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SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE GOD-IDEA

AS REFLECTED IN SELECTED AGGADIC SOURCES

Jordan Pearlson

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

Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion,
Cincinnati, Ohio, 1956

Referee: Dr. Robert L. Katz

Digest of Thesis:

Some Psychological Aspects of the God Idea As Reflected in Selected Aggadic Materials

The author surveys some of the writings in the field of psychoanalysis and the philosophy of symbols and attempts to show that symbolic thought is considered to manifest a semantic of its own, that it has logical significance in terms of the individual's experience . Symbolic thought enables unconscious thoughts to by-pass our conscious mind and yet to find significant expression. Using the terms of psychoanalysis, we attempt to find significant patterns in the picture of God drawn by the Aggadic literature, utilizing Israel Konovitz' anthology: Maamar Elohut as our major source.

The relationship to God is divided into two major categories: those elements which picture God as an authoritarian father whose love is conditional and whose demands carry threats of retribution, and those Aggadic references which picture God as a loving father who bestows his goodness unconditionally. The demand for identification and imitation, direct expressions of retribution and power, and the nature of God's involvement with His children amplify the former concept; His identification with the fate of His children, His unconditional forgiveness and His special regard for Israel among the family of nations are joined with the concept of mystic union to expand the latter.

In conclusion, we analyze some of the literature which uses a similar approach to religious symbolism and we find an almost complete acceptance of the idea that the God of Judaism is a demanding, patriarchal deity whose love is always conditional. It is hoped that the material presented herein will show how gross the common misconception is and how completely unfounded.

Jordan Pearlson

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PREFACE

Definition and limitation is difficult in the Aggadic literature for its basic quality seems to be its internal variance. The same early sages who were thoroughly capable of maintaining rigid logical and hermeneutic standards of exegesis made no attempt to limit the poetic flights of fancy which are characteristic to the Aggadic literature. Aggadah is more than the systematic allegory of Philo. In fact, Rabbi Konovitz in his message to the reader in the basic source for this study speaks of the needed restoring of the Aggadic material to its original purity, purging it of the "nonsense of the Greek philosophers." [1]

Just as his reaction is against the interpretations of the early allegorists so we may find that in the future there will be as clear a reaction to those like myself, who are attempting to draw significance from traditional materials and to express this significance in psychological terms.

The purpose of this study is to investigate within a psychological frame of reference, utilizing psychoanalytic terms and concepts, some of the implications of the picture of the Holy One Blessed be He which is given to us in the Aggadic materials. Although the approach of the Aggadah is not "systematic" in the Greek philosophical sense, the relationships of man to God are implied within it with some degree of consistency. It is these relationships with their overtones of familial interrelations that we will try to describe: the interrelations between God the Father and His children with such motivations and suggestions of mutual expectation and needs as are expressed in the symbolic language of the Midrash.

The primary source for this study is Israel Konovitz' classic collection of Aggadic materials dealing with God: Maamar Elohut. Because of the extensive nature of the materials involved, this study has been limited to those rubrics which suggest the most fertile fields for the relationships being studied. Supplementing the material in Konovitz' work, additional Hebrew sources have been consulted through Rabbi Moses David Gross' three volume guide to the Aggadic materials: Otsar HaAggadah HaTalmudit v'HaMidrashit. Additional guides to the sources have been provided through the index volume of the Soncino Midrash and the popular anthologies and references of the calibre of Montefiore and Loewe's A Rabbinic Anthology, Newman's Talmudic Anthology, and Cohen's Everyman's Talmud.

For the frame of reference within which this material is being organized, I have used as my basic guide to definition and terminology, Dr. Fenichel's encyclopedic and authoritative restatement of the classic Freudian theoretical position: The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis, which in turn has been supplemented by references to specific works of Freud: Totem and Taboo and Moses and Monotheism, and others. For the philosophical discussions of non-discursive thought and the function of symbols and symbolic relationships, strong emphasis has been placed upon the insights provided by the works of Langer and Cassirer — especially the former's Philosophy in a New Key. Additional valuable material has been found in the works of Erich Fromm and in Max Kadushin's controversial work: The Rabbinic Mind. In some instances I have found the works of Dr. Erwin R. Goodenough and Dr. Abraham Kardiner of considerable help.

For illustrative material on the approach of Christian scholars

who are utilizing a psychoanalytic approach I have turned to Oscar Pfister's Christianity and Fear and R. S. Lee's Freud and Christianity.

