Midrash 10.
Shochar Tov, Song 26, sec. 3.

69. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 2, p. 223 f.

70. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 3, p. 231, Midrash 82.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 15, secs. 2 and 4.

71. Genesis Rabbah, ch. 8, sec. 11.

72. Konowitz, Ch. 24, p. 95, Midrash 7.
(representative of a number of Midrashim reiterating this theme).
Yalkut Ha Makiri to Psalms, Songs 93-95; also Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezar,
Ch. 8, sec. 1.

73. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, Midrash 33, p. 221.
Jerusalem Talmud Taanit, ch. 2, p. 5A.

74. Ibid., Ch. 31, p. 122, Midrash 1.
Tanhuma Va Yera, sec. 9, Mishna Berachot, p. 30B, Jerusalem Talmud
Berachot, p. 30B, and in Tosefta Berachot, ch. 3.

75. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, Midrash 42.
Numbers Rabbah, Ch. 17, sec. 21.

76. Fromm, Erich: The Forgotten Language, Grove Press edit., Grove Press, New York, 1951. Ch. 7, p. 195 f.

77. Konowitz, Ch. 61, Sec. 1, p. 218, Midrash 15. Taanit 3A.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMAGES

Part A - The Nature of Myth and Midrash

1. the familial background - Freud

The Midrash is essentially a mythological type of literature. It has two essential features that interest us here: one is it shows the effects of the early experiences of the child within his family, primarily his relationship to his parents, his efforts to deal with their authority and win their love. These effects are by and large unconscious; that is, they become part of that total storehouse of memories which we draw on in later life. Morton Prince provides us with an apt description of the unconscious.

> "...We should not overlook the fact that many mental experiences are of the inner as well as of the outer life. To the former belong the hopes and aspirations, the regrets, fears and doubts...and wrestlings with self, the wishes, the loves, the hates, all that we are not willing to give out to the world, and that we would forget and sooner not admit even to ourselves ...." 1

Prince suggests that within the unconscious we also store other memories - those of our early appreciations of some of the contradictions of life. We will see later on as we discuss more about the unconscious that it also consists of some memories and impressions that all mankind seems to hold in common, - the "inherent" questions about the meaning and purpose of life that are ageless and universal. We will conclude from our study of Midrash that it has another essential feature besides the "familial" - the Midrash also reflects the universal aspirations and ideals of its authors.

First, however, we will consider some observations of Sigmund Freud, who traces the origin of myths to our childhood feelings towards our parents. Freud recognized that there are certain primary experiences which the child has, certain basic problems he faces. For example, the child has certain experiences with authority. He has to come to terms with his parents' control over him. The child also has certain experiences with love - in expressing love towards his parents and in responding to their love for him. Freud saw the relationship between the feelings and attitudes we have towards our parents and the feelings and attitudes we have towards our parents and the feelings and attitudes we express towards God. One of Freud's students, Ernest Jones, has summarized some of Freud's thinking on this subject:

> "....The outstanding conclusion that emerges from this investigation (of folklore, anthropology and religion) is that the religious life represents a dramatization on a cosmic plane of all the emotions, fears, longings which arose in the child's relations with his parents.... The varying emotional attitudes....notably those of dependence, fear, love and reverence are all direct reproductions of the child's attitude towards his parents... the earthly father is replaced by the Heavenly Father..." 2

Basically we would not accept this conclusion in toto because it is too narrow a view. Freud's thinking on this subject does not explain many of the images of God in the Midrash which we could not call "direct reproductions of the child's attitudes towards his parents." We would suggest that there are images of a "teleological" nature in the Midrash. The symbolism of these teleological images is not that of parent-child relationships. For an explanation of these images, for a total view of the Midrashic symbolism, we must turn to the contributions of other writers who have also thought a great deal about the nature of myths and the unconscious.

But before leaving Freud, let us consider his contribution a little more carefully. Certainly, it does tell us much, though it does not tell us the whole story. Freud's categories are helpful in explaining the Midrash, though not all inclusive. Certainly, there are considerable traces of the influence of childhood reactions to parental love and authority in the Midrash. For this reason, it would be helpful to expland first on Freud's views.

As we progress through life, according to Freud, our early impressions and attitudes toward our parents disappear from our immediate view. But they are not altogether forgotten. These impressions and attitudes linger in the unconscious which is the repository or storehouse of many of our basic energies and instincts and a kind of second mind which remembers much of what we think we have forgotten. In our dreams, some of the barriers of memory are relaxed, and many of these unconscious feelings appear in symbolic form. Myths, too, along with dreams are a "royal road to the unconscious." The symbolism in myths and dreams is a kind of a code: when we decipher the code we realize that there are two basic driving forces motivating all behavior. These two basic motivating forces have to do with the way in which we seek love and respond to authority.

Freud felt that we are all basically loving and yet also we may be aggressive. Our parents love us and yet may become angry with us. We may love our parents and yet be angry with them. Certain of the ways in which our parents cope with our overtures of love towards them may make us more angry with them. We remember our parents' reactions both to our love and to our agression. We also remember their loving tendencies and agressive tendencies, and our response to their love and to

their authority. We remember or store all of these impressions in our unconscious. There are times when these feelings "break through" the web of the unconscious. We "project" some of these early feelings toward our parents onto God. If we dream about God, or write myths about God, the images of God in our dreams or in our myths may tell us a great deal about how we felt towards our parents. It is in this light that we may understand Jones' observation: "the earthly father is replaced by the heavenly father." Though it is an observation we must qualify.

Now certainly something of what Freud had to say is of real importance to us in our present considerations. We would agree that the rabbis saw God through a certain kind of prism or lense that prism or lens was in part made up of certain unconscious longings, hopes and fears, that were in the first place engendered by the child's reactions to his parents. What Freud had to say about agressive and loving tendencies in the human personality is also of real importance to us: we can see that to a very real degree the impressions the rabbis had of God fall within the two categories of a Loving Father as contrasted with a Stern or Aggressive Judge. For that matter Freud's overall observations about the unconscious are of real importance to us.

It was one of Freud's outstanding contributions to conclude that a great part of our behavior is motivated by unconscious drives, and that much of our symbolic literature taps the wellsprings of these unconscious drives and memories of early childhood experiences. Yet Freud ruled out much of what we would definitely include in the psychological underpinnings of myth and Midrash: all of those various teleological concerns which we will expand upon presently. Much of what Freud said goes a

long way in explaining much of the imagery of the Midrash. But his observations do not provide us with a comprehensive enough picture. As we said before, we also need to account for images of God that allude to other concerns and aspirations: man's concern for discovering ultimate values and purposes in his life:

> "What we see imbedded in human nature we see in completed form, by way of analogy, in God: supreme power, unity, selfhood...." 3

One of the most compelling concerns of the rabbis was that of achieving selfhood. Many Midrashim contain images clustering around the concern for self-realization: not simply freedom from parental control.

