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MIRACLES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Thesis for Graduation.

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Miracles in the Old Testament.

Introduction.

It is of the tritest that in any modern investigation of the habits of thought and ideas of an ancient people, the caution be observed that there is a marked difference between the subsumptions underlying these ancient ideas and those at the basis of the modern conceptions of the same subject. In any such enquiry the investigator must guard against applying, unqualifiedly, his nomenclature to apparently similar ideas of the past. Thus, in any discussion of Miracles, the certainty is necessary that the term in question is clearly defined and demarcated. In order to do this the ideas underlying the conception must be limned unmistakably.

From very earliest beginnings, as soon as man developed sufficiently to distinguish more definitely the causal relations of phenomena, his brain has been at work trying to resolve the inexplicable. Occurrences which at one time seemed miraculous are being analyzed and explained as the natural results of definite causes. Other miracles, partaking of the nature of too subjective an attitude, and due, (so the moderns reason), in part, to an innate emotional, non-intellectual disposition to take for cause and effect what is merely coincidental either in time or space, and in part, to a highly developed imagination, are denied and ascribed to this rather temperamental nature of the early believer. This is surely a scientific attitude -- legitimate. But to attempt to throw back these considerations into the past and establish them there as facts for this early believer, is a trick just as miraculous as the facts denied. It is there that the modern investigator becomes rationalistic. He is an illegitimate critic who would impose upon the believers of miracles the rationalizing tendencies of his own mind. Were that possible in fact or true in origin then would the believer no longer name them miracles. Nay, more, wherever we find an individual or a people believing in certain phenomena as miracles, it is

absurd, speaking from their point of view to call it ought else; unless, indeed we desire to charge them with deliberate trickery.

The question then in an enquiry into the Miracles of the Old Testament, resolves itself into two parts: What are the underlying concepts of the phenomena designated as miracles, and the meaning of these; and, secondly, what relation do these concepts and meanings have to the general field of thought of the Old Testament, and how are the two related. It will thus deal both with the objective phenomena and the interpretation accorded them by the Old Testament writers.

With one possible exception¹ there exists no literature covering this double phase of the subject, nor indeed, even the objective side. In the main, the Jewish philosophers who dealt with the question were content to approach it from a purely theologic and apologetic point of view, and always with the idea in mind of reconciling these elements of Jewish faith with the doctrines of Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy.² This eminently rationalistic point of view is found also in the writings of more modern men.³ Instances occur, naturally, where latter-day Biblical critics and investigators into the fields of comparative folk-lore and religions, have touched upon the objective phase to be considered here.⁴ No systematic literature, however, exists.

1. Menegoz, Der biblische Wunderbegriff. (Translated into German by A. Baur. See Bibliography.)
2. Kramer, Das Probleme des Wunders.
3. Tisserand, Les miracles et les lois naturelles.
Girdlestone, (Transaction of the Victoria Institute for 1907, vol. XXXIX, pp. 61 et seq.) is responsible for a highly rationalistic attempt at miracle apologetics.
McClintock and Strong, s.v.
Kitto, s.v.
4. McCulloch in Hastings Encyclopedia, s.v. Miracles.

Terminology and Characterization.

The easiest approach to the question of miracles in the Old Testament will be a consideration of the implications involved in the recorded terminology. After having found what the exact elements there involved are, we shall have a starting point to discuss our subject in greater detail, and in the assurance that the designations we apply to the various phenomena involve certain and definite concepts.

One of the most ordinary expressions used in connection with events we now designate miraculous is the term זָכַר . The general consensus of opinion¹ seems to be that the root is זָכַר , 'to mark'. Further light on the meaning of the word and the implications involved in any event so denominated may be gained from a consideration of its usage. We find it often employed as a synonym for זָכַר , זָכַר and words of similar connotation. In Ex. XIII:9 the statement occurs, "And it shall be as an זָכַר upon thy hand and for a remembrance (זָכַר) between thine eyes." The verses 8b and 9 seem to refer to the blood-smearing ceremony; and זָכַר in that instance is also connected with a token, a remembrance that shows divine guidance. Also, in Num. XVII:3 the word is used as a synonym of זָכַר , and also with the idea in the background of divine interference. The same may be remarked of the passage in Ex. XIII:16, where זָכַר is either figurative for 'remembrance' or actual for 'bands of blood'.² In Ezek. XIV:8, where זָכַר is used as a synonym for זָכַר , the meaning there is that the event is to be a token of the anger of JHWH against those who have transgressed his law. In all the instances here quoted the divine element of the term is just as noticeable as is the fact that the word stands for an unusual circumstance that is to mark something.

Clearly in line with this usage is the employment of זָכַר to refer to the 10 Plagues and miracles of Egypt. In Deut. VI:22 where it is so used, from the fact that the qualifying adjective זָכַר is present, it would appear that זָכַר in and by

1. Lagarde, *Armenische Studien*, 24. Also his *Uebersicht ueber die im Armenischen.... Bildung der Nomina*, 82.
Koenig, *Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebr. Spr.* II. BDB, s.v. *Mandelkern* s.v.
2. Cf. Deut. VI:8, XI:18.

itself was equivocal: it was neither good nor evil. Thus the fact that the term is so often used of the Plagues does not mean that its connotation is exclusively one of punishment, though the telic element is here unmistakably present. It is of importance, also, to call attention to the fact that JHWH is here mentioned as He who caused these נִסִּים.³ In Genesis IV:15 we find the expression נִסָּה used as a sign whereby the immunity of Cain was to be made known. Here, too, it is to be observed that the sign is closely associated with the deity and that it is to be for a definite purpose.

In the characterization of Moses⁴ the statement is made, "And there did not arise another prophet in Israel..whom JHWH knew face to face, as far as the נִסִּים....which JHWH sent him to perform in Egypt.."

The rainbow is designated as the אֶמְלָה בְּרִית, the sign of the covenant. It is the mark that the deity established between himself and ~~between~~ humanity (Gen.IX:12f.) just as אֶמְלָה בְּרִית is the אֶמְלָה בְּרִית between God and the descendants of Abraham. (Gen.XVII:11).

In the story of Gideon (Jud.VI) the נִסָּה asked by him to prove the divine identity of the speaker, was, from our point of view miraculous: "And the angel..stretched forth the end of the staff that was in his hand...and a fire rose from the rock and consumed the meat and the angel disappeared." This satisfies Gideon that the speaker is divine!

When Hezekiah is promised relief by Isaiah, he demands a sign (IIKXX:8ff.). "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?" he insists. "And Isaiah said, '..This shall be the sign unto thee from JHWH that JHWH will do as He has spoken: Shall the shadow on the dial go forward ten degrees or recede ten degrees?'" In the account that follows Hezekiah seems to think that the former miracle is not so difficult, and that the latter test is more truly indicative of divine power. As a result, "Isaiah the prophet cried unto JHWH and the shadow receded (he brought the shadow back) ten degrees."⁵

3. Cf. Deut. XI:3, VII:19, IV:34ff., XVI:8.

4. Deut. XXXIV:11ff.

5. Benzinger in Marti's Kurshandkom. (p.185) remarks that from v.9 we can see the original form of the miracle which stated that the shadow had been moved ahead ten degrees and then brought back the same number. As it stands now, it has been reworked and Hezekiah is given the choice of two signs. It seems to me, however, that in either event, the sign is what we to-day designate as pure miracle: contrary to the course of nature.

In Exodus III:12 when Moses demands of the deity a sign, asking him, "Who am I that I shall go to Pharaoh and that I shall bring forth the children of Israel from Egypt?" he is answered that it is the deity who will take care of matters and he need not fear. And the sign to prove that, the deity declares, will be the fact that the Israelites will worship God on the same mountain where He has appeared unto Moses.

In Ex. IV: 1-17 are described in detail three אֲמָתוֹת which Moses is to perform to convince his people that it is really JHWH who had spoken to him and charged him with the message of deliverance. The statement in verse 1 that the people will not believe Moses is rather misleading; for from verse 5 the emphasis seems rather to be upon the proving of the identity of the deity. It was through the signs that the identity of the deity was to be established, and that His power was recognized. These signs which we shall consider in detail have then as their primary purpose the recognition of the Deity. And the unmistakable implication is that only the Divine can perform them.

What are the characteristics of these superior signs whereby the deity is recognized? The first sign is described in vv. 2/5. (It will not be to the point at the present to distinguish the complex sources involved, for as they stand now, they have been woven into a unified whole with a definite purpose.) Moses is bidden to cast his shepherd's crook on the ground, whereupon the staff turns into a serpent. Upon Moses fleeing the spot the Deity reassures him and commands him to seize the snake, whereupon it once more turns into the staff. As for the second sign, Moses is commanded to place his hand in his bosom. He does so, then upon withdrawing it, finds it leprous. Returning it, upon command, and withdrawing it again, he finds it as before -- healed. The third sign is the blood test. "Thou shalt take of the waters of the Nile and cast some on the ground; and the waters which you shall have taken from the Nile shall turn into blood on the ground." The three signs here enumerated stand in a progressive relation, no doubt so unified by a later redactor. So in verse 8 we are told, "If they do not hearken to the evidence of the first sign, yet will they hearken to the evidence of the second. But if they do not hearken to these two signs, then he is commanded to perform the third."

3. It is interesting to note that of the three signs only the first

Wherein did the signs evidence the divine quality of the doer? In the first instance, the changing of the staff into a serpent was not considered altogether impossible by human agencies, for the Egyptians did imitate it. We note, however, that the magicians accomplished this, not by themselves, but had to resort to *מג*. To accomplish the same without the help of these secret and demonic agencies was truly a sign of divine power. Presumably because it necessitated a change in the actual nature of the object. Similarly the changing of the water to blood was performed by the magicians, but again by secret magic, and implicitly to a more limited extent than was possible for Moses and Aaron. Here again the supposition seems certain that the change of nature of a substance was looked upon as divine⁷, and that inversely, the *מִן* here is used to *מג* signify this change of nature of a substance for a definite purpose. More exactly the term *מִן* is applied here because of the unusual nature of the circumstance, and also because of the telic element present in it. The same considerations apply to the second miracle, except that here there seems to be the additional increment, that leprosy was usually regarded as a direct visitation of the deity and hence particularly indicative of His action and power.⁸

*But how about
anubis and ba-
al's circumcision?*
מִן בְּרִית?

The *מִן* here described, then, contain several characteristics: they are purposive signs to show that JHWH is really the deity; they are indicative of divine action; and they are applied to phenomena that are unusual, in this case contrary to the usual course of nature, or more concretely, to events that are impossible of achievement by humans unaided. And it is because of this, indeed, that when Moses performs the signs before the people that they believe him. (Ex. IV: 30ff.)

We see, however, that in Is. VII: 11 *מִן* is used with the idea of corroborating the power of JHWH, yet without any attempt to apply it to a phenomena contrary to nature or to ordinary human

is later mentioned as here described. The second is not recorded at all, while the third is performed altogether differently. As we shall see later, moreover, both the signs actually performed were duplicated by Egyptian magicians. In the case of the latter, however, several marked differences will be brought out. It is quite possible that the skin disease in Ex. IX: 11 is the counterpart of the second sign, but one which the magicians are unable to imitate.

8. Cf. infra, p. *what?*

-v. 15 note 7?

experience. The sign which might be deep as Sheol or high as the heavens takes on a simple prognostic color: "The young woman shall conceive and bear a son...and before he ~~he~~ shall have attained to the age of discretion, the kings shall have forsaken the land." Similarly in Jer.XLIV:29 the sign that JHWH is about to visit the land for punishment is to be the defeat of Chofra at the hands of his enemies. In both these instances we have again the telic aspect of נִיח, and that it refers to an event that is not miraculous in the sense that it is contrary to the ordinary course of nature.

We find, also, that נִיח is used without any divine connotation. In Joshua II:12 Rahab enjoins the spies, "And now swear unto me by JHWH that as I have dealt kindly with you so will you deal kindly with me and my father's house, and give me an נִיח.⁹ In Numbers II:2 and in Ps.LXXIV:4,9 we have the word used as military signs or standards. In Gen.I:14 and in Jer. X:2 we find the word used in astrologic import: the tokens denoted by the junction of the planets and the portents of the constellations, etc. Here, too, however, there is a strong unmistakable telic significance to the word.

From the foregoing it appears that the main idea to be conveyed by the term נִיח is purposive. It is telic. It may be for good or evil; it may be to show the might of God or the truth of a prophet's mission. It may be to show God's pleasure or displeasure. Furthermore, in the vast majority of instances it is used of an act or a phenomenon directly or indirectly controlled by the deity.¹⁰

Hence, wherever a miraculous event is designated by the term נִיח, the main characteristic of that event is telic, and secondarily to show divine agency. The former element will be considered more carefully in the section of 'Purpose', while the second will engage our attention in the discussion on Magic and Miracle, where, as we shall see, its role is not inconsiderable.

9. Cf. also Job XXI:29
10. Josh.II:12 and Job XXI:29 are the only two instances in the Bible, with the exception of the two passages mentioned, where נִיח is used in entire dissociation of God or divine implication. Cf. also the following discussion of נִיח.

מוֹפֵת.

Like מֵאֵל, מוֹפֵת is another term that is often used to denote a miraculous or extraordinary event. Mandelkern gives the consensus of opinion¹¹ when he says, מוֹפֵת, נִרְדָּף אֵל, אֵת... לְרֵב חֹקְרֵי הַלְשׁוֹן שֶׁרֶשׁוֹ יִפֶּה, וְיִ"א שֶׁרֶשׁוֹ אֵת כְּהוֹרָאֲתוֹ הָעַרְבִית וּבְחֻמּוֹתָיו, כְּלוּמָר דְּבַר הַפֶּה נִפְלָא וְיוֹצֵא מִן הַכֹּלל..... It seems then that the word originally meant something that was distinguished, that stood out from the others because of its peculiarity, its strikingness, or its unnatural character. This, also, seems to be the original meaning of מֵאֵל: a sign or a mark or a distinguishing characteristic, something that stood out from among the general surroundings. The usage of the two will confirm this.

Unlike מֵאֵל, however, מוֹפֵת nowhere occurs without the specific meaning of miraculous, even in the phrase מוֹפֵת אֱלֹהִים (Zach. III:8). The most frequent reference of the word is to the miracles in Egypt.¹² In Deut. XIII:2 where מוֹפֵת refers to the credentials of the prophet, the event in mind, is evidently a miracle, as is the phenomenon denoted by מֵאֵל in the same passage. This is clear from the conclusion: "...for the Lord thy God is testing you", showing that the מֵאֵל or the מוֹפֵת are visitations or phenomena which, ordinarily, could be accounted for only on the supposition that God had interfered. In Joel III:3ff., we have a very clear description of a מוֹפֵת: "And I shall give מוֹפֵתִים in the heavens and on earth: blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood." The מוֹפֵתִים here are distinguished and singled out because of their preternatural quality; the complete reversal of the natural order and the visitation of unearthly changes were thus designated as מוֹפֵתִים¹³.