It is hoped that this study will accomplish two things: 1) that it will describe the Father-Child relationship as it appears in Aggadic literature and 2) that it will demonstrate that the severely punitive Father-figure which is the popular prototype that Christian theologians like to draw of the God of Israel may be neither so severe nor so punitive as is popularly conceived.

May I take this opportunity to add to this list of sources of insight, the name of Dr. Robert L. Katz, Coordinator, Department of Human relations at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati School, who as mentor in my studies in Human Relations and as my advisor in the writing of this thesis has been an invaluable guide, a constant spring of significant ideas and an encouraging and stimulating friend.

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February, 1956

Chapter One

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS: PSYCHOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF SYMBOLS AND THE AGGADAH

Dr. Abraham Cronbach has in his writings frequently stressed the need to bridge the outstanding gap between that aspect of religious experience which may be labeled "experienced" and that aspect which is the area of inquiry of the theologian and the philosopher -- that which Dr. Cronbach labels "reported" religion.[2] He attempts to reject the religious usage of the word "believe": "To believe means to regard a given proposition as informationally valid. To identify religion with 'believing' is thus to ignore the non-informational areas of religious phrasing. It is to endorse the assumption that the informational aspect is the only aspect."[3]

The "informational aspect" of religion, the cold and rarefied atmosphere of belief and dogma, is not the area of this investigation. Rather is the purpose of this study to investigate the broad and variegated base of Jewish folklore and legend as it expresses itself in the picture of the God of Israel that it draws. Implied in this literature is a pattern of relationship -- a pattern of relationship which had immediate experiential significance for the average Jew.

Dr. Cronbach's interest in deeper understanding of the apparently dichotomous fields of dogma and folk-belief is a motivation shared by others who have investigated the qualities of folk belief in an attempt to discover the roots of its profound significance. Pfister prefaces his study of the affective symbolism of Christian belief with such a statement:

> "In 1905, I published a brief...essay in which I expressed my grief and indignation on finding that theology had no satisfactory answer to questions expressing our most profound longing and our most tormenting needs, and that it failed to render intelligible the processes of salvation, regeneration and sanctification because it dealt not with the living faith, but with its theoretical by-products in the form of dogma and religious theory. I concluded that its attitude was purely antiquarian and scholastic and that it was remote from the real problems instead of concentrating upon the emotional needs and the psychological peculiarities of the living individual." [4]

Within Jewish scholarship we find similar observations and motivations expressed by Kadushin, Aggadic literature in his presentation allows for individual interpretation and significance but limits the area within which this expression takes place by setting normative key-terms or "value-concepts" around which the individual search for religious expression may operate:

> "If the value-concepts make for the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the individual self, it is folly, perhaps worse than that, to attempt to define them. It is folly because the defined concept is the same for all, negating the flexibility which allows for the play of every individual's differentia. It is worse than folly when such definintions are taken

> seriously and the attempt is made to cast the minds of all individuals in the same mold." [5]

Internally there may be many elements of contradiction in folk-literature yet this flexibility arises from the infinite variations of individually meaningful experiences.

Judah Goldin, in commenting upon the work of Kadushin, describes the functional impact of the Aggadah:

> "How, for example, shall we understand the concept of God's love? By contemplating His actions: 'He acts as best man at the wedding of Adam and Eve,...He visits Abraham on his sickbed,... He teaches Torah to Israel and to this very day He keeps school in heaven for those who died in their infancy.' For the philosopher such sentences can be maddening...the systematic theologian...finds it almost irresistable to translate them into chaste, abstract principles. Only the agadic homelist is ready to take these sayings for what they are: a record of what transpires in the universe between metaphor and catechism...Perhaps it is the inability to move in just such a universe -- of discourse as well as experience -- which explains why the account of Judaism by many theologians sounds a little off-key. Their summaries are not necessarily inaccurate; their conclusions cannot be altogether contradicted. But they have taken the life and complexity out of the statements they quote or paraphrase, and they have reduced the many-meaninged into a one meaning proposition." [6]

The Aggadic material then represents the folkloristic living soul of Jewish tradition, and we do not attempt to systematize it theologically. Rather we hope that the younger disciplines of psychology and the philosophy of symbols may provide us with those bits of conceptual equipment which will enable us to systematically analyze Aggadic materials in a "newer" frame of reference. We turn first to the philosophers.