We may summarize this discussion of Freud's thinking before proceeding further to consider the concepts of Carl Jung, one of Freud's followers, whose terminology relates to our consideration of the teleological element in the Midrash. Freud held essentially that the feelings we hold towards God are by and large projections on an unconscious level of our early feelings towards our parents. We would hold that this view is limited and does not sufficiently explain the kinds of images and symbolic forms in the Midrash which relate man to himself, the cosmos and his end purposes in life. Jung's concepts may provide us with some additional tools to clarify our understanding of that phase of rabbinic imagery which extends into other realms beyond the relationships of the child within the family constellation and their emotional, unconscious repercussions.

2. It is to Carl Gustav Jung, one of Freud's disciples and critics that we turn for two concepts highly useful to us in our present discussion: the concept of <u>archtypes</u> that appear in myths, and the concept of the <u>collective unconscious</u>.

First, with regard to archtypes: Jung believed that there are certain responses to life which are basically shared, group responses. Mythical literature is replete with examples of these shared, group responses expressed symbolically. For example, we have the archtype of the Mother goddess or of Mother Earth. This archtype stems from a more or less universal concern for the productivity of the soil. We have many reflections of this concern in primitive religions.

To use Jung's terminology, we also have many "archtypal" images in the Midrash. To explain the meaning of Jung's archtypes, we might draw an analogy to deposits made in a bank. Over the centuries of experience among any people (in our case among the Jewish people) writers have conceptualized God or pictured God in essentially similar ways. Eventually certain fixed ways of picturing God become permanent deposits in the mind of the Jew, and a writer centuries later, at the time of the creation of a Midrash, will instinctively draw upon the Jewish archtypal conception of God.

> "...Not only are archtypes the product of universal experiences...frequently repeated...but they also function as highly charged autonomous centers of energy that produce in each generation the repetition of these same experiences. Thus, the human mind today tends to conceive of the world in much the same terms as human minds of past generations did because they have the same archtypes..." 4

Basic archtypes in the structure of rabbinic thinking are those primary images of God we discussed in the first chapter: God as Benevolent Father, Stern Judge, Shephard, Lawgiver, Omnipotent Force in Nature, etc. There are also archtypes of the prophet, Torah, the peoplehood of Israel, and of certain events: "The Assembly at Sinai," the "Merit of the Fathers," etc.

The theory of archtypes is closely related to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. Archtypes exist within the racial memory or collective unconscious of a people.

> "....The collective unconscious is the inherited, racial foundation of the whole structure of personality...it is the storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from man's ancestral past....what a person learns as a result of experience is substantially influenced by the collective unconscious which exercises a guiding or selective influence over the behavior of the person from the very beginning of life...'The form of the world into which he is born is already inborn in him as a virtual image'...." [5]

Ira Progoff, one of Jung's interpreters, suggests that basically Jung was thinking of a stratum of "psychic materials" existent prior to the fact of an individual's life. Jung intended the word "unconscious" to "mean the large, amorphous creative area deep within the person." [6]

In the Midrash, there are the kind of images of God which strike roots deep in the soil of this "large amorphous, creative area" in the mind of the rabbis. We have only to examine to the ingenious elements of originality in the metaphors, similes and allusions of the Midrash to recognize the impact of the collective unconscious of the authors upon their literary creations.

Let us take for example a series of related Midrashim which we find scattered through the rabbinic literature which seem to suggest one tendency on God's part: to link Himself with the humblest and lowliest works of His creation. There is a central significance behind God's choice of the thornbush for the theophany to Moses through the "burning bush." This same significance is attached to God's choice of one of the lower forms of plant life to play a decisive role in the hanging of Haman. Basic to this stream of thought too is God's decision to humble

the moon for attempting to occupy the principle place in the spheres. We might also by extension consider those Midrashim which speak of God's desire to receive the humblest of His people first into His good graces, to suffer with Israel, because השפאלתן היא הגבהתו Israel the humble, suffering people, will yet be the triumphant emissaries of God, and so Israel's abasement is yet related to God's assertion of His glory. In a very real way, God's concern for humility is a thread within the collective unconscious of the Midrashic writers.

We suggested before that there is more underlying the images of God in the Midrash than projections of unconscious responses and attitudes toward parents. We suggested that there are teleological concerns voiced in the Midrash. Jung's study of archtypes leads us to surmise that there are certain archtypal images in the Midrash. There are archtypes of God and there are archtypes of ideals that God symbolizes. Many of these ideals are imbedded in the collective unconscious of the Jew, and find expression through the Midrash. Paraphrasing a statement made earlier: the Midrash is not only a "royal road" to the personal unconscious strivings of the rabbis, but it is also a "royal road" to the collective unconscious of the rabbis, where many group shared memories and ideals are lodged. Freud's understanding is that energies diverted from childhood wishes and fantasies, fears and longings become submerged into the unconscious only to re-enter consciousness partially in the symbolic forms of expression we have in myths. Jung's understanding is that myths are repositories of impulses and ideals that are part of the collective unconscious.

3. We now turn to a brief consideration of a few of the concepts developed by Susanne Langer. These observations have more to do with the general nature of the relationship between the unconscious and symbolic literature. We would not place Langer in either camp of writers we have been discussing. On the whole, her interpretations lend themselves more to the "teleological" interpretation of Midrash than to what we might broadly call the "familial." But the purpose of including some of her observations is to generally expand our understanding of the relationship between the unconscious and symbolism on the different levels on which this relationship occurs.

In Susanne Langer's book, Philosophy in a New Key, another extremely important insight is developed, an insight which helps us understand more clearly the relationship of unconscious reactions to the Midrashic literature. Langer speaks of the unconscious "hyposthetization of impressions" and of the "artistic tendency to conceive of the experience as a whole."[7] These two tendencies lead to the prevalent use of metaphors in myth. The use of metaphors becomes an unconscious device. The same is true of the use of allegory, metaphorical imagery in dreams and the poetic formulation of ideas. The Midrash is replete with poetic formulations and metaphorical imagery.

Langer says that when we look at poetic language or dream language, or any figurative writing (such as the Midrash) that we see a certain tendency to grasp the total impression of a significant feeling, or event or relationship, and that the symbols which appear in this kind of literature are a kind of code or abbreviation, a cryptic way of summing up a large sweeping impression or life search or emotional yearning that has

many variations. The reason why so many ideas are "crowded together" in a symbol is that the symbol is a "spontaneous envisagement" of some total experience or insight. To give an example of what we believe Langer means, let us say that we reach the peak of a mountain and have a commanding view of the landscape beneath. At first we will have a total impression of the general contours of the forests and valleys beneath. After some concentration, we may focus or gaze on certain particular aspects of the landscape. When we walk away, however, we may again have a generalized picture in our mind of the total impression of the landscape.