It seems, however, that מוֹפֵת was not in any sense essentially different from מֵאֵל. It appears that the two words were used interchangeably to denote the same events, both collectively and in detail. It further appears that though Dillman¹⁴ endeavors to distinguish the usages of the two terms according to two different authors, yet even he recognizes that

11. Barth, Die Nominalbildung, 172c. Also BDB, sub voc.

12. Dt. IV: 34, VI: 22, VII: 19, XVI: 8, XXXIV: 11, Jer. XXXII: 20, Ps. CV, et passim.

13. Cf. IV: 16

14. Kurzgefasst. Exeg. Handb. Exodus, ad loc. *What place?*

both E and P use the word as a synonym for the same idea expressed by J as נִיח. It appears that the two words were identical synonyms, probably from different sections of the country, and altogether identical in the period we find them. Nay, more, they were so closely connected, that joined, they formed a stock phrase, used to connote but one idea. Thus, in Ex.VII:3, נִיח is used as an alternative of נִיח. The same is true of the quotation in Deut.XV:2. In Is.VIII:18, which was certainly before the time of the main work of P, the words נִיח וְנִיח are used together as a stock phrase. In Ex.IV:21, the word נִיח is used to denote the same event previously described (by another author) as נִיח. The same may be remarked of verse 9. In verse 3 of the same chapter the two designations are used interchangeably. In IK XIII:3, correcting the text according to Benzinger¹⁵ we read, "And he gave a נִיח:...Behold this altar will be split and the ashes upon it will fall off... and the altar was split and the ashes upon it fell off according to the נִיח that the prophet had given by the Word of JHWH." Here is a striking instance of the identification of the two terms. Corresponding to another use of נִיח is the word נִיח in Ezek.XII:11.¹⁶ The ~~use of the~~ word in Zach. III:3 seems to be used in this sense: men of portents or signs or omens.¹⁷

Similarly, the use of the word in Ps.LXXI:7 is to denote the distinctive character of the Providential treatment accorded the suppliant. And just as we found נִיח a synonym of נִיח so we find נִיח used.¹⁸

It appears, then, from the discussion above that wherever נִיח is used the idea in the mind of the writer was an event that stands out conspicuously because of its preternatural character; and just as in the case of נִיח, because there was a definite purpose to be served by the event.¹⁹ It is also evident that the two terms here under consideration are no longer to be distinguished from the usage as present in the Bible. And the development of the two words, which originally meant simply a distinguishing mark is paralleled in post-biblical literature by that of נִיח.

15. KHC, Die Buecher der Koenige, ad loc. cit.

16. BDB quoting Thes. Ar., taking Mofet from root meaning 'portent'

17. Cf. Ezek. IV:3, XXIV:24, 27, Is. XX:3.

18. Cf. Job XVII:6. Several citations where the two are used as stock phrases occur in Jer. XXXII:20, Is. XX:3, Ex. XII:3⁹.

19. Cf. Wace in Internat. Stand. Biblical Encoy. p.2063

was correct

Does this
time mean?

אֵלֵּב

In addition to אֵלֵּב and מוֹפֵת the most prevalent designation for the miraculous is אֵלֵּב (אֵלֵּבִי). Mandelkern takes it as related to אֵלֵּב, אֵלֵּב, and אֵלֵּב: designating any event that is different from the general order of things.²⁰ The meaning given by the usage in the Bible seems corroborative of this.

In Ex. III:19ff., the term is used as a conscious synonym of אֵלֵּב and מוֹפֵת, or more exactly to describe the same events denoted by the latter. And like these two, אֵלֵּבִי does not necessarily mean phenomena of evil import. In the Song by the Sea (Ex.XV), the closing refrain, is "Who is like unto Thee that doeth אֵלֵּב." And when we consider in this connection the phrase in Gen.XVIII:14, הֵי אֵלֵּב סֵה' רַבֵּר the suspicion becomes strengthened that the term אֵלֵּב is used distinctively for actions that are too difficult for man, and only possible for God. In other words, it begins to appear as if this designation for phenomena were meant to convey the thought that the events so denominated are miracles in so far as they show divine agency. Similarly, in Josh.III:5 the people are bidden to make themselves holy for JHWH is going to perform אֵלֵּבִי: the people have to prepare themselves to witness this display of Divine Might. In the instances cited here, the word is used to indicate phenomena contrary to the laws of nature (from our point of view); but we must note again that it is solely the divine element that characterizes the events here.

Thus, in Is.XXV:1ff, and in XXIX:14, the word is used in connection with the deity, but without any connotation of opposition to the natural order of experience. On the contrary, it seems that the term אֵלֵּב, in conformity with the Semitic God-Conception (cf. infra), was applied to any event that struck the imagination of the author as unusual or more especially, as beyond the power of man. This idea is most strikingly attested to in the later literature, when a heightened spiritual conception is evidenced; as in the Psalms

20. Cf. with Targ. ad.loc.cit. Barth, *Etym.Stud.* 3, takes the word in the same way, while Wellhausen, *Rest.arab.heid.* p.206 relates it to a word originally connoting 'ominous'. The meaning given by Mandelkern, Barth, and Gerber is born out by such phrases אֵלֵּבִי אֵלֵּב, אֵלֵּבִי אֵלֵּב, אֵלֵּבִי אֵלֵּב. Cf. also Fraenkel, *Die Aran.Fremdwort.im. Arab.*, in *Beitr.z.Assyr. und semit. Sprachwissenschaft*, III:33.

and in Job. As to the latter, the passages in V:9 and XXXVII:14 are representative of this point of view; and there everything not possible to man comes under the head of מִלְאָם. In the Psalms this is evidenced even more convincingly. In the second verse of Chapter IX, מִלְאָם refers to all those works that are the product of the hands of God, as is also the sense of the second verse of Chapter LXXV. The seventy-seventh psalm is even more decisive. There deeds and wonders are practically identical and coterminous.²¹ Similarly Ps. LXXXVIII:11 sq., and LXXXIX:6 and CV:2 lead to identical conclusions.²² We do find the term referred specifically to the miracles in Egypt (Ps. CVI:7 et passim); yet from the one hundredth and seventh psalm, the rescue of desert wanderers, prisoners, the sick, sailors and wayfarers, are all comprehended within the same term.²³ Even spiritual contemplations over the power of God are included in this term.²⁴ The full intent of מִלְאָם, however, is given in Ps. CXXXI:1, where it refers to all those things that are beyond the power of the individual human to perform. Ps. CXXXVI:1 seq. points to an identical conclusion. There both the natural and the preternatural events are called מִלְאָם.²⁵

It follows then that מִלְאָם is used in general for any event that is extraordinary, unusual and not commonly occurring in the experience of man through his own power; and specifically applied to those events consciously ascribed to the direct influence of the deity, and which, without His action, are conceived of as impossible. Thus wherever, what we call a miracle is referred to by that word, the implication existing is that the phenomenon is caused by God.

21. Cf. 1st DVD in Deut. IX:3

22. Baethgen (ad loc. cit.) interprets 88/11 as meaning that the miracles consists in the relation of God and Israel and David, which is above the ordinary course of nature.

23. In all of the dangers mentioned here, God performs מִלְאָם which word seems to be synonymous here with control over nature. A striking example of this is in v. 24f: "They see the works of God and His wonders on the deep: He spoke and the whirlwind ceased, which had raised its waves... The cessation of storms at the prayer of God-fearing men is caused by direct intervention of God. This idea of efficacy of prayer runs through the whole psalter and is not lacking in other parts of the Bible. We shall have occasion to mention a number of other instances later.

24. Ps. CXIX:18, 27 (Cf. Baethgen ad loc. cit.), Ps. CXXXIX.

25. "Who fashioneth the Heavens... Who made the great luminaries.... who smote the first born of Egypt.... who divided the sea.... who leads His people.... who smote great kings.... who giveth food to all flesh...."

נִלְוָה

This word is most often used in connection with the greatness, the magnitude of God's doings, (Deut.X:21; Job V:9); but it is also used specifically of events that we would call definitely, miracles. Thus in IIKiVIII:4, the king asks Gehazi to tell him of the נִלְוָה which his master Elisha had performed. The lad's answer includes a recital of the resurrection of the widows son; thus showing that it was the extraordinary nature of the events related that claimed the designation--extraordinary in the sense that they were not met with in the general run of experience. The meaning here suggested is admirably illustrated in Job V:9 where נִלְוָה is used as a synonym of נִמְלֵא, and in Ps. XXXI:1, where the implication is found that the term like נִמְלֵא refers to deeds and thoughts beyond the power of man to divine.

נִפְעַל

In Ex.VI:6, VII:4, XII:12 this word is used to denote the plagues of Egypt. Its connotation, as clearly explained by the context is the punishing force of the miraculous acts. And when we combine with this the statement in Ezek.XIV:21 that the four 'judgments' of God are sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, we see that the term itself indicates simply the retributive and providential nature of events. With the exception of Ezek.XVI:41 and 2Chr.XXIV:24, all instances where the term occurs are ^{expressly} indicative of divine action. Even in the two exceptions noted, the second one unmistakably reveals the same idea, while the former deliberately implies it. This in itself is not strange when we consider that the ultimate judge, according to the idea of the Old Testament writers was God Himself, who judged every action and punished or rewarded it. It was He who decided all questions of Right, He who gave the Law, who spoke through the oracles.²⁶

Other terms designating miraculous occurrences are מִוִּלְיוֹת²⁷ נִסִּים²⁸, and מִפְּעֻלָּה²⁹. The first, from מַלְא is expressive of the unusual and awe-inspiring feature of the phenomenon, the second from נָס (to test) is on the retributive aspect of purpose; while the third is significant of the providential idea, underlying.

²⁶. Cf. God Conception (infra). ²⁷. Dt. IV:34, XXVI:8, XXXIV:12
²⁸. Dt. IV:34, VII:19, XXIX:2
²⁹. Ex. XIV:13 et passim.

From the foregoing we see quite clearly what elements in an event are necessary to make it called a miracle. In several instances the terminology has shown us that the out-of-the-ordinary characteristic is sufficient to make it so designated. It is however, not essential that there be a supernatural or a contra-natural ingredient; it is sufficient for a merely preternatural tinge to determine whether a phenomenon is miraculous or not. It is clear, furthermore, that in connection with the terms examined, any attribution of divine guidance, care or interference is sufficient to warrant the nomenclature of Miracle. Finally, it appears that some of the designations contain a decisive and decided telic element. It may therefore be tentatively inferred that a number of activities, natural in themselves, can be termed miracles or miraculous because of the divine purpose aspect referred thereto.

These considerations will give us a working basis for a further discussion. Since, however, the three points mentioned involve two ideas of fundamental importance: The Conception of Nature and Natural Law; and the God-Idea, it will behoove us to sketch these very briefly. We shall thereupon be in a position to decide more conclusively what position the miracle, so-called, occupied in the scheme of the Old Testament. We shall also be able to ascertain the relation that existed between miracles and other preternatural, supernatural or extraordinary events; if any such relation existed. Furthermore, we shall then be able to have indubitable characteristics, specific in themselves, of Old Testament miracles.

* * * * *

GOD CONCEPTION. 30

The God Conception of the Old Testament is an evolutionary picture of the development from a crass materialistic notion of the Deity to the highest spiritual idealization. Throughout the whole fabric of this changing development, however, several identical threads continue to the very end. And it is these threads that will aid us in the determination of the relation of the God Conception to Miracles.

First and foremost, God was always considered as the Helper

30. Baudissin, Sem. Rel. I:55-110. Barton, JHWH before Moses, in Studies in the History of Religions, Presented to C.H. Toy, pp. 187-204. Rbt. Smith, Rel. of Sem. Budd., Rel. of Israel.

of His people. From the old song of Deborah, than which there is scarce another bit of writing older, which speaks in unmeasured terms of the power of Jhwh as the Helper of Israel, till the very end of the development passages innumerable proclaim this characteristic of the Deity.³¹ Naturally, to help His worshippers is the first qualification of a God and JHWH was no exception to the rule.

In like manner JHWH punishes Israel for its transgressions. The idea that the defeats of Israel and the reverses it suffered were the results of divine displeasure because of its backsliding, is not merely the Deuteronomists' way of interpreting history, nor exclusively the property of the Priestly writer. These two possibly gave this view a more systematic setting. But throughout primitive life, a national, tribal or even family misfortune was always imputed to the lapses in religious observances. Several instances will occur later³² that will bear out this point sufficiently.

For the Deity thus to punish his people or to help them and rescue them from adversaries, save them from foes and be a bulwark against disaster, supreme power must be resident in Him. He is therefore conceived as All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Powerful. JHWH can kill and make alive³³; He is a God of Knowledge³⁴; all wisdom and understanding come from Him³⁵. He has the power to send rain and to cause drought.³⁶ All disasters are caused by Him³⁷. It is His to help and to defeat.³⁸ He is also gifted with foreknowledge, and He knows that those who sought the life of Moses are dead³⁹. He can turn the evil deeds of man into good; and because of His superior understanding those deeds which man with his limited understanding considers evil are really beneficent.⁴⁰ When Daniel is called to the king, the explanation of the dream is vouchsafed only because God has permitted it, that God who is superior to the magic-inspired wisdom (demonic) of the Chaldeans.⁴¹

31. A partial list of such passages are: Ex. XIV: 13, Ex. XV, Nu. XIV: 42, Dt. II: 30, Josh. X: 12, XXIV: 11ff., 2K. III: 2, XX: 5, Jer. XXXII: 20, 2Chr. XIV: 7.
 32. Cf. infra, Purpose of Miracles, Reward and Punishment.
 33. 1Sam. II: 8. 34. 1Sam. II: 8. 35. 1K. II: 3, 11, 29. Cf. Ex. XXVIII: 3.
 From Nu. XI: 16 seq. it appears that it was the $\square \square \square \square \square \square$ which made possible all judgment and wisdom.
 36. 1K. XVII: 1. 37. Amos III: 8. 38. 2Chr. XXV: 7ff. 39. Ex. IV: 18.
 40. Gen. L: 20, XLV: 5. 41. Dan. II: 8; Cf. vv. 18, 22, 28, 35, 47.

In Ps.CXLVII we have the conception that the deity is All-Powerful both in the material and the spiritual realm. His it is to accomplish according to His will; and nothing on earth or in the heart of man is hidden from Him; nor can ought withstand His might. That He is the Creator and the Maker of all is too well shown by the Creation story to need further elaboration. This conception as has been shown by Curtiss⁴² is general among the Semites. The old Semitic notion that God is the originator of all, good as well as evil is there clearly brought out. Whatever we may think of Curtiss' reason for this idea⁴³ it is not to be contradicted that with the Semite the chief role of the Deity is that of Creator⁴⁴. The Psalms admirably illustrate this. God is the creator and Owner of all. In such stories as the births of Isaac, Jacob, Samson, Samuel, the notion is but hardly hidden that the Deity was the direct generator of these men.⁴⁵ The story of Jacob and the success attending him with his sheep through the help of God⁴⁶ shows the same conception.⁴⁷ In Ps.CXXXV we find the idea that God controls the elements. God causes disease and heals⁴⁸. It is God who promises to add fifteen years to the life of the king and heal him of his disease⁴⁹. It is JHWH who is termed *אֱלֹהִים*⁵⁰; and the reproach levelled against Asa, and wherefore he was to be punished is that he sought to be healed, not by God, but by professional healers⁵¹. When the king advises Hasael to go to Israel to be cured, he tells him to approach the *אֱלֹהִים* and through him ask JHWH whether he can be healed,⁵² plainly indicating that the healing of disease was not directly in the power of the Man of God, but rather in the Deity for whom the Man was simply an intermediary. This is strikingly corroborated by the remark of the king of Israel upon receipt of the letter from Damascus. "What", he cries, "am I Elohim that I can kill and make alive, that this one sends to me to heal someone of his leprosy?"⁵³

42. Ursem. Rel. pp. 292 seq. 43. op. cit. p. 69 44. op. cit. Chap. VIII-XI. Cf. Barton, op. cit. 45. Gen. XXIX: 31. Especially Gen. XXX: 2, 6, 8. Also Doughty, Arab. Des. II: 385f.
46. Gen. XXXI: 8 47. The magical element of this story has been reinterpreted; cf. infra Magia and Miracles.
48. Gen. XIX: 11 49. 2KXX: 5 50. Ex. XV: 27, XXIII: 25
51. 2Chr. XVI: 12: These professional healers were really exorcists, in conformity with the opposite notion that all disease was caused by demons. (Cf. Weirreich, Das Antikeheilungswunder)
52. 2KVIII: 8 53. 2KV: 15

cf. stated

S. Kohler's Jahrbuch
der Theologie

Der Kohler
Jürgen Jacobs

When Naaman is told by Elisha to bathe in the Jordan as a cure for leprosy, the former is astounded, for thought he⁵⁴ "He (Elisha) would go out and stand and call on the name of JHWH his God...." Yet when he is cured, he nevertheless recognizes the handiwork of the Deity; for he says, "There is no God in the world as that in Israel."⁵⁵ To show his utter belief and thankfulness he has an altar set up in his own land upon soil taken from Israel, so that he may worship the Deity.⁵⁶