Or to give another example, let us say that a mathematician is concerned with equating certain allegoric variables. On approaching his problem, he may at first simply have a feeling for the nature of the total problem, then refine his thinking so that he selects out the correct variables to work with. If someone asks him to recapitulate his thinking sometime after he has concluded working on the problem, he may have certain fleeting impressions of the general outlines of his thinking, and may be at a loss to be specific, until the chain of association starts working and he recollects the particulars of his algebraic structure. Langer expresses this idea theoretically: she says that in figurative writing there is no opportunity for the author to separate the form of his impressions from the content. Beyond this, the form and content of an image may take on a "sacred" status of that image is of an idea that is particularly captivating to the author:

> "It is characteristic of figurative images that their allegorical status is not recognized...In spontaneous envisagement there is no duality of form and content... the power of 'conception' of having ideas is man's peculiar asset, and awareness of this power is an exciting sense of human strength. Nothing is more thrilling than the dawn of a new conception...the symbols that embody basic ideas of life and death, of man and the world, are naturally sacred...." 9

We can well imagine the thrill that would overtake a rabbi as he would hit upon some particularly apt metaphor to express God's power, or some striking analogy to convey the sense of wonder and awe that we feel when surrounded by the beauties of nature.

In the development of her ideas, Langer illustrates this process of "spontaneous envisagement" which plays such an important role in symbolic literature. First, she contends that the material of myth (and we might therefore say also of Midrash) is the familiar symbolism that we find in dreams: image and fantasy.[10] There is a certain transition that takes place in history as man's mythology grows and becomes refined or more sophisticated. Eventually the images in myths become not only the products of individual imagination and insight, but also become images of ideals that are socially shared. A particular kind of deity is envisaged by men in a given society; the picture of this deity is not the work of one man's imagination, but the "product of social insight...the envisagement of a vital factor in life...projected onto reality by the symbolism of religion....."[11] In the rabbinic images, God becomes the envisagement of vital life-forces in Judaism; God becomes a symbol for the most cherished ideals of our people. Further, there are images of God in the Midrash which suggest universally shared reactions, pursuits of all men that operate in all religions. This tendency to symbolize universal quests is a characteristic feature of more elevated mythologies:

> "The great step is taken...when not only social forces, persons, customs, laws, traditions - but also cosmic forces surrounding mankind are expressed...when not only relationships of an individual to society, but of mankind to nature are conceived through the spontaneous metaphor of poetic fantasy..." [12]

Langer's contribution to our analysis lies in her skillful exposition of the unconscious processes encouraging the writers of symbolic literature to choose the language of metaphor and allusion, a kind of language so prevalent in the Midrash. The primary unconscious process Langer is concerned with is that which she calls "spontaneous envisagement" or the "hyposthetization of impressions." This process is one of real importance to us in our understanding of rabbinic images of God.

Having now traced some of the findings of several people who have thought about the nature of myths, we are ready to proceed to draw together the various strands of our total discussion in this paper. Our method of organization here is to take the two categories of the "familial" and "teleological" influences of myth and to apply them to the Midrash.

Part B - The Psychological Views in the Midrash

1. The familial dimension

There are two dimensions to the psychological view of the Midrash: the familial and the teleological. The first dimension strikes roots in the soil of Freud's thinking about the importance of childhood reactions to parental love and authority. The second has its roots in our basic concern to appropriately direct our ideals. Whereas the Freudian aspects of myth take us primarily to the roots of our concern for appropriately directing our feelings, the aspects of myth that Jung and Langer write about strike at the core of man's relationship to himself, to nature, to his ideals. Let us now expand on each of these two essential conclusions, with some observations first on the "familial dimension" of the Midrashic view of God.

Our analysis in Chapters I - III led us to the conclusion that the rabbinic view of God is to some extent an outgrowth of the unconscious portrayal of childhood emotional experiences. We first observed that God is pictured in different ways in the Midrash, and tried to account for the diversity of these images. We suggested then and suggest now that there are certain underlying human responses and attitudes which account for the kinds of images of God we find in the Midrash. In our attempt to locate and pinpoint these underlying human responses we saw that they were two-fold: in the first place responses to parental authority, and responses to parental love. The memory of certain experiences in early life experiences of this two-fold nature decidedly colors the rabbinic images and symbols.

Reactions to God's authority in the Midrash stem in large measure from the vast resources of imagery connected with the child's attempt to cope with his parents' exertion of control over him. Responses to God's love are embellished to a considerable degree with the imagery of a child's response to his parents' affections for him. The memories connected with these influential experiences in early life re-enter the Midrash, in symbolic form, by way of the unconscious mind of the rabbinic authors. We have been concerned with the literary result that occurs when one writes about God, while unconsciously expressing the emotions earlier directed towards one's parents.

The various rabbinic images of God are chippings off the bedrock of one total rabbinic view which is composed of two essential strata. We might consider each stratum as an independent entity, conscious of the fact that for a comprehensive view, we will later have to see both

strata as layers of one rock. If we examine the rock more closely in other words, we notice that its different crystals and materials suggest one basic composition.

Phrasing the same idea in a somewhat different way, we might say that the various rabbinic images of God are miniatures of one basic portrait, which is composed of two contrasting, though complementary scenes. One scene of this composite portrait includes the picture of an authoritative Ruler or Judge who decides the fate of each human subject or defendant. This Divine Judge marshalls the evidence and issues the verdict. He decides whether man is guilty or innocent. This same scene shifts somewhat in details, though the overall outlines remain the same: the picture of the Judge is replaced by the picture of a stern, unyielding Father who threatens His children with severe punishment for disobedience. In either case, man, the subject or defendant is rather helpless, often bewildered. The child or subject may become despondent, and relinquish the attempt to gain God's approval.

Man may despair, in other words, of wrestling with God in a futile attempt to wrest from Him a blessing too dear, an approval too elusive. He may walk away limping, disconsolate, overpowered. He may as a consequence, resent God's exhibition of His authority, and blame God for the despondency he feels. He may say to himself: "What's the use, there is no pleasing Him." Or, he may blame himself: "It's no wonder He rejects me, I always bring it on myself. I deserve His punishment."

This first scene of the composite portrait then (of which we have many miniature reproductions, i.e., individual Midrashim) is that of an authoritative God:

רבונו של עולם, מלך דין אמת.
רבון כל המעשים, דין לכל באי עולם.

Before Him man stands as עפר ואפר recognizing his essential powerlessness, humbled, penitent, guilt-stricken, frightened into obedience, painfully conscious of his human limitations.

Yet there is a contrasting scene in the portrait, one that is so striking that it often stands out more vividly than the first, and yet often blends in with the first.

This scene pictures a loving and gracious Father and Kindly Ruler: the Shephard of His flock, tenderly caring for each of His creatures, personally involving Himself in their sufferings. This God recognizes man's essential frailties, yet does not ask too much of man, may even act indulgently at times. This God and Father tenderly guides man in his search for meaning in life; guides him also over the difficult obstacles. This God gently stands upon the heights man attain "after the toil of climbing" confident all the time in man's ability to scale life's peaks.