God, moreover, could make His will and purpose known in advance. The means chosen for this, were usually dreams, oracles, or prophets.⁵⁷ Strack's⁵⁸ contention that oracles were connected with pagan worship, and that the ~~city~~ mentioned in Gen. XXV: 22 could not be the place of an oracle is hardly well-grounded. It is true, as we shall later see, that there was a hard and fast distinction between magical or demonic oracles and JHWHistic oracles; but there is nothing in the text that countenances the assumption that all oracles are pagan, though this also must be qualified from the point of view of the later prophetic development.⁵⁹

The Divinity was closely associated with fire. When the angel touches the sacrifice and causes it to ascend in flames Manoah is convinced that the apparition is divine.⁶⁰ In the test that Elijah arranges with the prophets of Baal, the result is to decide who is the true God: JHWH or Baal. The test is proclaimed in these words,⁶¹ "...and that God which shall answer with fire, he is God; and all the people answered, it is well."⁶² The people agree that it is a fair test; only a God can cause fire to descend. "Answer me, Oh JHWH, answer me!" cries Elijah, after the Baal prophets give up in despair, "that this people may know that thou art JHWH, the true God!"... "and the fire of JHWH fell upon and consumed the burnt offering and the wood... And all the people saw and fell upon their faces, and said, "JHWH is God, JHWH is God!"⁶³ When Moses is called to his mission the Deity appears to him in the guise of

54. I IKV: 11 55. v. 15 56. Cf. 1K XX: 23 seq. This conception of localized deities and localized powers is a very common one in Semitic and other religions: the idea that Gods are powerless except when in their own peculiar 'gebiet'.
57. 1Sam. XXVIII: 6ff. 58. Kurzgef. Kom. p. 84 59. Cf. Is. XLIV: 25
60. Judges XIII: 20 61. 1K XVIII: 24 62. The element of fire has always been closely associated with a non-human origin. The Prometheus myth in its various forms is sufficient indication.
63. Cf. Lev. IX: 24, Nu. XVI: 35

indeed sketchy
but therefore lacking
psychological insight }

11.2

a flaming bush.⁶⁴ When the Law is given on Mt. Sinai, the mountain was clothed in flame and smoke when JHWH descended on its crest.⁶⁵ The Israelites were led through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.⁶⁶

JHWH is a living God⁶⁷ who knows all and who may or may not reveal events to his favorites, the prophets.⁶⁸

This very sketchy outline⁶⁹ of the God-conception in the Old Testament is sufficient to show that all the facts and phenomena of the Universe (narrow at one time, widened as time passed and the religion developed) were conceived as emanating from and controlled by the divine. The presupposition would therefore be that the source of any act ordinarily met with, or even of extraordinary character, would be imputed to direct or indirect control by the Deity. Miracles therefore, usually regarded as a striking event, would have their source in the Deity, especially in a religion which so zealously sought to preserve the singleness of its Supreme Being and waged incessant war against encroachments by any other power of powers.

CONCEPTION OF NATURE.

The foregoing discussion of the God Conception has generated a presupposition that miracles, which as we have seen from our discussion of the terminology seem to have as their main characteristic, the element of 'Unusualness' had their source and origin in God. It remains to be seen whether the Old Testament writers had any conception of Miracles as opposed to the Course of Nature; or indeed, whether they possessed any conception corresponding to our notion of Natural Law; and if so how Miracles were conceived from that point of view.

It has been held and with some reason that the primitive mind has no conception of natural law in our sense of the word. Thus, Frazer⁷⁰, "Men at this stage of thought do not consider miracles as breaches of natural laws. Not conceiving of the existence of natural laws, primitive man cannot conceive of a

⁶⁴ Ex. III: 2, Cf. Ex. XXIV: 17

⁶⁵ Ex. XIX: 18, 20, IX: 15, Dt. IV: 11

⁶⁶ Dillman (op. cit.) declares that this was but a miraculous interpretation of a perfectly natural way of guiding caravans.

⁶⁷ 2KXIX: 18, Josh III: 13sq.

⁶⁸ 2KIV: 7

⁶⁹ The writer recognizes that the God Conception of the Israelites is properly a synthesis of existing divergent conceptions; but as found in the OT it is a conscious attempt to amalgamate these to the dominant one of JHWH.

⁷⁰ Magic Art, 378ff.

breach of it. A miracle to him is merely an unusual, striking manifestation of a common power." So also Blau⁷¹ holds that the Bible does not know of Nature. Hence he believes the difference between miracles of God in conformity with the Law of Nature and those opposed to Natural Law is a foreign distinction to Biblical authors.⁷² It is true, from a multitude of instances in the Bible that Nature, as we would imagine from our discussion of the God Conception, was looked upon simply as a product of God's Will, (not in the theological or metaphysical sense) and as directly controlled by Him.⁷³ A Perusal of these quotations will undoubtedly tend to the opinion that the ancient Israelite had no conception of an impersonal Nature -- an objective working of Natural Law altogether dissociated from any personal divine action, such as the Greeks possessed, developed and gave to the world. It will, however, be unwarranted, I think, to infer from this that there was also lacking a concept of orderliness and natural succession in the sense that we usually attribute to the workings of Natural Law. It will be altogether false to state that the Israelite of the Old Testament made no distinction between phenomena of his daily life, which he took for granted and as a matter of course, and the unusual, which though he may have considered just as much a part of Nature (in his conception of the term) as the usual. The latter whether factitive in the sense that they defied his power of combining cause and effect, or because they were too subtle for his undeveloped intelligence to so connect; or fictitive, in the sense that they were pure products of a highly developed imagination⁷⁴ not trained to think as we are, and constantly apt to project into the outer world the products of imagination as real and factitive⁷⁵, these latter were nevertheless considered unnatural, in the sense that they were incapable of ordinary achievement and possible only through Divine aid.

⁷¹ Der Mosaismus und Das Wunder, p. 71f. Cf. also Kohler, Theologie p. 118-123.

⁷² Gen. 19/24, Isa. 12/15, Josh 10/12, I Kings 8/33, II Kings 20/8, Ps. 135/5, Ps. 148/6-8, Jon. 1/4, Ps. 38/6, Ps. 77, Ps. 107, Ps. 135/5, Ps. 148/6-8. Doughty in Arab. Des. gives instances innumerable of this trait of the Arabians. One statement he makes (though evidently exaggerated) is of interest: Nine out of ten Arabians are weak in the head.

⁷³ Baldwin in his Social Interpretations has some very illuminating paragraphs on this point of view.

The striking character lay in the fact that the phenomena broke the general order or heightened some orderly phenomenon above the usual. Thus Jevons⁷⁶ holds that the savage can distinguish between natural and supernatural though the comparative distinction to him may not be of the same quality as it assumes in our eyes. Implicitly involved is the same conclusion in Soltau's statement⁷⁷ that from the point of view of the modern world conception which is based upon an idea of the validity of Universal Laws of Nature, it is futile to believe in Miracles, in the ordinary sense of the word, i.e., in the extraordinary exertion of a superior force to change natural phenomena. It would be absurd, he says, to ask as Gideon(?) did that the sun might stand still or as Elijah did to ask for rain. In one of the quotations previously cited from the Bible⁷⁸ where Hezekiah is given the choice of the two miracles, it seems clear that the tacit subsumption there indicates that in the ordinary course of events --had not JHWH interfered-- the shadow could not have suddenly moved forward ten degrees nor backward. Likewise, in the story of the divine foretelling of Isaac's birth, the implication remains that according to all intents of natural sequence Sarah could not conceive nor Abraham beget⁷⁹. Probably due to Greek influence is the extreme view promulgated in Job and Koheleth that seem to reflect the idea of an iron law of Nature which not even the Deity can break.⁸⁰ In the latter author⁸¹ there is no possibility left for miracles. There the conception is that the order of the world is unchangeable and no disturbance of its laws ^{is} ~~are~~ possible. Unchanging sameness and irrevocable sequence are the concomitants of the progress of nature.

Less extreme and more nearly in accord with the tenor of Jewish thinking is the statement in Nu.XVI:29, "If these die as mankind generally die, and if they are visited by a usual visitation, then JHWH did not send me." We find here unmistakably,

76. Introduction to His. of Rel. p.24.

77. Heidentum i.d. Altchristlich. Kirche, S.127

78. I Kings XX:8ff.

79. Gen. XVIII:14. Cf. in particular Gen. XVIII:11.

80. Job VII & XIV:11

81. This is distinctive of the pure sceptic called by Siegfried (KHC)Q₁

the notion that there is a general rule of the manner of death and that there is a fairly well-defined concept of natural order, once again, not in the Greek sense. It must be submitted that all these occurrences, natural and unnatural were effected by God; but within this sphere of divine influence there were clearly demarcated two realms, the realm of the ordinary corresponding to our notion of Natural Law, and the realm of the extraordinary, which we deny but which the Old Testament writer affirmed.

There are a number of passages that support this conclusion, that the Israelites had a lively conception of the difference between the natural and the unnatural. These passages will be later quoted at greater length⁸². Sufficient to quote here the clearest, found in ISamVI, in the story of the Return of the Ark. The problem confronting the Philistines is to decide whether the Ark, the God of the Hebrews, had been the cause of the dire disaster that had befallen them, or whether it was simply *מקרה*. It would perhaps be too hasty to conclude that this word means chance in our present connotation of it. But the context (v.9) shows very clearly that a very vivid idea was entertained of the possibility of pestilence without the direct interference of the deity for any specific purpose. The possibility is of course open that underlying it was the notion of some other deity, their own, responsible for the pestilence. However, it is unmistakable that we find here strongly contrasted the possibility of the usual and the probability of the unusual. And equally clear is it that the Israelites of the O.T. felt the difference between the ordinary and the counter-ordinary, a difference that was also acknowledged in fact. They had a very keen appreciation of the usual and the unusual, whatever was their attitude towards impersonal nature.

To say then that there was no difference between miracles in conformity with nature and those opposed to nature is but a half-truth. If instead of Law we substitute Sequence and omit the negative a nearer approach to the truth would be gained. ⁸³

82, Ps. CXLVIII: 5-8, Jer. XXXI: 35f. (Cf. *Infra* Basis of Miracles).
83. Seeberg in Schaff-Hersog, VII: 365.

but the killer of soul
is a reality
seen this very day /<

KINDS OF MIRACLES.

The foregoing has yielded us a number of presuppositions. From the consideration of the God Conception it became plausible that the source of all events was really God, and hence we would have to expect that everything of unusual occurrence was viewed as a sign of the intervention of the Deity, just as much as are the ordinary facts in life. On the other hand, the presupposition was also formed that there might be various kinds of miracles: those of the usual, in perfect conformity with the ordinary experiences of man, for as we have seen miracles can be so termed wholly apart from the objective factors; and those which are unusual. We shall now examine in detail a number of miracles and see whether the presuppositions yielded are borne out by the evidence on hand; though, it is clear that the presuppositions themselves are based on individual cases thus examined. It will rather result then in filling out the outlines of our investigation. It must be observed that when in the following use is made of the phrase, Contrary to the Law of Nature, the concept to be evoked is not that generally known by that name; but taking the point of view explained above, Nature as a closed circle of divine action, those events that are interruptions of the 'usual' order. On the other hand, In accordance with the Laws of Nature, will stand for the 'usual'.⁸⁴

In considering the sign asked by Hezekiah I brought out that the main elements of the miracle consisted, 1) it was a token vouchsafed by God to prove to Hezekiah that his disease would be healed, 2) that God himself (in this case through the prophet) consummated the token, 3) the phenomenon involved the reversal of the natural order of events, and hence was striking, thus an index that JHWH was responsible for it. In the story of Lot his wife is turned into a pillar of salt for disobeying God (in the person of his angels).⁸⁵ While it is true that the basis of this miracle and the nature of its underlying purpose is different, several points of similarity exist. Analyz-

84. Cf. Religion i. Gesch. u. Gegenw. p. 214³

85. Doughty (op. cit. p. 530) speaks of a mountain called Thulla-el-Bint which the natives say, referring to a lofty pinnacle at the top was formerly a goat-herdess and was transformed to stone when Mohammed cursed the people of the valley for not giving ear to his preaching. "And the bint stands as she were spinning, when the judgment fell on her."

a planis
5 guy out on
over there but Michael!
See commentators

ing the occurrence, these elements are yielded, 1) The action took place for the purpose of punishing the disobedient one, 2) the transformation was effected by the Deity, and 3) the change from flesh and blood to salt was sufficiently unnatural to be direct evidence of the handiwork of the Deity. Thus in the two accounts, there are purpose, divine agency and phenomenal bases.

When Moses is stopped in the wilderness by the apparition of the blazing bush, Elohim called to him from the midst of the bush. Here undoubtedly the distinguishing characteristic of the phenomenon was its unnatural appearance, and its seeming defiance of the laws of natural activity of fire. The sight of the flaming bush unharmed by the darting tongues of flame was sufficiently contrary to all experience to turn the shepherd aside. And at the basis of the miracle was undoubtedly the notion described above⁸⁶ that it was only the Deity who could so control the flame, or there may even have been present the conception that that was the only way in which the Deity could reveal Himself. Though it is clear from the account as it stands at present that the main purpose to be served by the miracle was very definite: to secure the approach of Moses by heightening his curiosity.⁸⁷ In the account of the miraculous speaking of Balaam's she-ass⁸⁸ we read, "And JHWH opened the mouth of the she-ass..." We see here first of all divine agency working in the miracle, secondly that it was not customary for beasts to speak, though the motif is a familiar one in general folk-lore and in Miracle legends⁸⁹; and finally that there was a direct purpose to be served by the speech of the beast. The miracle related of J^hshua when he commanded the sun to stand still is not as some have taken it, figurative, but from the language used in X:12 weq, a genuine miracle in the mind of the writer. The very fact that he finds it necessary to add, "This is written in the Sepher Hayashar points unmistakably in this direction. Furthermore the verses immediately preceding leave no doubt. In this case also we have the following

86. Cf. infra p.16 87. It is clear that one of the accounts embedded here knew of but the appearance of an angel from the bush, and did not at all explain the flame of fire. The bush moreover, seems to have been a very definite bush, one probably in intimate connection with the JHWH worship.

88. Nu.XXII:28. 89. Jausson, Costumes, p.297f. tells of a she-ass belonging to Ahoud later a wely who spoke when accused of unchastity.

characteristics: The event was contrary to the ordinary course of things -- indeed it was felt to be so in the extreme, for the narrator tells us, "and there was not like that day before him nor after him..." From the context, it is also clear that JHWH was responsible for the phenomenon. However early or late the story may be, the setting in which it is placed admits of no other conclusion. Also it is evident that the performance of the miracle was for a highly practical purpose and in full harmony with the conception of God as the helper of Israel.

In I Kings XIII:20 seq. the story is told of a Man of God, who disobeyed the command of JHWH. To show that his punishment was really divine and not the product of 'chance' the author notes that the lion that killed him did not devour the corpse of the prophet, neither did it harm the ass upon which the disobedient one was riding; in fact the two beasts remained together near the dead body, in perfect indifference. This then was evidently a miraculous punishment in the eyes of the writer. It is from God, because the lion does not follow the ordinary inclinations of his kind, and in addition this punishment has been foretold by the other prophet with whom the unfortunate one had broken bread, thus directly contravening the command of God. Similar in quality is the miracle related of Daniel in the pit of lions.⁸⁹ There we find the direct statement that God sent an angel to close up the mouth of the lions. Again they act contrary to the laws of their kind, and do not destroy the man of faith. This miracle also has an evident purpose: to show that because Daniel trusted in God, He delivered him from death. The providential quality is apparent.

In Gen. XVI we have the story of the miraculous appearance of the angel to the banished Hagar. The striking element there is the fact that Hagar alone was unable to see the well, and 'her eyes were opened' by God, directly or indirectly, so that she saw the water course.⁹⁰ The element that plays the chief role here is not the fact itself, the existence

89. VI:12 seq.

90. Jirku, Volkerreligion Israels attempts to explain that this opening of the eyes was caused by the Sanherim, a host of fiery chariots and horsemen. For his amazing explanation see pp. 65-78

of the well -- that itself is natural circumstance.⁹¹ What gives a miraculous tint to the event is, first, the providential nature of the attendant circumstances; and second, the presence and the activity of divine forces. Similar considerations hold for the story of Abraham when he is shown the ram entangled by its horns in the thicket.⁹² Likewise, the story of Jacob and his dealings with Laban's sheep imply the same. It was God, as we have seen, who caused the sheep to bear to the advantage of Jacob.⁹³ It is true that Jacob resorts to means, ordinarily termed homeopathic magic; but the color the narrative assumes here argues for the first consideration. It must be noted, however, that in the first two instances here mentioned the events may have been miracles in the sense that we ~~so~~ look on the meaning of the word. I mean, that the original version of the Hagar story may have told of a well produced on the spot, as was the case, for example in the Moses story; and that the ram which Abraham saw was then and there created by the Deity. Yet as they stand here, the miraculous element is present; but it is due to the role given divine intervention.