Putting it another way, this God leads compassionately, helping man to trod through the brush that obscures his path. He does not command men to march forward. He does not rebuke man when he loses his stance or loses his way. This God is the אל רחום וחנון sensing a feeling of חביבות , encouraging man in the effort toward דבקות . God returns man's loving embrace, gives Him willingly His fondest blessings. Man may walk away limping from the struggle to grow to be more conscious of his God-given gifts, but man emerges whole, enthralled with God's goodness to him. God is דודי, רעי, אהובי, אחותי, אמי there are no limits to the ecstatic rapturous images which the rabbis may conceive of to express this חביבות , this דבקות אלהות . At times the rabbis may feel even a little bit triumphant. God cannot

bring Himself after all to reject man. God is entrapped in His own needs for man's love: כניכול, אסור אני כי ביניכם . This gives man the "upper hand." He is not only dependent on God; God also needs him. True, man had better not try to "get away" with too much, but neither had God press man too far.

Sometimes the rabbis see each part of the composite portrait in isolation. Sometimes they pick up the rock and see only crystals of anger, or crystals of sublime love. More often they feel the entire texture of the rock, and grasp the nature of its total, unified composition. More often it is one portrait they see with the mind's eye. Their rich imagination enables them to distinguish the striking hues and contrasts in this portrait, or rather their brush, the מליצת השיר , the poetic sensitivity, added different colors and hues and contrasts. But the picture emerges as a unified creation, the bedrock is solid and consistent. God is Stern and Good, Benevolent and Challenging, Authoritative and Compassionate.

2. the teleological dimension

This overall contention, - that rabbinic images are composite portraits of two essential emotional responses the child feels towards his parents - which take on a different form when re-directed towards God - is one essential contention of this paper. Yet there is another, equally important conclusion that we would draw: rabbinic images of God are also suggestions of the values and ideals which were most cherished by the rabbis themselves. God is not only a Divine Parent, but in a manner of speaking - the Source of those ultimate values man strives to attain. The reader is asked to bear this sentence in mind when we consider the relationship of Midrashic view of God to the "naturalistic theology" of Reconstructionism in the appendix: Chapter V.

By way of introduction to this section, we might consider an observation offered by Ernest Cassirer in his book: Language and Myth. Cassirer suggests, in a mode of thinking we have encountered before in the writings of Susanne Langer, that in myths there is a certain concentration of interest upon one particular idea or feeling, one situation or event. This is evident in the Midrash. Each Midrash usually takes one particular event or situation, idea or feeling as a point of departure for imparting a more general religious truth. Cassirer makes this important observation:

> The manner of this concentration always depends upon the direction of the subject's interest, and is determined not so much by the content of the experience as by the teleological perspective from which it is viewed. Whatever is important for our wishing and willing, our hope and anxiety, for acting and doing: that receives the stamp of verbal "meaning." (underlining mine). 13

Cassirer's point about the teleological perspective of symbolic literature is extremely important for our consideration. There are feelings and attitudes in the Midrash that do not have the ring of carry-overs of a child's reactions to his parents.

There are questions in the Midrash not only of the nature of - Does God love me with all my faults? Is God essentially merciful or uncompromising? May I disobey God and not suffer for it? There are other kinds of questions that enter the rabbinic mind: What ought I do with my life? How is it that I feel so insignificant in the vast magnificent world of nature? What will happen to me when I die? Why is it that I suffer while others less worthy, prosper? Questions of this nature also flood into the minds of the rabbis. They hold such an important place in the overall rabbinic view that we would be committing a grave mistake were we to suppose that all of the rabbinic images of God spring

simply from the memory of feelings engendered by our parents' exercise of authority and love. The rabbis constantly searched for ideals, and the rabbinic images of God trace the landmarks on that search. There are certain overall emphases and tendencies in Midrashic lore to view God, man, the world in ways other than those which might be traced to the intrusion of child-like preoccupations into the literature.

For example, there is a certain tendency in the Midrash to view all of the works of nature as strokes of the Divine Artist's brush on the cosmic canvas. There is a tendency to view suffering as a purification for leadership responsibilities that lie ahead. There is a certain tendency on the part of the rabbis to feel that it is in the very acceptance and affirmation of whatever life brings, whether good or evil, that life in fact becomes good. There is an inherent predisposition to feel that regardless of the extent of man's sinfulness, that he may be restored to God's favor if he repents. There are in other words certain guiding thoughts and main concerns in rabbinic thinking that reflect what Cassirer has called the "teleological perspective" of myths. The Midrash has its own teleological perspectives, its own major ideals and concept of man's ultimate purposes.

We may surmise then, that God could be pictured not only as a Divine Parent toward whom one consciously or unconsciously re-directs many of the feelings first directed towards his parents. God also came to represent what the rabbis felt most strongly about, what they fought most courageously for; God symbolized their highest ideals. God could also be an unknown or felt Presence, captivating and inspiring the individual and lifting him in an almost mystic way "out of himself." We have already in one way or another touched upon all of these three views

of God. We might direct our attention for a while longer, however, on this one thought: "God" came to exemplify what the rabbis felt most strongly about in the realm of values and ideals. We are concerned here with the symbolism of the Midrash for the light that it throws on the nature of rabbinic ideals and values.

One thought is that "God" came to suggest a way of talking about those things the rabbis cherished most in life. Another way of saying this is that God came to be looked upon as the esource of love, wisdom, justice, mercy, brotherliness, good will, charity, and all other noble pursuits in life. These are the pursuits the rabbis placed greatest personal emphasis upon. Together these values constitute the "good life." The rabbis felt it important to tie together their feelings about the important virtues in life with their feelings about God. As Kaddushin puts it: "The rabbinic experience of God is a phenomenon associated with the organismic interpretation of value concepts." God is not only אביגו שבשמים but also a מורה דרך , showing man the way upon which he should go.

We will now illustrate a few Midrashim which reflect this concern for ultimate values. Generally, the concern for ultimate values is expressed in terms of a concern for the future.

> אמר הקב"ה: סיקלו אותו...ואני מעבירו מכם לעתיד. שנאמר סולו סולו המסלה, סקלו מאבן הרמו! וכה"א ואמר סולו סולו פנו דרך הרימו מכשול מדרך עמי! ולעולם הבא אני עוקרו מכם. והסירותי את לב האבן מבשרכם ונתתי לכם לב בשר.
>
> God said: Clear the pathway, lift up the stumbling block from the road of my people, and in the future world, I will uproot such obstacles from before you. [14]

God holds before man a certain ideal of conduct which inspires man to bring out the best within him:

שכל המרחם על הבריות מרחמין עליו מן השמים, וכל
שאינו מרחם על הבריות אין מרחמין עליו מן השמים.

Whosoever acts compassionately towards his fellow man receives God's compassion. 15

שאי קונין שלך חקוקה למעלה.

The ideal of what you may attain in "engraved" above. 16

Stirring within him, deep down inside of him, there is a certain essential human striving in man to perfect himself. This may express itself, as we have indicated, in a concern for the future. This feeling may also express itself in terms of a desire to be pure, to be holy unto God, to be sanctified. God helps man become holy:

אדם מקדש עצמו מעט מקדשין אותו הרבה,
מלמטה מקדשין אותו מלמעלה.

A person strives to perfect himself with an initial effort; God motivates him all the more. When one tries to perfect himself on earth, God sustains his efforts from on high. 17

Man strives to be the more perfect שתוף של הקב"ה . God assists man for essentially two reasons: 1) God is concerned with man's spiritual growth and self-realization; 2) God is limited in the degree to which He can be effective by the extent to which man cooperates with Him. This last thought is brought out in the following Midrashic statement:

ד"א קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלהיכם. או
אינו אומר אלא אם מקדישים אתם אותי הריני
מקודש ואם לאו איני מקודש, ת"ל כי קדוש אני.
בקדושתי אני בין מקדשים אותי ובין אין מקדשים
אותי.

Distinguish yourselves! If you sanctify yourselves, I will attribute it unto you as if you sanctified Me.... and if you fail to sanctify yourselves...I will react to it in terms of your failure to sanctify Me! 18

These Midrashim bring some thoughts to mind about the origins of our "teleological perspective" that we find voiced in the Midrash. One thought is that as we go through life, we are not simply concerned with the possibility that our parents may reject us or be dissatisfied with us. We are concerned that we may be dissatisfied with ourselves, that we not fulfill our deeper endowments. We are not only anxious about being alienated from God in the sense in which one may be alienated from his parents; we are also concerned with the feeling of emptiness that may come over us when we are disappointed with the way we have been conducting our lives. In the sense to say that God disapproves us might be the same as saying that we have failed to bring out the God-like within us and our own growth and the spiritual progress of mankind suffer for it.

We may at such moments, feel at odds with ourselves. Our uneasiness may stem from a feeling of discord quite apart from the displeasure a child feels while reacting to his parents' authority. Our search in such moments may be for a feeling of spiritual unity, and not for "Father's approval." In the "Concept of Sin According to Freud and the Midrash," Abba Gordon speaks of this search for inner unity:

> "The feelings of guilt, remorse, wonderment and depression afflict man's soul. These four conflicts are actually one conflict...intertwined in the personal separation of the "I" from the "not I." Right (in a religious sense) is the longing for fundamental unity....man experiencing himself as a unified being....As long as this unification is not achieved...man feels depressed, guilty, sinful...." 19

It is as if we were out before a beautiful mountain with the sun setting over the mountain; with easel, brush and canvas before us. We see before us the objective scene of the sunset over the mountain. Within our grasp are the tools we have to paint with. We also have a mental picture or outline of what the finished work of art might look like. We

eagerly anticipate the feeling of inner expansiveness and self-satisfaction that might be ours if we capture the rays of the sunset in the true artistic manner in which we hope to capture them. When we succeed in satisfactorily capturing the image of the sunset over the mountain, we feel an inner glow of serenity and pride. When we paint stones that are disproportionate or asymmetrical, we become displeased with ourselves. The initial inner harmony and self-repose is shattered. We feel similar emotions when we act selfishly or unthinkingly in our relationships with those whose friendship we prize. We hope to correct the imbalance, to square the ledger, to make things right again. The two emotions of joy over fulfillment, creative or ethical fulfillment and the feeling of displeasure over failure are so closely related that it is difficult to speak of one without referring to the other.

Summary of Part B.

Though feelings of possible alienation from our parents influence us, these feelings alone do not account for all our hopes and longings. Other hopes and longings of a teleological nature, concerns about being alienated from oneself, from nature, from one's higher ideals work their way into the rabbinic literature. Or stating it positively, we do not simply seek from God what we earlier sought from our parents, and the Midrashic images of God cannot be reduced to projections of child-like needs for affection and responses to authority. We seek from God companionship in a struggle to realize ourselves, to bring out the finest within us. God does not simply love us and limit us. He inspires us and directs us in our search not only for emotional security but for spiritual edification.

We do not want to stand still. It is not only that we want to move forward; we also realize that it is really impossible to stand still - we fall backwards if we try. We are concerned with our moral and spiritual self-perfection. This concern cannot be reduced to a threat of alienation from our parents' affections, or a fear of parental punishment. What causes us to feel alienated or "punished" is a feeling of personal guilt for having failed to listen to the call of moral duty, guilt for having failed to develop certain natural endowments, guilt for having missed some opportunity for alleviating human pain or contributing to the overall well being of society. We are concerned with being alienated from the finer part of our own spiritual make-up, and this sense in becoming separated from God. We have to conclude that the rabbis were as deeply affected by this concern for self-realization and spiritual growth as much as they were affected by unconscious reactions to parental influences and controls.

If we consider the Midrash as a mythological literature which reflects the unconscious longings and hopes of its authors, we have to conclude that only some of these longings had to do with adjusting to parental affections and demands. Other of these longings had more to do with ultimate goals and purposes for existence. Midrashically, it is hoped that God's מדת הרחמים will prevail over His מדת הדין. Yet it is also hoped that man will take the initiative in achieving his own קדושה, and in this way help to sanctify God in the midst of the people. The concern for קדושה is a teleological concern.

It is true that a given Midrashic image often suggests a particular inner struggle of the author. Yet it is also true that if often

suggests the ideals by which the author guides his life. Many of these ideals have been foremost in the history of Judaism. Yet they also suggest certain universal human quests. Each Midrashic image of God is a sign upon the highway pointing to a destination all men since the beginning of time have tried to reach. That destination might be characterized as a feeling of being at home in the world, of being at peace with oneself and with one's God.

> "Religion is a response, deeper and more inclusive than speech or thought, to the reality apprehended as Divine. In the more elevated religions, the Divine is identified with the ultimate in man's universe." 20

One closing Midrash will serve to illustrate this point. God is envisaged as pondering an important problem: To whom shall He give the gift of peace. לאומה שאוהבת שלום "To that people which loves peace."[21] For it is said: כל בניך למודי ה' ורב שלום בניך "All of your children are educated in God's ways, and great peace obtains among them."[22] Yet in the rabbinic view: "Sons" is an improper rendition of the word בנים . "Builders" would be more correct.[23] Man builds towards peace, building upon "the abiding foundations of God's law." In the words of the Psalmist: והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום "The work of righteousness will be peace."[24] Man builds his spiritual life, quarrying from the bedrock from which he has essentially been hewn: more than simply the responses to life engendered by his trust or distrust of his parents, but engendered also by what Baeck has called "the consciousness of being created."[25] חבה יתרה שנודעת לו שנברא בצלם.[26] It was out of His deeper love that God made man conscious that he was created in the Divine image. Man's obligation is to make the "fashioned object" more like the intent of the Fashioner. Man is a son, and responds

to God with the emotions of a child. But man is a builder, and responds to God with the teleological concern to build a better life and a better world.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IV

1. Prince, Morton, The Unconscious. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1929, p. 85.

2. Jones, Ernest, Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis, vol. II: "Folklore, Anthropology, and Religion," London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1951, pp. 194-197.

3. Otto, Rudolf, The Idea of the Holy. New York, Oxford University Press, Galaxy Edition (reprint), 1948, ch. I: "The Rational and the Non Rational."

4. Hall, Calvin, Notes on Jung's Analytical Theory, Unpublished lecture notes, Department of Psychology, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

5. Ibid.

6. Progoff, Ira, Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning. New York, Grove Press, Evergreen Editions, 1955, Ch. II: "The Psyche and the Layers of Consciousness," p. 53 f.