Identical remarks apply to the narrative in Gen. XXIV, where Eliezer sets out to seek a wife for his master's son. The test he considers sufficient to establish the identity and eligibility of the future bride are fulfilled, only, as the writer is careful to point out through the help of Providence.⁹⁴ Here, too, the objective fact is not at all contrary to the general order of natural experience; but its miraculous color is gained from the providential nature of the circumstances, and, what is more to the point in this case, the answer to a prayer addressed to God.

From this point of view the Healing of Hezekiah may be considered miraculous. The providential of the event, or more strictly, the intervention of the Deity is sufficient to make it so.⁹⁵

91. We shall see however that this is really an aetiological myth even as it stands now. Cf. this narrative under Legends of Miracles, (infra). 92. Similar considerations hold here, except that the rationalizing element is even more pronounced. This, however, is by no means the only evidence of such a tendency in the Bible. Cf. Sources of Miracles, (infra).

93. Gen. XXXI:8 sq.

94. v. 12, & 21, 40 sq.)

95. Cf. infra Sources of Miracles, for a further discussion.

This belongs to Chap. 10

Prophecy

7

A similar miraculous content is found in the story of Joseph⁹⁶. The intention there is to show the providential aspect of the Selling of Joseph by his brothers; and the fact that it was God who so ordered the matter, that in the end the children of Israel might be properly cared for during the famine; and at the same time, the author undoubtedly considered the narrative but an element in the whole story of God's miraculous dealings with His people throughout its history.

When the sign is given to Eli that his sons will both die on the same day, the actualization of the prediction, though not a miracle, has miraculous elements.⁹⁷ Note, the deaths are not, in themselves, miraculous, for war and battle take their toll, always. The fact that the event has been foretold shows that the Deity was interested in the event and that He, therefore, was the direct cause of the deaths of the two on the same day. Likewise, the signs that Samuel gives Saul⁹⁸ gain their miraculous setting from the element of foretelling, an indication of their providential nature. In all these illustrations we must again note that the objective facts themselves were not miraculous, only the circumstances were. Of like nature is the story in Is.VII:11 seq. On exactly the same plane are the signs given by Jonathan to his companion in ISam.XIV:9f.⁹⁹

Dreams are also in the nature of the miraculous. Not only is there here inherent the idea of prophecy and of the ominous but they are considered as deliberately sent by God. Thus when Joseph dreams, the implication is present that it was God who sent the dream, just as when his fellow-prisoners relate their dreams to him,¹⁰⁰ or when Pharaoh asks him for an interpretation of his dream¹⁰¹ or as when Daniel is asked to explain the dream of the king. Likewise is it with the dream that Gideon overhears.¹⁰² It is, to him, a sign that God has delivered the hosts of Midian into his hands. The fact that "he bowed" ¹⁰³ (to God) shows that he considered it in this light. Indicative

96. Cf. Gen.XLV:5

97. ISam.II:84

98. ISam.X

99. * Benzinger points out with regard to II Kings.XIX:29ff that the sign there is not a miraculous sign but rather a memorial that JHWH has foretold it and therefore it is JHWH who is the cause of it. This last fact, however, is sufficient, I believe, to stamp the sign, rather its consummation, as a miracle.

100. Gen.XL:18

101. Gen.XLI:16, 25, 28, 32.

102. Judges VII:9

103. v.15.

from

Nature of J.H.V.22
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of the same are the dreams of Jacob.¹⁰⁴

Theophanies, likewise, come within the purview of miracles. In the E narrative as well as in J, theophanies are usually consummated through the mediation of angels.¹⁰⁵ The theophany described in ISam.III indicates the direct action of the Deity and His direct appearance. The completest theophany described is that in I Kings XIX, when Elijah is confronted by the angel. He had fallen asleep beneath a broom-bush. The angel appeared and awakened him.¹⁰⁶ Thereupon the angel fed¹⁰⁷ the prophet and because of the miraculous nature of the feeding the prophet is enabled to go forty days and nights without other sustenance. This part of the story smacks suspiciously of the similar account concerning Moses. As for the theophany proper, it is clear that a deliberate attempt was made by a later editor (or possibly writer) to sublimate the crude God-conception there revealed. It is sufficient, for our purpose, however, to indicate that theophanies, because of the circumstances attending them, and because they were vouchsafed only to 'Geweihete' or those especially favored by the Deity were considered as genuine miracles.

In the case of both dreams and theophanies the miracle was both of the objective and subjective type. The Israelite of the Old Testament, like early peoples everywhere, looked upon dreams as unusual manifestations. To him it was not part of the same order as his waking moments, though the latter also was under the guidance of God. Likewise theophanies. They could happen, like dreams. But like dreams, their occurrence was unusual and meant that the Deity had particularly chosen the individual to whom they happened.

It seems then from the foregoing that the miracles in the Bible have really two aspects. First of all there is the objective fact itself. This may or may not be in direct contradiction to the usual order and customary human experience. When it is in opposition to the ordinary course of nature, that fact itself was enough to stamp it as evidence of divine direction.¹⁰⁸

104. Genesis XXXI:8, XXVIII:10seq.

105. Instances of theophanies in E are: Gen. XXI:17, Ex. XIV:19, Judg. VI:20, XIII:6,9. Instances in J, Gen. XVI, XXII:11, Ex. III:2, Nu. XII:22seq. 106. Benzinger seems to think that the events here narrated occurred to Elijah in a dream. Aside from the fact that this does not chime in with the purpose of the story, there is nothing in the text to warrant it. Wherever we have the mention of a dream in the Bible we have the definite mention of the word, חלום. Furthermore there does not appear to be anything strange that Elijah, who was carried away by fiery

And when the phenomenon itself is not one sufficient to be a sign or a token or a portent in the sense that it alone is unusual, there are several elements that make it so. Among these there is primarily the fact of Providential or Divine intervention and control. It may be providential because it is in answer to a prayer, or because it is foretold, or because it corresponds to a definite arrangement of events that betoken a definite purpose. It follows, then, that the single criterion of a miracle, if such is to be had, is the unusual aspect of an event denoting its Divine influence.

From this point of view, then, all of the history of Israel is a miracle -- and, indeed, as noted before, the Psalmists so conceived it. We, however, will have to content ourselves here with a more detailed analysis, not of the whole history, but of those individual events that are unusual and striking manifestations of God's providence and influence. For our purposes, therefore, we shall define a miracle as a direct or indirect evidence of divine power exerted in individual instances for a definite purpose. As contrasted with the definition of McCulloch¹⁰⁹ we have noticed that the purposes subserved by these miraculous phenomena are not always beneficent, a point to be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

spirits (chariots and horsemen) should hold converse with an angel face to face. All the more so since these personal encounters with angels, as we have seen, a definite motif in the Old Testament, and especially applicable to an אֱלֹהִים שֶׁנִּשְׁמָה.

¹⁰⁷. The foregoing remarks are borne out by a closer examination of the text, which, as can be seen from vv. 5-8 is an attempt to fuse two accounts. But in each of the accounts we have the expression וַיֵּרָא, and in v. 3, we find that after he had eaten he once more composed himself to rest.

¹⁰⁸. In the case of the false prophet, the miracle, or sign was, I may be pardoned for repeating, as much a product of divine action as was the sign or miracle of the true prophet.

¹⁰⁹. Op.cit. p. 87Ab, "We therefore define miracle as an occasional evidence of direct divine power, presumably divine used for beneficent ends not to cause wonder." Cf. classification of miracles according to Maimonides (Kramer, op.cit. pp. 83ff) where similar considerations are regarded.

CHAPTER II.

SOURCE, PURPOSE AND BASIS OF MIRACLES.

* * * * *

Source.

Generally speaking, the source of all miracles is the Deity Himself. We find thus, in one of the accounts of the Plagues of Egypt¹ the words given, "Therefore, tell the children of Israel that I am JHWH and I will redeem them from their serfdom." Likewise, in Dt. IV: 34f God Himself is the one who is referred to as having accomplished the Plagues of Egypt.² The waters of the Red Sea were divided by JHWH, according to one author.³ The same conception is seen in Exodus XV, though here we find an attempt to rationalize the miracle by attributing it to the strong wind which JHWH sent. As mentioned previously, the birth of Isaac was directly due to God's intervention. It was JHWH who smote the first-born of Egypt⁴. The waters of Mara were made sweet by a wood which JHWH showed Moses.⁵ The latter did not know of the miraculous properties of the wood, and only the superior knowledge of the Divine helped the Children of Israel. In Ex. XVII: 17 JHWH stands near the rock when Moses smites it with his staff; so that the idea is in the mind of the author of the extremely close connection between the presence of the Deity and the consummation of the miracle. When Miriam was suddenly stricken with leprosy, we read⁶ that the cloud had been resting on the tent. Since E's conception of the Deity was that the majesty and awefulness of God could not be seen, and hence must His glory be shrouded in the cloud, it is evident that the source of Miriam's miraculous visitation was the Deity alone.

The pestilence that afflicts Israel (in Numbers XIV: 11) is occasioned by JHWH himself. It is JHWH who dried up the waters of the Jordan⁷. Steuernagel⁸ points out, as was previously shown that Josh. X: 14 clearly indicates that JHWH caused the sun to halt in its diurnal course. The story of Jonah and the

1. Ex. VI: 8 2. Cf. Dt. VI: 22, VII: 19, XXVI: 8, Ex. VII: 8 et pass.

3. Joshua II: 12

4. Ex. XII: 29, XIII: 15

5. Ex. XV: 23

6. Nu. XII: 10.

7. Josh. IV: 23. This is a concrete instance of a later effort to attribute to JHWH all miracles. We shall see that this miracle in its original form (despite the priestly additions) was performed by the Ark.

8. HK. Deut. u. Josh. ad loc. cit.

miraculous events that happened to him were caused directly by God. The storm was sent by God, the fish was prepared by Him, He spoke to the fish and it spewed the prophet forth, the gourd is His handiwork, and the east wind that harassed Jonah was sent by Him⁹. "Blessed be JHWH who alone doeth wonders" is the sentiment of the Psalmist¹⁰.

Manna was rained down by JHWH from heaven¹¹. When Jeroboam attempts to cause the arrest of the prophet, his hand is smitten with palsy.¹² The following verses, wherein is told that Jeroboam asks the prophet to pray for his recovery show that the visitation was from God. God grants the request and the hand is healed -- evidently through the same power that had caused the affliction. One of the accounts of the Plague of Hail¹³ states that the Deity Himself caused the hail to trouble the Egyptians, without any other intervention such as is contained in the accounts of the other authors. The blossoming of Aaron's staff as related in NU.XVII:16seq was clearly caused by the Deity¹⁴. The destruction of Dathan and Abiram was caused directly by God¹⁵. When Samson thirsted at Lechi¹⁶ Elohim split the mortar which was in (near) the town so that the water gushed forth and slaked his thirst. In the account of the translation of Elijah there are two elements.¹⁷ One tells of Elijah carried to heaven by fiery chariots; the other by a storm. Yet in both the undeniable implication exists that it was the Deity who was the direct agent of the miraculous translation. In fact Elijah tells Elisha that if he (Elisha) is able to see the wonderful event, then it is a sign conclusive, that God has chosen him as his (Elijah's) successor and able to be endowed with two parts of the Spirit of God. Comparable to the miracle of the waters of Mara, is the narrative of Elisha's purification of the unhealthy water.¹⁸ In the latter case we find, "thus saith JHWH, 'I have healed the water'", a statement showing that it was JHWH who was considered responsible for the phenomenon.

9. Jon I:4, II:1, 11, IV:6, 7, 8. 10. Ps. LXXII:18.
 11. Dt. VIII:15, Ex. XVI:4. Strack (op.cit.) maintains that the word 'heaven' in the latter citation proves it to be a miracle.
 12. I Kings XIII:4 13. Ex. IX:18. 14. Cf. v.20
 15. Dt. XI:1 seq. 16. Jud. XV:18ff. 17. Cf. Benzinger, op.cit. pp.130ff. Thenius, op.cit. holds, that the word Whirlwind in the story means 'quickly'. This seems to be unwarranted. II KII.
 18. II KII:20

The sudden retreat of the Syrians related in IIKVII is caused by the intervention of the Deity. Verse 6 states, "The Lord caused the camp to hear the sound of a mighty host..."

In IChr.XIII:10 we find one version of the punishment of Uzzah in requital for his touching the ark. There the complexion given the story is, "the anger of JHWH was kindled against Uzzah and He smote him". If we remember that the Ark was originally the Deity Himself--that is, it was conceived of as containing the Deity-- we shall again have an illustration of direct action by God. Similarly in Josh II:13, in the miracle at the Jordan, referred to above, it is really the Ark that performs the miracle. "And it came to pass as soon as the soles of the ~~feet~~ priests bearing the Ark rested in the waters of the Jordan that the waters of the Jordan were divided. The priests here are merely the bearers of the Ark and are not at all connected with the actual performance of the miracle. In IV:6 we see this unmistakably. Furthermore, the waters remain divided^d so long as the Ark remains in the river; once the priests have carried it to the other bank the waters resume their accustomed flow.¹⁹ The picture here, like that in Num.X:33 and in ISamV,VI:7-14, IISamVI:3⁶ is that of the Ark as a divine force exercising divine power. The importance given to the the object in all these narratives and the role it plays there are undeniable evidence of this. We see that it possessed determinate military power, sufficient to give victory to its devotees. When the Philistines hear of its arrival, they tremble because of the dread of the God of the Israelitee. It was also considered powerful and able to direct the cows that bore it and to choose a camp for the Israelites wandering in the desert; capable, also of bringing plagues upon the Philistines and destroying ~~ix~~ their gods.

In addition to these direct modes of action on the part of the Deity, in miraculous manner, a number of miracles are performed indirectly by the same divine agency. We shall see that it was the tendency on the part of the Israelitish writers to ascribe all unusual powers and events to the Deity, even though performed directly by a non-divine agency.

19.IV:18

The Hand of God plays a very prominent rôle in this respect. Weinreich²⁰ has pointed out the significance that the hand has in the performance of healing miracles among the ancients. In the case of the O.T., it is quite possible that the Hand of JHWH is a survival of the anthropomorphic and anthropo^{athic} conception of the Deity. Unquestionably the Hand was as concrete and as real a part of the Deity as were His face and back²¹. Later as the conception became spiritualized, the terminology remained and the parts of the body of the deity became figurative and poetic. In all cases, however, where the Hand of God is mentioned²², whether figurative or concrete, it is part of the Deity Himself.

Miracles are also performed by the angel of God. We have seen that the angel played an important role in the theophanies of both J and E. As to the significance attributed to these intermediary beings²³ and as to the conceptions involved in the term, little is known, at least with regard to pre-exilic ideas. With the exception of the Bnei Elohim in the book of Genesis, wherever they occur in pre-exilic literature, they appear to be mediators between God and men, and are the messengers of God, assuming human form and shape, and even endowed with human attributes of thirst and hunger, as were the Bnei Elohim with concupiscence. Yet in nearly every instance they manifest their divinity by acts which are miraculous. Thus Gideon is convinced of the divinity of the stranger when the latter touches the sacrifice with his staff, sending the food heavenward in a pillar of flame.²⁴ He then realizes that it was an angel of JHWH. In the story of Hagar we see how closely identified were the two: God and his angel. True it is that the story as we have it is a composite of two sources, yet the very fact that the redactor combines them and calls the angel a JHWH²⁵ points to the close connection existing between the deity and his messenger. Similarly in the story of Jacob no distinction is made between the messenger and the Deity.²⁶ When Abraham sends Eliezer to seek a wife for his son he is confident that JHWH will send his messenger to prosper Eliezer on his mission.²⁷ The same conception is latent in Ex. XXIII:20,

21. Weinreich, op.cit. pp.48 seq. It is clear that the hand served not only for the purpose of transferring certain powers but rather for the purpose of transferring what was peculiarly the quality of the one who thus transferred it.

22. Cf. Dt. XI:8, XXVI:8, Ex. III:19, VII:4, XIV:31, Ex. XV, Is. LXIII:11

In the main the T. T. 7433 represents a later substitution for the earlier, simple

have 13 m. 20?

Again the peculiar nature
of J. H. V. H. as the
God of the Sinai or Desert
Heights which consists
in the

where despite the opinion that messenger there refers to a man of flesh and blood, the presumption is that word stands for an angel who will fulfill the same function as that mentioned in the passage immediately preceding.²⁸

The Assyrian camp was destroyed through the efforts of an angel (IIKings XIX:35). Daniel is saved in the lions' den by the angel, who, it will be noted was sent by God to close the mouths of the lions. And in IIChron.XXXII:21 the angel who destroyed the Assyrian camp was also sent by God. These instances show, that, whether in the late narrative of Daniel, (when there had already been developed a complete angelology), or in the early picture given by E of Jacob, the angel, whatever may have been his characteristic, was closely identified with the Deity and all the powers of the former came to him from the latter²⁸. In the Old Testament, then, miracles performed by angels were really as much a product of divine influence as were those miracles performed by the Deity Himself.²⁹

Aside from these sources of miracles, sources that are virtually directly divine, there are a number of miracles that were performed by man. Yet even here, the evidence clearly points to the fact that the origin of the source whereby these men performed the phenomena harked back to the Deity.

* * * * *

The Miracles of Moses.

Despite the multiplicity of authorship observed in the account of the plagues of Egypt, the final redactor evidently had a well-defined plan in the combination of the various sources. In accordance with his idea of divine providence and of evolution-

23. Judg.VI:17.

24. The passage here seems to be indicative of a time when there were local JHWHs

25. Gen.XXXI:9,11ff. In all these instances, the fact that the stories have been fused by a later editor does not vitiate the contention that it was the tendency of the Old Testament writers to identify the work of the angels with the work of their Master; otherwise the narratives could not have been preserved in their present form.

26. Gen.XXIV:7
27. We see here that the angel received his power from the Shem which was resident in him, the Shem of JHWH. Despite the contention of Benno Jacob, in *Namen Gottes* (of. infra, *Magio and Miracle*), the Shem like the Ruach was a concrete, definite power producing object. *sent. to (object too material a form)*.

28. This conception, however, differed materially from the later Jewish conception of a demonology and angelology revealed by many of the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic works.

29. Naturally there was a difference in the point of view of the writer who conceived of JHWH revealing Himself through angels and him who believed in the direct non-mediating effect of the Deity.

ary progress he has grouped the miracles, as Billman³⁰ observes into a kind of a progression. The first four are inconvenient but not harmful,, the next four are harmful but not destructive, the ninth is merelyⁱⁿ convenient, the tenth culminating and destructive. The same progression is to be observed in the effect produced upon the disposition of Pharaoh. In Ex.VII:13,23 he refuses absolutely to leave the Israelites depart; in Ex.VIII:11 he begins to weaken; in VIII:28 he permits them to leave with certain restrictions; in IX:27,34 he modifies these restrictions; in Ex.X:7,8-9,11, 17,20 further modifications are made; still more in Ex.X:24,27; till finally he hurries them forth.

In the three accounts to be distinguished in the narrative, the so-called E account knows of but one agent for the plagues in its story: Moses and the Staff.³¹ Yet in these miracles which Moses is supposed to perform we find that it is really God who is the force in the background. Thus in the case of the first plague of Flood according to the E account Moses performs the miracle with the staff that had been transformed into a serpent.³² The staff, however, from the narrative in Ex.IV had been an ordinary shepherd's crook until the Deity had transferred His power to it. Thereupon it became 'the staff' and through it Moses was enabled to perform the miracles. The position occupied by Moses in this stratum, then, is one of the miracle-worker, performing miracles through the power of the staff which transmits the force transferred to it by the Deity. (For a further discussion of this 'force,' see infra, Miracles of Elijah).

The other miracles mentioned by E are those of the Flies, the Hail, the Locusts and the Darkness. This last plague³³ has practically no other elements; and we can see exactly how the author conceived the plagues to have been consummated. Moses waves his hand to the sky³⁴ and darkness ensues.³⁵

30. op.cit. ad loc.cit.

31. Cf. VII:14b,20, IX:22ff, X:12,13,21-27

32. VII:15-17. It appears that the manner of performing the miracle described by the E source in Ex.IV:9 is not mentioned verbatim in the later redactional account.

33. X:21

34. v.22. The staff was in the hand of Moses when he waved it; this is synecdochical. Cf. Ex.VIII:2 and VIII:13, X:12 and X:13.

35. Cf. story of the preceding plague in Ex.X:12

The P³⁶ account most clearly illustrated by the Plague of Vermin³⁷ shows us that Moses delegated his power to Aaron and that it was the latter who performed the miracles with his own staff. In this account of P, however, it is also clear that the divine agency is the ultimate force that gave Aaron's staff the power to perform the miracles³⁸. There can be no doubt³⁹ that a decided thaumaturgic and magical coloring is given to Aaron by the Priestly writer, based possibly upon older tradition, but the emphatic tenor of his presentation, we will see to be the hostility between the magic of the Egyptians and the wonder-working power (a sign of JHWH's favor) of Aaron.

In the same manner as the Plagues of Egypt so the Miracle of the Red Sea is composed of various strata. Dillman⁴⁰ attempts to distinguish the various sources. It is clear that the account of Moses performing the miracle relates that he succeeded in consummating through the agency of the divine staff. We have already seen that the miracle at the waters of Marah was accomplished only with the assistance of God. In the Water-Miracle of Ex.XVII Moses is told to take his staff with which he smote the Nile and smite the rock whereupon it is promised that the water will flow. The very fact that JHWH was to stand near the scene indicates the source whence the power of Moses was to come. The scene described immediately following (Ex.XVII:9-16) tells how Moses caused the victory over Amalek by keeping his hands raised. It must be remarked that here again he held the Staff of God (Cf.v.9) so that it was through the power resident in it and which it in turn derived from the deity that the victory was possible. The tale here smacks of magical origins, yet as it has come down to us it is a pure miracle in the sense that it is a free divine power that is effective. We saw that in the miracle of Manna God was the moving force. Similar considerations hold for the miracle of Quails. In the second miracle of the water, (Nu. XX:6seq), where Moses is told to take the staff and speak to the rock, there is a peculiar

36. It will be unnecessary to consider the J account for as seen in Ex.IX:1-7, according to that author Moses simply announced the miracles while God Himself performed them.

37. Ex.VIII:12-15

38. Cf.v.15

39. Cf.infra Magic and Miracles

40. Op.cit. ad loc.cit. He gives as the component parts of E XII:17-19, XIV:5-7, 19a and the Song in Ex.XV, which though not originally E was used by that author. And the verses he considers P (16, 21, 26) are probably not correctly assigned, for he considers the P account responsible for the idea that Moses accomplished the miracles by stretching out his hand when as a matter of fact we

also the story of
his staff
Num. 17.

iar confusion. The clear intent of the narrative as it has been edited is to account for the fact that Moses was not permitted to reach the Land of Promise. It is thus described that Moses disobeyed the Deity and instead of speaking to the rock smote it. Despite Holzinger's contention⁴¹ that the sin of Moses consisted in disbelieving the immediate power of JHWH and relying rather on the medium of the staff to produce the water, the solution is not so simple. We have seen that the power of the staff was derived from God; and the reason Holzinger gives cannot answer the problem. Moses was told to take the staff. From the phrase, "take the staff.. and thou shalt bring forth water"⁴² and from vv.10b and 11, it is clear that this constituted one account and this was complete as to the means of consummating the miracle. In that recension Mosee alone is mentioned and he alone is to perform the miracle. In v.12, on the other hand, and 8abc there is another account that speaks of both Moses and Aaron as talking to the rock. It appears therefore that a later redactor combined these two and therein found a reason, or made one, to account for the fact that Moses did not enter the land. In any event, however, it is clear that Moses' performance of the miracle was made possible only by and through the Deity.

It is evident from the foregoing that Moses himself was not able to perform any miracle, in the sense that a magician can perform them⁴³ but that all the miracles for which he stood sponsor were actualized only either because of direct divine action or mediation in the form of the staff. Furthermore, these miracles were performed by the Deity only because he so willed, no constraint was exerted, in the sense that a magician forces the powers to obey him. It was in complete consonance with the Israelitish idea of the Deity that they could not conceive⁴⁴ of their God as compelled to help them or perform miracles for them. Thus He is represented as punishing their

have seen this to be but a synecdochical and elliptical expression for the hand and the staff. It is quite possible that 16a, 21ab and 24 are parts of E with the name of the Deity a redactorial change.
 41. KHM, ad loc.cit. 42.v.8 43. Cf. Magic and Miracle, (infra.) 44. This refers, naturally to the theoretical development of the religion, for in practice we shall see evidences of ancestor-worship, magical ceremonies, spirit worship, divination, necromancy and a host of other practices unacceptable to the theoretical thinkers in the religion. There is always this difference in every religion, especially a spiritualised religion, between the practices of the populace, relics of an older time and the ideals of the thinkers.

Agains Fdly. Id. of
Horeb kept it!

Who gives it rain

or produces it?

backslidings -- and wherever, as we have it occasionally in the Moses account -- he is entreated to help the people, stay a pestilence, or feed them, the clear indications show that it was not such a compulsion such as the belief in magic entailed, but entirely due to the free, self-determinative power of God.

* * * * *

The Miracles of Elijah.

We have remarked that the Elijah miracle dealing with the prophets of Baal and the coming of the rain was produced directly by the Deity, with Elijah simply as intermediary. In the story of the miraculous feeding of Elijah (I Kings XVII:4sq) it is clear that God sent the ravens who brought him bread and meat.⁴⁵ When Elijah attempts to restore the dead son of the widow he does not rely upon his own power as in the case of the healers cited by Weinreich, but he calls upon God. Indeed, v.22 tells us, "And JHWH heard the cry of Elijah and returned the spirit of the child so that he lived again." And when the mother realizes that her beloved is once more among the living she exclaims, "Now do I know that thou art a Man of God and that the Word of JHWH which is in thy mouth is genuine."

In this sentence we have the whole secret of Elijah's power to work miracles. He is an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים and he possesses the genuine דָּבָר ה'. Thus in I Kings I:10, Elijah exclaims, "If I be an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים let there descend a fire from heaven and destroy you." In this manner does he rid himself of the several companies of soldiers that come to arrest him. The אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים is he who is gifted with the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים or who has the דָּבָר ה'. And as Duhm has shown⁴⁶ the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים was a concrete spiritualized substance which came directly from the Deity and was communicated by him to his 'Geweihete', whereby they became 'in place of God' and capable of acting like Him. It must be remembered, however, that in every case their power was limited, so that we often find these men invoking God in order to have Him aid them with His power. Furthermore,

⁴⁵ Benzinger, op.cit. ad loc. cit. suggest the close connection between the story of Elijah and the story of the Manna and the Quail. The Raven story however is a familiar one in both Oriental and occidental literatures,

⁴⁶ Die Gottgeweihten.

though this power~~y~~ possessed by the favored ones could be transferred, it could not be disposed or diverted except by the wish of the Deity Himself. The Men of God were strictly limited as to their powers. When Elisha ¹ asks Elijah to give him two parts of the Spirit, the latter answers that he is quite incapable of bestowing it: it rests entirely with God, the source and origin of the force. On the other hand we know from the case of Moses and Aaron, Moses and Joshua, Samuel and David and Saul, and finally from that of Elisha and Elija themselves that this Spirit could be transmitted to a limited degree, and always with and through the consent of the Deity. When the elders of Israel are to be invested with the spirit, God says⁴⁷, "I will go down and speak with you and I shall divert of the Spirit which is upon thee and place it upon them, so that they may be able to engage with the people in company with thee." In vv.25 seq., we read the conclusion, "And JHWH spoke unto him and He caused to depart of the Spirit that was on him and gave it to the seventy -- and it happened that as soon as the Spirit rested on them they began to prophesy."⁴⁸ In the story of Samson we note that in the majority of circumstances when he performs a deed of extraordinary nature, the expression is used⁴⁹ וְחִזַּק עָלָיו רוּחַ ה' Daniel was considered capable of interpreting dreams because of the רוּחַ which was in him.⁵⁰ It was because he was an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים and endowed with the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים that Abijah, though blind knew the wife of Jeroboam and here errand.⁵¹ We read in IIChron.XXIV:20, "And the spirit of God clothed Zachariahand he stood opposite the people and said to them.... 'Thus saith God....' " Joash dares to attempt punishment; as a result, because he offends the Deity by ignoring the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים the king is punished.⁵² It is clear that the Spirit was a direct ~~product~~ product resident in the Deity and bestowed by him upon those whom He favored.

47. Nu.XI:16 seq.

48. Cf. also v.29

49. Cf. Jud. XIII:25, XIV:6, 19, XV:14.

50. Daniel IV:5. Cf. for a fuller discussion of רוּחַ Weinel (its significance in the N.T.) op.cit. p.244; Case, Evolution of Early Christianity, p.144.

51. I Kings XIV:4 seq.

52. Cf. v.24.

It was therefore through the power imparted directly by God that Elijah was able to perform the various miracles. Elijah is also helped concretely by the 'Spirit'. Thus in IKings VIII:12 Obadiah is afraid to tell Ahab that Elijah is located, for he thinks, "And it shall be when I go from thee (Elijah) then may the Spirit of JHWH carry thee to a place whereof I know not." It is quite possible, however, that the Spirit referred to here is the same as the Wind in IIKings II:11. In this event it would indicate that Elijah could be served by the forces of nature, because he was a Man of God; rather, JHWH could command the wind to carry him away.⁵³ In the last miracle here mentioned (that of his translation) we find the tale of his crossing the waters of the Jordan. These are divided by the mantle which he carries. Here also we must remember that the mantle plays the same role as the staff. It is a convenient mediating power to transmit the Spirit of God. In fact any part of the prophets garment is considered infected by this force the very nature of which makes it contagious, within certain limits.

As in the case of Moses, then, Elijah's ability to perform miracles is due to the direct influence of the Deity. It is God who is imagined to be the generating power and the potent force back of all his manifestations. Elijah, may most probably have been of the frequent type of miracle-workers met with in all literatures; but in the tradition, and especially in the form in which we have the story and the cycle, the miracles he performed were all, as we shall see for definite purposes, and being so, were connected with the Deity, sometimes directly, as in the case of the Baal prophets, and the translation, sometime indirectly, as in the case of the Widow's son and the Waters of the Jordan.

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The Miracles of Elisha.

Benzinger⁵⁴ points out that before having seen the translation

53. This is another version of the general theme of the ability of individuals to appear and disappear at will, especially individuals who are considered to be in touch with divine or supernatural powers, and particularly on occasions when danger threatens. Cf. IKings XVIII:12 and Benzinger's commentary in KHC p.108. Of especial interest are the examples that Jansen (op. cit. p.808) gives of the ability of wyls to transport themselves at will and render themselves invisible.