7. Langer, Susanne, Philosophy in a New Key. New York, Mentor Books, (reprint) 1951, ch. 6, "Life Symbols - The Roots of Sacrament", p. 127 f.

8. Ibid., p. 131.

9. Ibid., p. 131, 133.

10. Ibid., p. 131.

11. Ibid., ch. 7, "Life Symbols The Roots of Myth," p. 155.

12. Ibid.

13. Cassirer, Ernest,Language and Myth. New York, Dover Publications, (reprint), 1946, Ch. 3, "Language and Conception," pp. 37, 38.

14. Konowitz, Ch. 36, p. 141, Midrash 4.

15. Ibid., Ch. 44, p. 164, Midrash 9.
Erubin 6a.

16. Ibid., Ch. 61, sec. 1, p. 217, Midrash 9.
Genesis Rabbah, ch. 65, sec. 12.
See also Talmud Holin, p. 71, and Pirke d'R. Eliezar, ch. 35.

17. Ibid., Ch. 36, p. 141, Midrash 2.
Deuteronomy Rabbah, Ch. 2, sec. 12.
See also Agadat Bereshit, ch. 76 and Midrash to Psalms, Song 4 and Song 65, sec. 4.

18. Ibid., Ch. 16, p. 55, Midrash 3.
Siphra on Kedoshim, sec. 2; see also Malbim's commentary.

19. Gordon, Abba, "The Concept of Sin According to Freud and the Midrash" (American Jewish Yearbook, 1939), New York.

20. Calhoun, Robert T., "The Language of Religion" in The Unity of Knowledge. Columbia University, centennial conference Series V, edited by Lewi Leary. New York, Garden City publishers, 1955, ch. 15, p. 252.

21. Konowitz, Ch. 46, p. 166, Midrash 7.
Numbers Rabbah, Ch. 12, section 4.

22. Isaiah 54:13.

23. Konowitz, Ch. 43, p. 159, Midrash 5.
Yalkut "Ha Makiri" to Isaiah 54:3, see the conclusion of Esther Rabbah.

24. Isaiah 32:17.

25. Baeck, Leo, The Essence of Judaism, p. 156 f.

26. Avoth 3:15.

CHAPTER V

CONTRAST OF THE MIDRASHIC VIEW WITH THE "TRANS-NATURALISTIC" GOD-IDEA IN RECONSTRUCTIONIST THEOLOGY

In myths, men survey the past and dream of the future. Many of our most graphic memories and fondest hopes are symbolically embedded in myths. Some of these memories and hopes are very personal, others we share with our people (Israel), others we share with all men. When man remembers his past, he tends to think of those experiences in his childhood responsible for making him the person he is today. But man also thinks of tomorrow, his own tomorrow, and the tomorrow of all mankind. When he thinks ahead towards the future, man tends to reflect on those ideals which might be responsible for making of him a better individual, and of mankind: a better human fellowship. Both memories and ideals decisively shape the symbolism of the Midrash. It was in this sense that we described rabbinic images of God in terms of biographical and teleological elements.

We have considered the Midrashic impression of what man remembers and what he aspires towards; those phases of his personal biography and his broader idealism which shape his views of God. We said in the first place that man cannot help but react strongly, though unconsciously, to some of the significant experiences of his childhood; and that inescapably these reactions will make their presence felt in his symbolic literature. Man's impression, in other words, of how far he can manipulate God's authority, or control His exercise of power, is an impression based on his childhood experiences in coping with his parents' authority.

Man is dependent upon God in certain of the same ways in which he was dependent earlier upon his parents. Man may need constant reassurance of God's love in much the same way in which he needed constant reassurance of his parents' love.

However, in our consideration of the Midrashic images, we observed that there is more to the literature than can be explained in terms of early childhood experiences. We contend that in the Midrashic myth, we see man not simply regressing to an earlier childhood level where he obeys God out of fear, or loves God as a Father; but we see man reaching toward the future, concerned with ultimate goals, pre-occupied with the destiny of civilization. In his teleological moods, man is no longer the helpless child turning to God, uncertain of whether he will be punished for disobedience or rewarded for his good deeds. We see man concerned with values such as mutualism, integrity, freedom, because of their intrinsic worth. We see him striving to actualize these ideals because there is a certain spiritual dimension to his personality motivating him to ferret out evil, or to turn the evil into the good, or to turn his sufferings into means of growth.

Recall those Midrashim where man interprets suffering as a test of his courage. These are noble images, mature images. Certainly, one could bend over backwards to find within them traces of "regressive" behavior or of "unfulfilled dependency needs." The child is saying: "Go ahead and punish me, it will give me the upper hand in future claims against you," and so the child (now the people Israel) is still rebelling against his dependency upon his parents and regressing to the stage where he tried to control his parents by using their rejection of him as a

means towards his own ends. But this kind of an interpretation misses the mark. It may explain something of what is going on; but it leaves more unexplained. In a sense, it is a reducto ad asburditum of the deeper, mature human capacity to reconcile oneself with the realities of evil and suffering and pain, to surmount these tragedies and meet life with courage in the face of it all.

Summarizing our thinking on this subject, we contend that the Midrash, as myth, has its biographical and teleological components. The cable that tows the rabbis out from the shore of everyday experience to the ocean beyond (the experience of God and the Godly) has two threads: one re-inforcing the other. The outer thread, covering the stronger, inner, central thread is composed of the unconscious projection of childhood needs, impulses and reactions. But the inner cable itself is composed of those broader teleological concerns that in the final analysis is really responsible for enabling the rabbis to move out from shore, withstand strong currents and even tidal waves of persecution and uncertainty, and finally to reach the calmer, surer waters of a belief in the worthwhileness of life and a reverence for that which is sacred within man.

We contend that the inner "teleological" thread is the stronger and more basic part of the cable; and for that reason we concern ourselves more with what the Midrash tells us about man's ideals and less with what it tells us about man's reactions to his parents' love and power. When we examine the Midrashic images in light of their teleological content, we reach a very important conclusion, one that has vital bearing on a major religious problem of today: Is God a personal Being, a Heavenly Father, a supernatural Individual, or is God the sum

total of those forces and processes making for the creative fulfillment of human personality? We raise this question because one school of Jewish religious thought, Reconstructionism, maintains that God is Process and not Being. Because we find that much in the Midrashic symbolism lends support to this way of thinking, we pause to trace the major outlines of Reconstructionist observations about God as Prodess. We may then compare Reconstructionist symbolizations of God with our Midrashic symbolizations. Our treatment of the Reconstructionist God-Idea will be somewhat cryptic, and for a fuller analysis we refer the reader to two books by Professor Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist movement: The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion, The Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, New York, 1947) and Judaism Without Supernaturalism (Reconstructionist Press, 1958).

Dr. Kaplan uses certain key words in his writings. God is the "Power that Makes for Salvation" or for the "Regeneration of Human Nature."[1] God represents the sum total of those powers at work in nature, in history, and in human personality that lead to self-realization and social cooperation.