54. Op.Cit. p.131

of his master, and having been invested with his power, Elisha was unable to perform miracles, just as none of the other prophets of the same school could accomplish them.⁵⁵ It was only because Elisha had been found favorable by the Deity as the story in chapter II tells us, that he was able to witness the miraculous departure of Elijah; and again only because the latter felt that God had chosen his pupil by vouchsafing him the power to see this, did he invest the former with the mantle, thereby conferring upon Elisha the Spirit. And it was this which enabled Elisha to perform miracles.⁵⁶ The miracle of the purification of the cistern is accomplished with the help of God.⁵⁷ When Elisha curses the youngsters who had jeered at him the bears that destroy them are sent by JHWH.⁵⁸ The miracle which Elisha promises in II Kings III:17 is accomplished by God. In the miracle of the oil-cruse⁵⁹ there is an undoubted relation to the similar miracle described in I Kings XVII of Elijah. There is, however, a slight difference in the two stories, as indeed, there seems to be in the portrayal of Elisha and that of his master. In the case of the latter, JHWH is directly responsible for the miraculous feeding of the widow.⁶⁰ In the story of Elisha no mention is made that the miracle was in any way connected with divine help, though there are several indirect indications. In the first place the widow appeals to him on the basis that her husband was a prophet and God-fearing, and in the second place, the power of Elisha is attributed to his being a Man of God.⁶¹ The same considerations hold for the following incident.⁶² It was because Elisha was a Man of God that his prophecy was considered genuine. There is, however, a very marked tendency in this Elisha cycle to ascribe the miracles of Elisha to the man himself, as is the tendency to ascribe miracles to welys.⁶³

55. II Kings IV:38ff. 56. We find however in II Kings III:12seq. that Elisha had to resort to the usual means of inducing ecstasy and having the Hand of God rest upon him! Whether or not there are several narratives of Elisha combined is difficult to say.
57. II Kings II:21. 58. II Kings II:23seq. 59. II Kings IV
60. I Kings XVII:14. 61. II Kings IV:7. 62. vv. 8seq.
63. In fact, a considerable number of elements in the Elisha story and in the Elisha story remind one very strongly of the welys mentioned by Jaussen, (op.cit. pp.294-312). But the caution must be urged that whereas welys are almost autonomous and independent, in the stories here there is the strong Divine element, which though weaker in the Elisha cycle is nevertheless present -- a fact due most likely to the nature of the JHWH worship.

The God motif, however, occurs more conspicuously in the following miracles. After Gehazi had failed in his mission⁶⁴ Elisha comes, himself. The first thing he does to effect the cure is to call upon God, (v.33). And even if this part of the verse were an interpolation, the twenty-seventh verse would show that the Man of God was directly dependent on the good-will of the Deity. In II Kings IV:42 seq., it is God who is responsible for the miracle. "Thus hath said JHWH, 'They shall eat and leave over.' And he gave it to them and they ate and there remained of the food, according to the Word of JHWH". As was pointed out above, when Naaman comes to be healed the supposition is that the Deity will do this. He is therefore indignant at the seemingly puerile advice given him by the reputed man of God. On the other hand as soon as he is healed he recognizes the handiwork of God.⁶⁵ The miraculous satisfaction of the hunger of the inhabitants of Samaria is also occasioned by the intervention of God.⁶⁶ But, as Benzinger explains in his comment to that passage, we have here a combination of two legends. One is the complement, legendary in nature, to the story in I Kings XX; the other is based upon the Elijah story of the Drought. In II Kings VIII:8 Elisha is sent to by the king to ask of JHWH whether there is a chance of him being healed. In this story the prophet is simply the mediator between God and the patient. He acts a part similar to that revealed in the narrative in chapter III:12.

In the story in II Kings VI:8, however, Elisha appears once more in the role of the quasi magician. He knows the secret plans of the Syrians. When, on the other hand, the soldiers of the king come to seize him, he prays to God. As a result, these are struck with blindness, or a species of it⁶⁷. Attention is to be called to the fiery chariots and horsemen that Elisha shows to his disciple.⁶⁸ In this he shows himself once more in the character of a magician or a wely, And in harmony with this last conception, even at death his force and power do not leave him; for when a murdered man is cast into his grave, the contact with corpse of the Man of God restores the unfortunate one to life.⁶⁹

64. Cf. Jirku, op.cit. pp. 78 seq.

65. II Kings V:15

66. II Kings VII:2

67. Cf. Jirku, op.cit. Sanwerin.

68. There

is a strong resemblance to the familiars and demons of later magicians, not because of the objects, but because of the way Elisha puts the explanation. 69. Among other illustrations compare those in Jaussen, op.cit., p. 297; and Doughty, Arabia Deserta, II: 385f.

We have no Old Testament ✓

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There appears to be then a composite picture of Elisha. It is difficult to decide which is the more genuine, in the sense that it reflects the character of the real Elisha, whether he was historic or not. We shall see that magic was practised in Israel, with certain limitations, as well as among the surrounding peoples. We shall also determine, however, that the deliberate trend in Israel was against all magical performances. Furthermore, from what was said of miracles and the other miracle-workers, it is safer to conclude that the picture of Elisha, the miracle-worker, dependent upon God, and simply the intermediary through whom the Deity worked, is closer to the spirit of Israelitish miracle-workers, and the position they occupy in the Bible, than is the portrait that endows him with powers and capacities clearly magical; especially since there is a deliberate effort made to adjust the two conceptions.

Throughout the various accounts of the miracle-workers and miracles, whatever may be the immediate means used to consummate the phenomenon, the ultimate source to which the power is referred is always the Deity. Properly speaking, therefore, only one source is conceived of in the Old Testament,⁷⁰ as originating all miracles. This source, as we presupposed from the God Conception and as inevitably following from it, is God. Of course various modds may have and probably represented non-JHWHstic methods; but as we have seen and shall later take occasion to emphasize and amplify, the tendency was to correlate everything with God. And this particularly must be borne in mind. Nowhere, even in the Elisha stories, is there a full and complete description of compelling God to perform any miracle. The Deity is often invoked, prayed to⁷¹, but never compelled as was the case with magicians.

70. I must again insist that the meaning here is of the dominant and constant note running through the whole development of the Bible. My meaning here is strictly confined to the evolutionary trend of the O.T. as revealed in its developing conceptions. As far as practise goes, magic was as prevalent in the time of Solomon as it was in the days of the Tannaim and later.

71. Prayer, in origin may have been partly in the nature of a magical compulsion; and it is quite possible that the insistence of Elijah and Elisha following their prayers may have borne a resemblance to the action of Choni HaZanagol when he virtually compelled the Deity to grant rain by refusing to step out of the circle. But this compulsion is altogether different from the compulsion used in magical ceremonies, and from the conception underlying that. Cf. Magic and Miracle (infra, Chap. III)

Purpose of Miracles.

In the preliminary discussion in Chapter I it was seen that miracles are telic in character. We shall now find that this general purposive nature, the *rason d'etre* of miracles, is divided into several concrete and definite classes. It sometimes occurs, moreover, that one miracle may serve two or more purposes.

Reward and Punishment.

Pharaoh is punished by God for violating Sarah⁷². Here the diseases that visited Pharaoh just as was later the case with Abimelech were considered visitation from the Deity, from the criterion already established for miracles. The destruction of Sodom is also miraculous: containing providential, purposive elements. In this instance the miraculous visitation is to punish the inhabitants for transgressing fundamental laws of conduct, morality and hospitality. One of the motives running through the composite story of the Plagues of Egypt is similar. We find there that God hardens the heart of Pharaoh so that the latter refuses to obey. Hence the plagues are sent to punish him⁷³. The last plague is given as a punishment for Pharaoh's hardness of heart and rebellion against God.⁷⁴ Akin to this is the statement in Ex.XV:26, XXIII:25, that the disobedience of the Israelites will be followed by the same punishments that were visited upon Egypt; and obedience by the removal of these.

The miraculous fire from JHWH is a sign that the sacrifices were genuine and acceptable, while the destruction of Nadab and Abihu by a similar divine fire is to punish them for disobedience. (Lev.X:1-3). The miraculous visitation of Miriam was also a punishment for refusal to acknowledge the authority of Moses⁷⁵. In the story of Korach we find a detailed description of a similar function of miraculous visitation. The sin of the rebellious ones, like all sin in primitive conception is contagious⁷⁶. Hence the innocent are asked to separate. Then saith Moses, "Hereby will you know that JHWH has sent me to do all these doings." Moses could not accomplish the subsequent miracle himself. It was the Deity who was to perform it. He, however, describes in advance what is to happen in order to show that the event will really be a punishment for their sins. "If these die as mankind generally

72. It is clear that the violation of Sarah was actual, no matter how hard the author (or redactor) tries to hide this. Gen.XII:15f. Gen.XI:6. 73. Cf. p.44. for main motif. 74. Ex.VII:17 et passim

75. Nu.XII:14

76. Cf. Nu.XVII:26

die.... then JHWH d&d not send me...but if JHWH will create ⁷⁷ something new and the earth will open its mouth, then know ye that it is these men who have displeased God.." The miraculous destruction of the rebels was to show that they had displeased and disobeyed the Deity. The same holds true of the destruction of the 250 men in the story told in Nu.XVI:35. Indeed, when the Israelites demur here they themselves are visited by a pestilence which is stopped only through the action of the leaders.

The calamities enumerated in IKings VIII:38f., though natural (from our point of view) were regarded as punishments from the Deity for having transgressed His law. ⁷⁸ We have indicated above that the miraculous withering of Jeroboam's hand was a punishment for his attempt to lay hands on the Man of God. The king recognized it as such and virtually promises to repent when he asks the prophet to pray for him to the Almighty. Similarly, the prophet mentioned in IKings XIII:20 is killed by a lion under circumstances so unusual that they are regarded as proof conclusive of God's displeasure and punishment. Related to this is the visitation of lions upon the Samaritans, evidently punished by God for lack of reverence: "because they did not fear the Lord." In IIChron. XXV Amaziah is punished by God for disobedience: "for it was from God in order to deliver them into their hand, because they sought the Gods of Edom." Uzziah is smitten by leprosy because he refuses to respect the ritual law. ⁷⁹

The instances just considered show that (in) the vast majority of ~~instances~~ cases show disobedience to either the Deity or Laws considered instituted by Him; and if we remember that where it was disobedience or offence against the prophet that the case was equivalent to disobedience or offence against the Deity, we must conclude that the punishments were solely because of disobedience to God.

⁷⁷. This phrase, 'create something new' is a rationalistic attempt to explain the theological significance of the miracle. Cf. infra p. 51

⁷⁸. It was this conception that made the Israelites deaf to the admonition of the prophets. Being prosperous, the Israelites could not conceive of the Deity's displeasure or their lack of religion.

⁷⁹. IIChron. XXVI:18 seq.

Divine Origin of Men, Rites and Events.

Another important function of miracles, growing out of their Providential nature, is to show the divine origin or character of men, rites and missions. We have seen from Deut.XIII:3ff., that the usual way in which a prophet corroborated his divine mission was through and by means of an אֵימָה or a מוֹפֵת. Moses asks JHWH for miraculous signs in order to convince the people that he was really sent by God. Pharaoh, we are told, will ask for a sign in order to be assured that Aaron and Moses are what they represent themselves to be.⁸⁰ In Ex.XIX:9, JHWH said to Moses, Behold I am coming to you in a cloud in order that the people may hear when I speak to you, and so that they also may believe in you forever.. The citation from Numbers XVI on the preceding page, also had this as a motive: "And Moses said, Hereby will you know: that JHWH it is Who has sent me to do all this." (v.28). Similarly, the miracle on the Jordan had as one of the purposes: "On that day did JHWH exalt Joshua in the eyes of the children of Israel and they feared him as they had feared Moses..." (Josh.IV:4). In Judges VI:17 Gideon, to be assured of the divine character of his visitor asks a sign of him. The miraculous response, as we have seen, satisfies him. The punishment of Jeroboam, mentioned on the preceding page, had also this subsidiary purpose: to convince the king that the prophet was really an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים.⁸¹ When Elijah revives the widow's son, she exclaims, "Now do I know that thou art an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים. So, when he punishes the companies that come to seize him, one of the secondary purposes is to show that he is indeed an אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים. The main purpose of the Elisha story is to evoke unconditional obedience to and reverence for the Men of God, as Men sent by God.⁸²

It is to show the truth of prophecy and coincidentally the divine sanction thereof that the above examples serve. Similarly the miraculous sign given by Samuel in ISam.XII:16seq is to show that God did not approve of the course adopted by the People. No punishment occurs here, but the miracle has a distinct purpose.

80.Ex.VII:9 Cf.Strack, op.cit ad loc. cit.

81.Cf. Case, op. cit., p.148.

82.Cf. II Kings II:23, IV:30, VIII:1, 7, XIII:4ff. Also Benzinger, op.cit. p.129f., and Case, op.cit.p.217.

In the case of the births of Isaac, Jacob, and Samuel we noted that the miraculous element was introduced to show the divine origin of these. This is also true of Samson. Similarly, the sanctity of the Sabbath and its divine nature is emphasized in Ex.XVI:29 by the miracle of the double portion of Manna. The same theme is most strikingly expressed in the various accounts attending the circumstances of the Giving of the Law. Samuel was known to be a prophet 'by the people 'from Dan to Beersheba' because they heard of the Theophany. (ISamuel III:20).

McCulloch⁸³ claims that miracles ascribed to Joshua and Moses were solely for the purpose of heightening their importance, while those of Elisha and Elijah may be due to the fact that they really had healing powers. And since all miracles are grouped around these men, according to his point of view, this exhausts the function and purpose of miracles. Hence, so the inference runs, the miracles of the New Testament are superior since they have a more beneficent aspect.

Without descending into apologetics we have seen that miracles were used for purposes other than enhancing the reputation of individuals. We shall consider further evidence in the following. We find, in Ex.IV:31 that after Aaron performed the signs in the presence of the people, "...the people believed and realized that God had remembered the children of Israel.." In this case the intent of the miracle was not to enhance the reputation of Aaron but to strengthen the faith of the Israelites.⁸⁴ As a result of the miracles in Egypt the people not only believed in Moses but what was more important, and which later was pointed to by the prophets, from Amos to Jeremiah and later, they believed in God. So later the people believed not only in Samuel but in God.⁸⁵ The miracle of the water in Ex.XVII was not only for the purpose of satisfying the thirsting Israelites but also to refute the doubt of the people: "Is JHWH among us or not?" Indeed, God complains to Moses, (Nu.XIV:11), "How long will this people...not believe in me, despite all the miracles which I have performed for it?" The clear conclusion

83. Op.cit.p.679a.

84. It is this theme, as pointed out by Weinel and Soltau (op.cit.) which is the predominant one in the miracles of the N.T.

85. ISam.XII:16 sq.

to be drawn from this is that the miracles were for the express purpose of strengthening belief in God, at least according to the interpretation later given them.

The test that Elijah arranges with the Baal prophets is not to increase the glory of Elijah. "And that God which shall answer with fire, He is God..." And when the miracle is performed Elijah is not acclaimed. Rather, the people exclaim, "JHWH is God, JHWH is God!" We have seen in the previous discussion other examples where the miraculous visitations are to punish unbelief in God and His Law. The Psalms are especially rich in this motivation ⁸⁶ for miracles. The same leading thought runs throughout the Daniel story; this all being in complete accord ⁸⁷ with the purpose for which the Book was written.

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To Evidence the Power of God.

Closely connected with the foregoing motif is another and very dominant one: the intent to evidence the power of God. The miraculous elements attending the Giving of the Law attest this. All who touch the mountain die. Thunders and lightning accompany the Revelation. Mt. Sinai is covered by a cloud of smoke and fire. The gist of the meaning of these phenomena is given in Ex. XX: 20, when Moses tells the people, "Be not afraid, for only in order to test you has God come, in order that you may be inspired with fear of Him and not sin." We have seen that the Elijah story shows also the power of JHWH as superior to all other deities. The same sentiment is inspired by the Miracle of the Red Sea, and so eloquently expressed in Ex. XV. Jethro voices an identical thought when he hears of the miracles in Egypt.⁸⁸ In the description of the plague of the first-born, God says, "...and I will smite the first-born of Egypt...and visit judgment upon the gods of Egypt", thus showing His power over them. This superiority is mirrored in Deut. IV: 34f. It is because God is a living God that he can perform these miracles and is superior to others.⁸⁹ In like manner the story of the

⁸⁶ Cf. Ps. LXXVIII: 1, 6, et passim. ⁸⁷ Dan. VI: 24.

⁸⁸ Ex. XVIII: 11

⁸⁹ Josh. III: 9f. This verse which is part of the J narrative indicates a fairly early conception of the Deity as essentially 'living'—and may be one of the underlying reasons, why, as Marshall later attempt to show, there was an inevitable conflict between magical miraculous conceptions, especially those magical conceptions dealing with necromantic practices and ideas.

wanderings of the ark and the miraculous visitations that accompanied was aimed to show the superiority of the Israelitish God over the deities of the Philistines. More particularly, there are innumerable passages that leave no other conclusion open but that the very identification of JHWH was entirely dependent upon His power to perform miracles.