> "God, not merely as a metaphysical being, but as the object of worship and prayer, is the Power that makes for salvation of man through the community which organizes its entire social order around the purpose of man's salvation." [2]

Kaplan is concerned with those human and social "tendencies and relationships that augment the unity and value of life" and thus "point to the reality of God."[3] In place of the traditional meaning of Revelation, God reveals in Himself human efforts toward cooperation, in the

efforts of the individual to lead a more worthwhile, creative, and ethically desirable way of life:

> "...God is the personification of Godhood, which is the sum of those forces and relationships which operate in the entire cosmos and which in man leads to his salvation which is experienced in at-homeness in the world. Among these cosmic forces are organizability, polarity (selfhood and interaction) and creativity. The uniformity of natural law manifests itself in the ethical trait of reliability, of universal interaction in responsibility, and universal creativity in human growth and progress...." 4

Kaplan and other Reconstructionist thinkers are careful to distinguish between a totally naturalistic or humanistic concept of God (God reduced to man or nature) and the "object of man's prayer and worship." God is not only experienced by man in his personal efforts to attain reliability and inner unity, but God exists beyond man. Yet when Kaplan says that God is beyond man, he does not mean that God is Supernatural (performing miracles, personally rewarding good and punishing evil) or that God may be conceived of as having personality. God is "Trans-Natural" - that is, he exists beyond man as the possibility of all that man may attain.

> Transnaturalism is that extension of naturalism which takes into account much that mechanistic or positivist science is incapable of dealing with. Transnaturalism reaches out into the domain where mind, purpose, personality, ideals, values, and meanings dwell..." 5

Man may relate to God in a very personal way, as the"very source and sponsor of personality." What happens when we conceive of God as a finite power is that we no longer look upon Him as the source of all suffering and pain and senseless tragedy, which are realistically the consequences of either natural law or human error. We do not rely upon

miracles but assume responsibility for our own lives. Kaplan's theology is rooted in some concepts of natural law, and in effort to reconcile traditional religious ideas with our expanding view of the universe and of man's place within it. The view of God as a Personal Transcendant Authority who intervenes in the order of nature to create miracles, reward the pious and punish the evil-doers, arose out of an environment and a world view at odds with our own. Kaplan contends that with the rise of the modern, scientific world outlook we may no longer view God as a Personal, Supernatural Authority. In reconciling religion and reason, we recognize that supernatural sanctions of other worldly religion have gone by the ways and we emerge instead with the conviction that "there is something Divine in human personality, in that it is the instrument through which the creative life of the world effects the evolution of the human race."[6]

It is in light of this theory that Kaplan reinterprets many of the traditional theological notions that occupy prominent places in rabbinic thinking)and that inevitably affect the symbolism of the Midrash). He translates the traditional doctrine of the "Sovereignty of God" partially into terms of the sovereign role of certain innate human tendencies at work in human personality, responsible for man's spiritual evolution. Man creates a "Heirarchy of purposes" and a "Kingdom of ideals."[7] Teshuvah and Atonement are not simply the rewinning of God's favor, but the attainment of renewed self-expression and heightened social cooperation.[8] Prayer is not only addressing God, but it is also talking with ourselves about the meaning that God holds for us in our lives; communicating to ourselves, through the medium of

of the ancient idiom, our convictions about our most sacred human ideals.[9] In place of Yirat Chet and Yirat Shamayim, Kaplan would introduce the drive toward self-perfection and social harmony. Reverence for God is coupled with reverence for the sacred within man.

Kaplan generalizes about the process going on within man and within society propelling man and society toward a religious evaluation of human personality and toward a recognition of the sacredness of the individual human being. There is something universal about the tendency to revere the sacred within man. God conceived in a trans-natural way, is responsible for the expression of this important tendency which makes for the regeneration of human nature and the social order.

It is hoped that in this brief survey of the thought behind the Reconstructionist God-Idea, that we have offered a general feeling for this kind of "trans-naturalistic" thinking. We may now proceed to contrast this way of looking at God with the ways in which God is viewed in the rabbinic lore. There is little of the Midrashic feeling for the biographical aspects of man's images of God in Kaplan's thinking. But we would contend that the teleology of the Midrash paves the way for a transnaturalistic concept of God.

The rabbis, we must remember, were essentially poets, writing poetry, they were not philosophers. They used a vocabulary and idiom to express their ideas which would arouse the imagination and capture the heart of their listeners and readers. It would be difficult for the rabbis to speak of God as Process because their concern was not so much in defining God's nature as in expressing the emotions they felt towards God. And so when they spoke of God, or wrote about God, it was often in terms of "Our Father," "The Beloved One of Israel," etc. But

when we examine the content of the Midrashic statements, beyond the imagery in which the message is couched, we see that God expects of man what the Trans Naturalist God expects: sincere devotion to those ideals which promote human self-realization and social harmony.

The rabbis did not speak of God as Process for another reason too. Civilization has to reach a certain point, and scientific reasoning has to progress to a certain point before people can start talking about a "Process that Makes for Regeneration." This view of God as Process is only possible when we see the world as an ordered, unified cosmos, obeying natural laws. The rabbis did not have that kind of a world view. They had begun to think in these terms, but it was only with the rise of modern science, the Copernican Revolution, and the rise of modern physics and astronomy that this idea of the world as an ordered cosmos obeying natural law really took hold and began to seriously affect basic theological notions.

But while the rabbis did not have the logical tools we have to work with, or the world view that we have, they nevertheless realized that God was primarily the Source of man's salvation, and they defined salvation as self-perfection and social cooperation. God is concerned with the unfolding of human personality; this is equated with Kedushah: self-sanctification. God sanctifies those who sanctify themselves. God is concerned with social cooperation; He gives the Torah to the nation that loves peace, He finds interpersonal discord unbearable. God is concerned with the religious evaluation of human personality: "Just as He is merciful, so be you merciful." God "links the good thoughts of man to their fulfillment," "supports man's ethical efforts," helps

man being "the fashioned object closer to the intent of the Fashioner." In all of these and many related Midrashic statements, we would find overtones of an image of God as the Process making for the creative fulfillment of human personality.

The essential distinction to be kept in mind is that the rabbis spoke the language of the heart, they were writing poetry and myth, they were trying to be inspirational and not philosophical. The conclusions that the rabbis reached about what man ought to do with his life (his teleological perspective) are earlier sketches of the blueprint for the religious life conceived of by trans naturalist thinkers of today. The metaphors and allusions and images used by the rabbis differ from the various key words which Kaplan uses in describing God. But implicit within many Midrashic passages of a teleological nature is the image of God as the Power making for the perfection of human nature and the social order. That power is described in more personal terms; but the relationship of the rabbis to God is not only characterized as a relationship of sons to the Father; the relationship is one of moral agents to a Source of ethical inspiration at work in human life. If this were not the case, we would have images exclusively of a biographical or "familial" nature, and we would be hard pressed to discover in the Midrash overtones of the "teleological perspective" with which it is pervaded.