Miracles and miraculous phenomena, then, served the purpose of punishments for violations against the holiness, the authority of JHWH or any of His chosen ones upon whom rested His 'Spirit'; they were for the purpose of establishing the power and potency of God; for strengthening faith in God; they served to give the stamp of truth to the pretensions of one who claimed to be possessed by the 'Spirit' -- and finally, they were virtual traces of God's presence on earth and his effectiveness in the affairs of the world. They were the proofs of the existence, the power and the holiness of God. Just as in the case of the Source of all miracles, so in the Purpose, we find that it centered entirely around the God-Idea.

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Basis of Miracles.

The Old Testament writers, in general, were not concerned at all with the bases underlying the actual phenomena they described as miraculous. They spoke in the same strain of the angel touching the sacrifice with his staff and sending it up in a blaze of fire, and of the death of Eli's two sons. Since everything was a product of divine action, everything was practically on the same level, when the issue was the manifestation of God's power. We have seen, it is true, that a distinction was made between the usual and the unusual; but this distinction, it must be said, is often lost sight of, though now and then it appears in all vividness.

From our point of view, however, it would be interesting to enquire into the probable bases of the miracles of the Old Testament, and if possible discover the sources of these, and

90. Among others Cf. Ex. VII: 17, VI: 8, IX: 18, X: 2b, XIV: 18, XVI: 18, XVII: 7b, VII: 4f, XII: 12, Deut. IV: 35, Nu. XI: 18 seq, III: 10, XIV: 11, 21, Josh. III: 9, IV: 23, Ps. CVI: 8, II Chron. XXXIII: 11 seq.

see to what extent they determined the form of the miracles as we have them. It would have been manifestly futile to argue with Doughty's rafik that the Thulla-el-Bint⁹¹ was invented to explain the formation of the rocks topping the mountain. It is evident, however, that the shape of these boulders was undoubtedly the starting point of the legend of the miraculous transformation of the goat-herdess; just as the topography of the country was partly responsible for the story of Lot's wife. There are in fact a number of instances for such a natural basis of miracles. The destruction of Sodom and Gommorah may have been inspired by the barrenness of the plain, as Dillman well remarks. Here, however, it seems that the fame of these two cities in non-pentateuchal times and literature would argue for a more historic basis. It is quite possible that two such cities did exist and were in deed destrcyed by some natural calamity. Though, on the other hand instances abound where aetiological myths have in the later literature assumed real characteristics. The myths of Greece furnish excellent illustrations of this. More to the point, however, are the miracles narrated in the Exodus as to the furnishing of the Israelites with water. These accounts were doubtless inspired by the actual existence of such water sources in the Sinaitic peninsula. Indeed, Burton gives a striking illustration of a well issuing forth from the solid rock, and of another that is still called Moses' Well by the Arabs.⁹² Similarly, the existence of the rainbow must have been responsbile for the greater part of the miraculous visitation described there. In this case, it must be remembered that though the story may have been borrowed from contemporaneous or comparative mythology, the motif was not, a fact that will interest us later on. Again, the tower of Babel and the divine intervention there recorded ~~was~~^{were} inspired by the name Eabylon, by the division of peoples and languages and by elements of comparative folk-lore.

I must reiterate, however, that in all these instances as well as in the great majority to be cited subsequently, after the miracle

91. Cf. infra, p.21

92. Op.Cit.

tale was in existence it became a cause and not an effect of the facts that called it forth. Indeed, these facts from the very beginning, if we remember the psychology of emotionalism, were considered effects and not causes of these miracles they suggested. It is always difficult to trace the origin of a miracle, and still more difficult to decide when a miracle began. There is a suspicion, in my opinion, whether miracles, especially of the type here considered, ever had a definite beginning. And it appears that from the very first the facts calling them into existence, if they were natural facts, as those considered above, were believed to be effects and not causes.

The story of the miraculous cure of the brass serpent, according to Holzinger (op.cit.p.93) was told in order to explain the existence of the Nehushtan in II Kings XVIII:4.⁹³ The twelve stones of Gilgal mentioned in Josh.IV belong to the same class of aetiological stories. Miracles that are based upon names also occur in the Bible. The well of Hagar in Gen.XVI (לְחַי רֵא'י) and that of Samson in Jud.XV (עֵין קוֹרָא) are both cases in point. It is to be noted that several of such explanations are not miraculous as in the case of Isaac, where one account explains it by laughter (פֶּחַח) on the part of Sarah and another by laughter on the part of Abraham. So too, in Jacob's name, it is explained by saying that he held the heel of his brother. When we come to Israel, however, the explanation is again miraculous.

The miracle of the waters of Marah, like that well Elisha made wholesome, may have had a basis in actual fact, for Doughty in his Arabia Deserta gives numerous instances of brackish wells and Burton speaks of one or two sweet water wells in the Sinaitic peninsula, where ordinarily all water is brackish. Furthermore, it appears from these authors, that some wells, brackish and unfit to drink (though the Arab sticks at no kind of water) ~~xxxx~~ during one period of the year, are sweet and wholesome at other times. Burton also speaks of placing salt in some of the wells to render the water fit to drink.

Nestle⁹⁴ discusses the basis for the miraculous sign given in

93. Cf. Grossmann, quoted by Jirku, op.cit.p.6

94. Archiv f.Religionswissenschaft, (1909) XII:154seq.

Judges VI:36 seq, as to the fleece. His conclusions are neither definite nor satisfactory. In this instance, if there was any traceable basis to the miracle, it is at present lost; for the criterion here, aside from the divineelement seems to be the simple fact of usual and unusual.

Interesting to the extreme are the various basés adduced for the miracles of Moses. Thus in the case of the burning bush Dillmann mentions one explanation that attempts to explain the miracle on the theory that there are bushes in the desert bearing red berries, which have the appearance of burning. It is however more logical and less amusing to say that the idea of fire intimately connected with the Deity is the basis of this narrative, and indeed gives it its motif. Thenius in commenting on the story in II Kings VI:6 proposes an illuminating explanation. He vouches for the dexterity of Elisha and assures us that the ax-head did not really float, but that the prophet jammed the branch he had cut off, into the hole of the ax-head and thereby lifted it out of the water. The water was not very deep, so he affirms, and the progress of the lost article through the water at the end of the prophet's stick had the appearance of floating metal. This motif of floating of bodies on the water through superhuman agency is too well known in other literatures to warrant such an explanation. This is rationalizing with a vengeance!

Strack explains the miracle of the serpent and the staff⁹⁵ by referring to the snake charmers in Egypt. In this respect he may be correct. But when he attempts to explain the introduction of the staff as due to the rigidity which the fascinated ophidian exhibits in the presence of the charmer, he descends into rationalism. The staff has always been used as the magician's and miracle workers instrument and medium through which the miracle producing force works.⁹⁶

Dillmann (op.cit.p.63) shows that the five miracles attributed to P in the Egypt story: Serpent, Blood, Frogs, Vermin and Leprosy, are based upon actual conditions existing in Egypt. It seems

95. Ex.VII:9ff. in Kurzgef.Komz.A.u.N.T. p.184f
96. Cf. Jirku's explanation in op.cit.pp.4seq.

hard to maintain, however, that this can show anything more than P's familiarity with conditions in Egypt. To hold that the author deliberately fashioned his miracle-account in accord with this and fabricated them is too far-fetched from what we know of the history of miracles. In addition, it is evident that though these miracles, contain elements of P, all with the exception of vermin and leprosy, have other strata as well. As to the former, it is significant that the Egyptian magicians could not duplicate it; as for the latter, we have seen that disease in general, and leprosy in particular were considered visitation from God. Moreover, and this is to be emphasized, the plagues here described mirror conditions not only prevalent in Egypt, but throughout the Orient.

Strack's rationalism is seen again in his account of the miracles of the quail and manna. It may be true that the natural phenomena of ~~the~~ dripping sap, and migrating flocks gave the color to the narrative; yet, from the prevalence of feeding miracles throughout all literatures, that appears to be the least important item. It is the idea of miracles, as providential evidences of God's protection that is most important.⁹⁷ In this case, Strack's rationalism is, in a measure justified. In this narrative we have also a Biblical rationalist who attempts to explain the circumstances of the miracle, and square it with known facts in Natural History. He takes pains to tell us that the manna was something like dew, and brought about by the same processes. In the story of the Red Sea, we find one explanation of the miracle declaring that God caused an east wind to blow, and this dried up the waters. (Ex.XIV:21). Similarly the miracle of the quail is explained by natural means in Ex.XVI:13 and in Num.XI:31. In the story of Korah, the insertion of the word כריאח in Num.XVI:30 is indicative of a similar attempt.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Millman, (op.cit. ad loc.cit.) points out in detail the characteristics of these miracles that show the deliberate effort of the author to stamp them as genuine miracles, even as far as the objective facts go.

⁹⁸ Holsinger, op.cit. ad loc.cit. Cf. (infra) pp.434.

The inverse of this attitude is seen in II Kings III:17 where, what Benzinger calls a purely natural phenomenon is given a miraculous origin. Somewhat similar may be the miracle related in Josh.X:10seq. But in this case, there are two possibilities: either it was a later story designed to show that God had fought with Israel, or it may be an interpretation of a genuine fact.⁹⁹ In either event there is no question but that the miracle was genuine for both the author and the time. Similarly is the miracle in II Chron.XXVI:16, which was factitive and interpreted either at the moment or later in the miraculous manner narrated.¹⁰⁰

There are, moreover, a number of miracles mentioned in the Old Testament that have as their bases the general legendary motifs to be found in all parts of the globe. Thus Marti, (KHC, p.244) quotes Babylonian, Egyptian and Buddhistic parallels of the Jonah story. We have already touched on the universality of the healing miracles, and Weinreich (op.cit.) gives a rich list of these in ancient literature. Dillmann, (op.cit. p.339), compares the two tablets of stone mentioned in Ex.XXXII:16, written so miraculously with the Palladium of Troy and the images of Diana of Ephesus and of Athena in Athens. In this case it is hazardous to conclude that either tale was borrowed; and the true basis may be in the psychologic attitude to make all law divine and divinely given. Weinel, (op.cit. pp.368f.) makes the same statements regarding the N.T. miracles, which are largely dependent upon the Old Testament narratives.¹⁰¹ Duhm, (Die Gottgeweihten, p.12) points out that the miracles of Moses, Elijah and Elisha are universally ascribed to prominent men.¹⁰² But in these instances, once more the caution must be voiced, that there is no reason to believe in deliberate borrowing; and that the true basis of these universal mythological and miraculous themes are due more to the unconscious universal dispositions of Mind, rather than to any deliberate plagiarism. And we notice that in all such 'comparative themes' each people builds its own structure. And the Israelite, as we have seen

99. Cf. II Kings XIX:35.

100. Cf. Kittel in HK

101. Cf. Soltau.

op.cit. pp.32 seq. For contrast, see Jacob, op.cit. pp.50seq.

102. Cf. Tacitus, Hist.VI:81, quoted by McCulloch, op.cit. p.879a.

has erected his structure on the basis of God. The Source, the Purpose and the Motivating Theme of miracles and the miraculous tales, whatever may have been their origins, however much they may have smacked originally of demonic and magical environment have been transformed into evidences of God and His providential care of His people.

Chapter III.

MAGIC AND MIRACLE.

* * * * * * *

In the foregoing we have noticed that practically every element contained in miracles has some relation more or less direct with the God-Conception. It was seen that as regards the kind of miracles there was in all earnest but one general class, though a variety of minor distinctions marked the individual instances. As regards the sources of miracles, they all ultimately hark back to the deity, from whom flows all power to create and fashion all the elements in Nature. It was He who was the Real Origin of the miraculous powers of the prophets and miracle-workers, of the angels and the Men of God. All miracles were manifestations of His divinity and the sanctity and authority of His messengers. Likewise, in the discussion of the purpose of miracles, we noticed that there were various reasons for miracles, yet they all centered around the Deity: punishments for disobedience, evidences of His power, might; tokens of the divine nature of His laws and Men -- in a word, miracles were for the purpose of showing divine traces in the history of His people. Similarly, the bases of miracles, whatever may have been the historical or natural events de concreto that suggested them, were transformed so as to show the workings of God.

Yet it is here in this last statement that an interesting field opens up. In the discussion of the plagues of Egypt an instance was given where there was apparently a conflict between the magicians of Pharaoh and the miracle-workers of God, to the utter confusion of the magicians. On the other hand, we noted miracles of Elisha containing magical elements, and other cases savoring strongly of homeopathic magic. The question is natural, then, to what extent was magic countenanced among the Old Testament writers, and how they reconciled it to their miracles.

Before proceeding to the general investigation it will be serviceable to see in a hasty survey the fundamental ideas underlying magical conceptions, and if they are at all at variance with any of the fundamental conceptions determining miracles. Blau (Juedische Zauberwesen, p.4) defines magic as the art of

producing supernatural results through natural means. According to the Christian notions (and he might just as well have said 'general¹ notions') all magic rests upon the help of demonic forces.² Wellhausen³ notes that demons could be called up by various men and women who were expert in summoning and dismissing these servile phantoms of evil. These adepts were called witches or magicians, depending on the sex. Magic was used not only for the purpose of harming² but also for the purpose of benefitting individuals. Thompson² speaks of the 'kassāpu' and 'kassāpu' as the witch and wizard who lay bans or cast spells on people. They were³ the exponents of the evil or dark magic among the Assyrians.³ Yet he notes there that the priest-magician, a recognized member of the Assyro-Babylonian religious system utilized the same spells and methods to combat the influences of the illegitimate performers. "In all magic," says Thompson,⁴ "three things are necessary for the perfect exorcism. First the Word of Power by which the sorcerer invokes divine or supernatural aid to influence the object of his undertaking. Second, the knowledge of the name or description of the person or the demon, against whom he is working his charm, with something more tangible, at times, like hair, parings etc. Third, some drug⁵, which was originally ascribed a power vouchsafed by the gods for the welfare of mankind or some charm or amulet...even a wax figure or an atonement sacrifice to aid the physician in his final effort." As Thompson and Jeremias⁵ point out there was a recognized class of priests in the Assyrian and Babylonian religions who devoted themselves to magical practices: healing, exorcisms, divination, etc. Likewise, Moore⁶, speaking of the Egyptian worship claims, "Osirian salvation from the power of death...is nothing but one of the commonest types of magical deliverance through the performance of rites and the repetition of words."⁷ Davies⁸ defines magic as the attempt on man's part to have intercourse with the spiritual and supernatural world and to influence it for his benefit.

1. Op.Cit.p.7

2. Reste d. alt arab. Heid. 88.159

3. Edm Thompson, op.cit.pp.xxivf. Cf. the Hebrew שחט

4. Op.cit.p.xlvi.

5. Handbuch d. altorientalischen Geistes-

kulten.

6. History of Religions, p.185

7. For the prevalence of magic in Egypt, see Blau, op.cit.87-44.

8. Magic, Divination and Demonology. p.1

There appears to be a close similarity between magic and miracle. In miracle, just as in magic, we have found healings (which originally, were generally exorcisms⁹), rain-making, destruction of enemies, providing fecundity to earth and mankind, and the like. In the Bible instances occur where identical results are related of both forms of the marvelous. So, in the various plagues of Egypt, we read that the magicians were able to produce the same results effected by Aaron. His wand is changed into a serpent, the magicians accomplish the same. He turns the waters of the Nile to blood, the Egyptians duplicate the feat. Aaron conjures up frogs from the Nile, the magicians are not behindhand. But when it comes to the Vermin, the Egyptians seem to have lost their cunning. They are no longer able to imitate Aaron. And finally in the last plague of P, where the Egyptian magicians are mentioned, they themselves are stricken by the plague produced by the Israelitish miracle-worker. Throughout the account, however, there is an implied and expressed opinion as to the inferiority of the phenomena produced by the Egyptians! In the first case the rod of Aaron swallows those of the magicians. In the next two plagues the implications¹⁰ seems certain that though the magicians are able to produce the phenomena they are not able to do away with them. Furthermore, additional discredit is cast against the work of the Egyptians, for they performed it 'with secret magic'¹⁰.