One cannot truthfully say then, that there is no basis or grounding for Kaplan's views in the traditionalist images of God. One may only say that the rabbis pictured God both as a Person, and in terms of Process; and that Kaplan prefers to see God uniquely as Process. This concern emerges from an awareness of the contradictions between the view of

God as having personality and our modern conceptions of the world, and of natural order. Whether one accepts Kaplan's ideas or not, he must admit that the contradiction is real. He must also concur that Kaplan is not developing a view antagonistic to rabbinic thinking - it is simply that his view underscores one aspect of rabbinic thinking and applies this aspect to modern Jewish religious thought.

In conclusion we might say: there are certain basic elements to any God idea. God, whether Person or Process, is generally still the Source of Salvation and the Object of Worship. Kaplan believes this and the rabbis believed this. After all, man believes in God in the first place and turns to God in prayer for basically the same reasons, whether he is living in the 2nd century C.E. or the 20th century. Whether we think in terms of classic theology or a more modern trans naturalistic vein, our myths and writings, whether ancient or modern, will express very similar strivings.

One basic reason for discussing symbolism is to arrive at a symbolism which is satisfying and honest for us, as men of a modern age. This does not necessarily imply rejection of all of the ancient symbolism. What it does imply is an effort to look beneath the symbolism of any period and ask: "What are these men trying to say to us about life's purposes and about the human soul?" Mordecai Kaplan uses a vocabulary which is different from that of the rabbis - but he is giving us much the same message: There is something sacred in human personality; man is born to be free; life has purpose; the evil may be harnessed and diverted into good; there issome meaning to life with all of its suffering and tragedy; we are not utterly alone; God cooperates with us, inspires us, holds us responsible; helps us fulfill our ideals. The power and beauty of the Midrashic images is in their emotional appeal: the rabbis

wrote poetically, they spoke "from heart to heart." Kaplan uses the vocabulary of philosophy and science and therefore at times we find it hard to "warm up" to his ideas. But we do not always stay on the poetic Pindaric heights of symbolism, rich imagery, and myth. If so, we would rest content with the Midrash alone, and Kaplan would go unread. There are, however, certain moments of intellectual honesty, of grappling with the truth, of inner examination of our beliefs, when we recognize the power and force of Kaplan's images. When we realize that in our own lives, God is in fact primarily that Power enabling us to assume responsibility for our existence, helping us to unleash our own inner creative resources, we are inclined more toward a trans naturalistic conception of God. Perhaps we might nurture the magnificent foliage and branches of traditional religious imagery with the sap of trans naturalistic theological honesty. One way of approaching God is incomplete without the other. Midrashically we might feel edified by the image of God as Master of the Universe, mindful, intellectually, that "God's seal is truth."

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER V

1. Kaplan, Mordecai, The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion. New York, The Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, 1947, 2nd. edit.; see chapters 2 and 4.

2. Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism. New York, The Reconstructionist Press, 1958, p. 52.

3. Kaplan, Meaning of God, p. 214.

4. Taken from the writer's correspondence with Dr. Kaplan.

5. Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, p. 10.

6. Kaplan, Meaning of God, p. 89.

7. Ibid., p. 86.

8. Ibid., see p. 178 f. "Repentance as the remaking of human nature."

9. Taken from the writer's correspondence with Dr. Kaplan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Gordon Allport. The Individual and His Religion. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947.

2. Leo Baeck. The Essence of Judaism. New York, Schocken Books, 1948.

3. Judaism and Christianity. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958.

4. William Braude. "The Relevance of Midrash". (CCAR Yearbook, XV), 1955.

5. Ernest Cassirer. Language and Myth. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1946. (Reprinted in a Dover edition, to which page numbers refer).

6. Abraham Cronbach. The Realities of Religion. New York, Bookman Associates, Inc., 1957.

7. Alex Fodor: "The Fall of Man in the Book of Genesis." (American Imago XI).

8. Sigmund Freud. Ego and Id. London, The Hogarth Press, Ltd., and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1950.

9. Totem and Taboo in Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, edited by A. A. Brill. New York, Random House, 1938, Modern Library Edition.

10. Erich Fromm. The Art of Loving. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1956.

11. The Forgotten Language. New York, Reinhart Co., 1951. (Reprinted in a Grove Press edition - to which page numbers refer.)

12. Abba Gordon. "The Concept of Sin According to Freud and the Midrash." (American Jewish Yearbook, XXXIX), New York, 1939.

13. Calvin Hall. Notes on the Structure and Dynamics of Personality (Freudian Theory) and Notes on Jung's Analytical Theory. Mimeographed lecture notes - Department of Psychology, Western Reserve University, 1955.

14. Karen Horney. Neurosis and Human Growth. New York, W. W. Norton Co., 1948.

15. Ernest Jones. Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis, Vol XI: Folklore, Anthropology, and Religion. London, The Hogarth Press, Ltd., and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1950.

16. Irene Josselyn. Psychosocial Development of Children. New York, Family Service Association of America, 1948. The Adolescent and His World, 1952.

17. Max Kaddushin. The Rabbinic Mind. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1952.

18. Horace M. Kallen. "The Symbol as Survival Value" (International Record of Medicine, CLXXI), New York, 1958.

19. Mordecai Kaplan. The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion. Second Edition. New York, The Reconstructionist Foundation, 1947.

20. Judaism Without Supernaturalism. New York, The Reconstructionist Foundation, 1958.

21. Notes from personal correspondence to the writer on Reconstructionist thinking.

22. Eugene Kohn. "A Clash of Ideas or Words". (The Reconstructionist XXVI). New York, 1960.

23. Israel Konowitz. Maamar Ha Elohut: The God Idea in Talmud and Other Rabbinic Sources. Published by the author, New York, 1908.

24. Abraham Kook. Orot HaTeshuvah: (Lights of Repentance). Jerusalem, Zion Publishers, 1925.

25. Susanne Langer. Philosophy in a New Key. Boston, Harvard University Press, 1942. (Reprinted in a Mentor edition - to which page numbers refer.)

26. Bronislaw Malinowski. Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays. New York, The Free Press, 1948. (Reprinted in a Doubleday Anchor edition, to which page numbers refer).

27. Geddes McGregor. Aesthetic Experience in Religion. London, The Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1947.

28. Midrash Rabbah to Genesis: Folio Edition.

29. Patrick Mullahy. Oedipus, Myth and Complex. New York, Hermitage Press, 1948. (Reprinted in a Grove Press edition, to which page numbers refer.)

30. Erich Neumann. The Origins and History of Consciousness. New York, Bollingen Foundation, 1954.

31. Rudolf Otto. The Idea of the Holy. New York, Oxford University Press, 1948. (Reprinted in a Galaxy edition, to which page numbers refer).

32. Morton Prince. The Unconscious. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1929.

33. Ira Progoff. Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning. New York, Julien Press, 1953.

34. Harry Slonimsky. "The Philosophy Implicit in the Midrash" (Hebrew Union College Annual, XXVIII), Cincinnati, 1956.

35. Orlo Strunk, editor. Readings in the Psychology of Religion. New York, Abingdon Press, 1959.

36. Werner Wolff "Structure and Origin of Religious Symbols" (International Record of Medicine, CLXXI), New York, 1958.