In the case of Balaam, there is no question but that the Israelites considered him efficacious as a 'curser'. There can be no doubt but that his reputation as a *qaddish* was given due credence by them. What must not be overlooked, though, is the direct opposition that is introduced into the narrative. As a professional 'curser' Balaam would ordinarily have been empowered to curse whomsoever he chose and in whatsoever manner he desired, provided he was paid to do so. But in this instance, the form taken by the narrative shows that he is forcibly compelled to betray his master, Balak, and bless

9. Jeremias, op.cit.

10. Cf. Saadyah's distinction made between the two, quoted in Kramer, op.cit.

the people he had been hired to curse. The picture given here is not completely that of a professional 'curser' in the sense that those mentioned in Job III:8 were 'curser's'. As the narrative stands now, the professional curser, which Balaam originally undoubtedly was, has been transformed and qualified. We shall return to these two instances, after having examined some further traces of magic in the Old Testament.

Davies¹¹ gives a fairly comprehensive list of instances in the Old Testament that savor of Magic, Divination and Demonology. The plagues quoted above, he declares (p.38), "show the reality of magic." The story in Samuel VI where the Philistines make images of tumors, the golden(?) serpent¹² are further instances of magic in the Old Testament. As regards methods of divination, he enumerates (pp.74seq) belomancy, ieromancy, (Ezek.XXI:23, Nu.XXIII), sortilege, Gideon's Fleece. He calls the test of Jonathan and his armor bearer magical^o (ISam.XIV:8ff). He mentions the diviners (Dan. IV:6), astrologers (Is.XLVII:13), oneiromancers and necromancers. Coming to the belief in spirits, demonic and angelic, Davies enumerates, (pp.95 seq.), עֲזַאזֵל (Lev.XVI:8,10,26), לִילִית (Is.XXXIV:14,4), רַפָּאִים, and עֲלֻקָּה (Prov.XXX:15), פֶּתֶן (Ps.LVIII:5), סִטָּה, דִּוְחָה and שָׂאֵל, which he believes were originally demonic spirits. Except, however, for a brief statement, Davies does not enter into any discussion as to the significance or the change that is noticed in the present form and setting of these references.

In addition to these citations we shall enumerate a few others in which the magical element is discernible. As regards the methods of divination, Joyce points out¹³ hydromancy in Gen.XLIV:5. As stated above, the miracles worked by Elisha have many magical elements. Indeed, the story of the resurrection of the child seems in a certain sense due to the direct opposition of magic and miracle. It almost appears as if Elisha decided to trust in his own power and attempted to have Gehazi produce the desired effect with the magical staff of the master.¹⁴ In addition

11. Magic, Divination and Demonology.

12. For the brazen serpent and its relation to homeopathic and sympathetic magic, cf. Weinreich, op.cit.p.168 seq.; Frazer, Golden Bough, Magic Art, p.426; Jakob, Altarab.Parallelen S.A.T., quoted by Holzinger; Jastrow, Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions, p.183.

13. Joyce, Inspiration of Prophecy, p.26seq.

14. Cf. infra, p.40, n.24

it should be noted that Elisha does not accept the fee of Naaman -- nor indeed does this seem to have been a practice¹⁵ of the diviners in Israel. And that these diviners were at one¹⁶ legitimate in Israel is evidenced by a number of passages.

Moses holding up the staff for the conquest of the Amalekites by the Israelites, is highly suggestive of the magical. So, claims Thompson¹⁷ are the miracles of Marah and Striking the Rock. Magical in suggestion is every use of the staff. Jirku claims that even the angel in Jud.VI:21 betrays magical elements. The conquest of Jericho with its use of the magical number seven¹⁸ and its strong savor of homeopathic magic is another case in point. In addition, the curse of the Danite in Lev.XXIV:10 is suggestive of the magical power attributed to the ~~ew~~¹⁹.

In the story of the Golden Calf, Aaron describing the process to Moses declares that he simply cast the gold into furnace and the calf sprang forth.²⁰ The inference to be drawn is that a demonic spirit was responsible for the sudden emergence of the fateful idol. It is therefore, not Aaron's fault as the P writer would be interested in maintaining. Furthermore, this explanation would well accord with the known tendencies and influences of the author, in whose account we have seen so marked a relation to the magical practices of the Egyptians.²¹

I have mentioned the magical property involved in Elijah's ability to appear and disappear, almost at will. Smacking of the magical is the action described in II Kings II:8 where Elijah spreads his mantle so that the water divides to provide a passageway for him and his companions. The Elisha story of the Oil Cruse, and the story in II Kings VI:8 both contain magical elements. As for necromancy, the prime illustration is the Witch of Endor in ISamuel XXVIII:7 seq.

The instances enumerated above would appear to show that magic, divination and demonology were firmly entrenched in the religious life of the Israelites, and that they formed an integral part of the religious system of the Old Testament. Further considerations, however, will show that this is altogether false, and

15. Micah III:11

16. Jer. XXVII:9, Ezek. XII:24, Zach. X:1 et pass.

17. Op.cit. pp. xviii, n.1

18. Thompson, op.cit. pp. xx, 5, 16, 37, 58, 144, 170, et passim.

19. Ex. XXIII:20 seq. II Kings V:11, Gen. XXXII:25 seq.

20. Ex. XXXII:24. Contrast version in vv. 4, 5, 6.

21. In the plague of boils, also, (Ex. IX:8), homeopathic magic is seen.

that there was a definite tendency in the Old Testament to make a sharp distinction between the implications of magic and those of miracles, and that hostility to magic, divination and demonology is a dominant theme there.

Even Davies admits that "one great reason which induced the Hebrews to condemn magic and the like was that it was so closely connected with idolatry.... To the Hebrews, deities worshipped by other peoples were evil spirits and demons which were supposed to help magicians and diviners.. It is significant that the Hebrew names for heathen gods found in the Old Testament have been translated in the LXX by 'demons'".²²

In the case of divination, it has been shown that that played a legitimized part in the nation's religious life. It must be noted, however, that as Joyce pointed out²³ that there was a steady struggle in Israel between the so-called diviner, and the so-called prophet. According to the latter, JHWH was above all soothsaying practices and trickery. The soothsayers were impostors, and denounced as such, since, according to the developed notion, no one can tell the future except God.²⁴ This hostility became so marked that in Deut.^{XVIII} we find an absolute prohibition against all diviners. The essence of divination was to force the deity or the spirits to reveal the future, to compel them to make known what is to be, hence the sharp conflict between the prophetic school, which believed in the free power of the Deity and the diviners. Indicative of the same, is the explanation of the Balaam story. The soothsayer may have certain powers, but according to the now developed Israelitish view, they all come from God and are freely bestowed by Him. Even the heathen soothsayer can speak only that which God commands him²⁵. It is through the direct intervention of God we noticed that the she-ass of the seer was allowed to speak and to see the angel, while Balaam himself could not see it -- a sure indication of a deliberate attempt to minimize the importance of the seer and to show his impotence before God. He cannot compel God to curse, God compels

22. Op.cit. p.38.

23. Op.cit. pp.45-40

24. Cf. Is. XLIV:25, XLVII:8, Jer. XXIX:8, XXVII:9, XIV:4.

25. According to Holzinger the word D'DD is due to an attempt to belittle the work of Balaam.

him to bless. Though the picture here does not reach the heights of the passage in Isaiah, it may nevertheless be clearly remarked that the magical element which indicated the compulsion of the deity is altogether absent and deliberately eliminated. A similar attempt to introduce a miraculous divine feature instead of the magical is seen in the story of Elisha, where, though he points out to his lad the fiery chariots and horsemen who will help him, the narrator tells us, [II Kings VI:8], he prayed to JHWH to smite his enemies with blindness; and it is JHWH who opens their eyes when they arrive in Samaria. Likewise, in his conversation with Hasael, Elisha, emphasizes the author, depends upon God to show him the future. In the story of the resurrection of the dead child, it was pointed out that Gehazi was powerless to perform the miracle with his staff; and that it was necessary for Elisha himself to come, and also in this case, to pray to God, in order to obtain the realization.

Aside though from this deliberate attempt to introduce the divine element, divination, per se, is not exclusively magical. In the O.T., at least, the idea of compulsion was not so strong in the casting of lots, in the shooting of arrows and in the various forms of divination, though, as shall later be pointed out, necromancy is a striking exception. It was the deity who vouchsafed the information as to the future. The Deity was free to make known the future or not, and the means employed was to divine it. Thus Elisha complains that God has hidden the matter from his eyes, whereas were the conception there of magical compulsion such a case would be impossible. It was only later when divination assumed the aspect of magic, that there was vigorous hostile opposition against it.²⁶

As for necromancy, the Bible is fairly consistent in its hostility. The fact that Saul consulted the witch of Endor, only serves to heighten the general inimical atmosphere that surrounded such practices. Indeed, as the writer tells us, Saul had removed the ¹ ~~idols~~ from the land, (ISamuel XXVIII:3).

26. It is true of course that the constantly developing God-Conception tended to arouse hostility, from the other side.
27. For the meaning of ~~idols~~ Cf. Dillmann, op.cit.

Indeed, so grievous was his backsliding in the eyes of a later writer, (I Chron. X: 13f), that he declares, "...Saul died because of his transgression against God...to ask of an אִוֶּן." In II Kings XXIII: 24 the אִוֶּן, among others, are classed with idolatry.²⁸ Likewise in Lev. XIX: 26, the seeking an אִוֶּן defiled a devotee. Similarly, in Lev. XX: 6 the frequenter of the necromancer will be destroyed, so that God "may be sanctified, and ye be holy".²⁹ Necromancy is really considered defiling the worshipper and the Deity, just as the worship of foreign gods and idols were defiling.³⁰ We see, however, that though אִוֶּן is classed with all other forms of divination, in the story of Samuel the narrative is directed only against necromancy, the other methods of divination being considered legitimate.³¹ It appears then that אִוֶּן was more stringently proscribed even from the earliest times, because it contained elements contrary to the JHWH worship and not to be countenanced by it. Eudde maintains³² that this instance and that in Is. VIII: 19, show that the practice was connected with ancestor worship.³³ From one of the elements in the God Conception, that God is essentially a living God³⁴, we can understand the hostility and animosity to any creed of the dead, at least in the theoretical development of the religion and in the interpretation placed upon it by its expounders. In addition it appears that there was another consideration militating against necromancy; and later divination in general. From the God Conception we have seen that the main characteristics of the Deity was His complete self-determination and power. In the case of necromancy the magical element was dominant: namely, the coercion of ghosts and spirits to answer the human. In divination we have shown, and this corroborated by Semitic Magic in general, that the tendency was to become more of the same nature. Thus the inherent repugnance of the Old Testament to conceive of its God as forced or compelled, was responsible for the early suppression of necromancy and the later classification of divination with idolatry. For when divination became magical in nature³⁵

28. Cf. I Chron. XXXIII: 6
Dt. XVIII: 9.

29. Cf. Lev. XX: 26.

30. I Chr. XXXIII: 6,

31. Is. XXVIII: 15.

32. KHC. ad loc. cit.

33. Cf. Is. 63: 16

34. Cf. infra, p. 17, n. 47

35. That magic does not necessarily come before religion may be seen in the demonologies of Mishnaic and Talmudic times. It may succeed the former when religion degenerates.

same
methods

it erected demonologies and angelologies, (though these latter may also have served initially to influence the former), which to the pure JHWH worship ^{here} was superstitious and idolatrous. ³⁶

As far as divination then is concerned the general dominant Old Testament concept of it does not conflict with the implications involved in its belief and presentation of miracles.

This is also true of the magical notions found in the Bible.

In the story quoted from the Plagues of Egypt there is no question but that the purpose of the author was to disparage the works of the magicians and at the same to glorify the miracles performed on Israel's behalf. As far as the result is concerned the two may have been identical in certain respects, but the motivating power of each was decidedly different, and because of the superiority of this, were Aaron's deeds finally triumphant.

Weinel ³⁷ states, "We believe in miracles when our own side performs them, but disbelieve it when an opponent is the worker." The psychological half-truth contained in this statement is at the basis of all differentiation between magic and miracle, which is identical with the differentiation between demonic and divine forces. It is a half-truth, for as we have seen in the case under consideration, the author does not disbelieve in the phenomena ^{performed} by the Egyptians; he simply disparages it and tries to show its inferiority by calling it 'secret magic'; but he does not believe in the possibility of performing marvelous things in that way. And, indeed, it is this consideration that leads Weinell later to say that all miracles are caused by divine power, while magic is a miracle caused by the power of a god not belonging to the category of the accepted gods. It is this consideration also which leads McCulloch to define magic as a thaumaturgic miracle. So Joyce speaks of magic and religion as opposed to each other, as respectively ~~illicit~~ illicit and licit modes of converse with supernatural powers. Lehmann ³⁸, on the other hand, applies to

36. Cf. Is. XLIV: 25, II: 6, XIX: 8, Isa. XLV: 23, II Kings IX: 22, XVII: 17 et passim

37. Op. cit. pp. 163 seq.

38. Aberglaube u. Zauberei, p. 11

all manipulations that exert a compelling power upon the gods, the term, Magic; whereas those manipulations through which one hopes to influence (the entirely free and self-determining) decisions of the gods are to be considered genuine cult rites and miracles. And in line with this Frazer³⁹ claims that the main characteristic of the Egyptian magic was the subserviency of the gods. The magicians could compel the gods and threaten them and even mutilate and harm them if they did not obey the formulistic incantations of the magicians.⁴⁰

As regards miracle, Lehmann⁴¹ holds that when certain actions are considered the direct product of divine interposition they are called miracles. When these same miracles are explained from a superstitious point of view they are pronounced magical. What is a miracle for one, since it is conceived as having been effected with the help of divine power is magic for the other since he does not believe in the same god. This last observation would be entirely true, did we not know that in one and the same cult there were both magicians and miracle-workers.⁴² The real differences between magic and miracle appears better indicated in the preceding paragraph. It is rather in the means and methods employed, as well as to the powers to whom addressed, rather than in any concrete difference of results.

In the contrast of Egyptian and Israelitish marvels, the whole difference between the two is that in one case the demonic forces were compelled in secret, whereas in the other God prophesied and declared that He would accomplish. Similarly, wherever magical practices or manipulations of magic are mentioned, the free force of God is deliberately introduced, because the whole tendency of the Old Testament, is as I have shown, to be in that direction. There is not an unmistakable instance where Frazer's statement about the subservient position of Egyptian deities could apply in the Old Testament. Jacob,⁴³ ~~calls~~ ^{that} calls attention to the fact, there appears to be deliberate

39. Taboo and Perils of the Soul, p.389

40. Cf. also Magic Art, p.225.

41. loc. cit.

42. Jeremias, op. cit. and Thompson, Semitic Magic.

43. In Nasan Gottes, p.48

care in the Moses narrative to present him as performing miracles without any spoken formulae.⁴⁴ So is it with every element of magic that is found in the Bible. We have seen this to be the case in the Elisha story. In the brazen ~~serp~~ serpent narrative the magical element is completely transformed. The substratum may be magical, and indeed is, but it always bears the unmistakable impress of the JHWH worship, to which all marvels and all wonders were the product of God's doings, accomplished because He so willed it.

Though magical notions were current among the people and through contact with the Egyptians, Babylonians and later Persians, these became more developed among some classes, the main current of Biblical thought and the current that bore on its bosom the narratives and history of the Israelites insisted upon the purification of such conceptions, and resisted every attempt to encroach upon the eminent domain of God: performance of the marvelous and control over nature. All history was guided by God, and everything was the product of His power. This power, furthermore, could not be coerced, nor compelled, it could not be conjured nor directed. All miracles were directly traceable to God, and He performed them Himself or delegated the power to His chosen ones. Magic, compelling demons and gods to obey man, was inferior and out of place in this conception; hence every effort to transform all remnants of such beliefs. Magic was idolatrous, not merely because it was foreign, but also because its basis was the coercion and compulsion of divine and demonic forces..

44. Strack, op. cit. p. 185.

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