To the symbolic school of philosophy -- especially to Susanne K. Langer and Ernst Cassirer -- we are indebted for a deeper understanding of the process of symbolic transformation. How does man express himself symbolically and how does he relate himself to that which is symbolically expressed? To the psychoanalytic schools of psychology we will turn for an understanding of the process of "projection" especially as it expresses itself in terms of the relationships "projects."

In turning to the writings of Cassirer one is immediately impressed at the similarity between his approach and those of Psychologist Pfister and Rabbi Kadushin. Cassirer was inspired by the biological observations of Uexkull whom he interprets as saying,"Reality is not a unique and homogeneous thing; it is immensely diversified, having as many different schemes and patterns as there are different organisms....In the world of a fly, says Uexkull, we find only 'fly things'; in the world of a sea urchin we find only 'sea urchin things.'" [7] Utilizing the approach of Uexkull, Cassirer tries to find the singular characteristic of how the world of the human organism differs from the world of other organisms:

> "Man has, as it were, discovered a new method of adapting himself to his environment. Between the receptor and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link, which we may describe as the symbolic system...man cannot escape from his own achievement. He cannot but adopt the conditions of his own life. No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience...mythology itself is not simply a crude mass of superstitions or gross delusions. It is not merely chaotic, for it possesses a systematic or conceptual form. But, on the other hand, it would be impossible to characterize the structure of myth as rational." [8]

In his opinion, myth has long defied the attempts of philosophy to set fundamental categories to its thought.[9] Religious symbolism as a function of experience must reflect the space-time factor of its environmental setting. "The /the great creative spirits/ could not create anew religion out of nothing. The great individual religious reformers were not living in empty space, in the space of their own religious experience and inspiration. By a thousand bonds they were tied to their social environment." [10]

Miss Langer builds upon the work done by Cassirer and others. In her approach "Symbols are not proxy for their objects but are vehicles for the conception of objects....In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves; and it is the conceptions,

not the things, that the symbols directly mean!" [11] Symbolism allows for meaning which is even beyond the realms of discursive thought and operates with a genuine semantic even in this non-discursive area.[12]

> "Wherever a symbol operates, there is meaning; and, conversely, different types of experience -- say reason, intuition, appreciation -- correspond to different types of symbolic mediation. No symbol is exempt from the office of logical formulation, of conceptualizing what it conveys; however simple its import or however great, this import is a meaning and therefore an element for understanding. Such reflection invites one to tackle anew, and with entirely different expectations, the whole problem of the limits of reason, the much disputed life of feeling, and the great controversial topics of fact and truth, knowledge and wisdom, science and art. It brings within the compass of reason much that has been traditionally relegated to 'emotion' or to that crepuscular depth of the mind where 'intuitions' are supposed to be born, without any midwifery of symbols, without due process of thought, to fill the gaps in the edifice of discursive, or 'rational', judgment." [13]

Summarizing the contribution of our philosophers of symbolism, we are able to derive their assertions that: 1) symbolic thought is an unavoidable and necessary aspect of human existence, 2) symbolic thought arises out of environment in finding its ways to express meaning and

3) symbolic thought possesses a semantic of its own which extends the area of "rational" thought well beyond the area to which it had been traditionally limited.

The starting point for the contribution of psychology to our study must be the concept of the unconscious mind developed by Sigmund Freud. Many of our actions are made understandable in the light of motivations which remain unknown even to ourselves. The formative period of these motivations and the mechanisms through which they operate is the period of our extreme youth during which we make our initial encounters with the affectionate, nourishing, loving figure of the mother; during which we develop our system of associations with certain pleasure sensations and during which we develop our identifications and rivalries which, in classical Freudian psychoanalysis, determine the basic structure of our personality throughout life. [14]

The impact upon religious circles of the Freudian theories took the form of a gleeful iconclasm which sought sexual symbolism and repressed incestuous and libidinous drives in all of the areas of religious literature and ritual. Goodenough feels compelled to note his resistance to such suggestions in his work.[15] Dr. Cronbach documents this literature in detail in a survey article written for the Hebrew Union College Annual.[16]

The later writers on this subject have tended to veer away from unbridled search for the sexual symbol and have turned their attention to the implications of certain relational patterns other than the sexual-Oedipal. Environmental elements and Freud's concept of the unconscious remain as basic tenets of their thinking.

We may find such a position in the writing of Abram Kardiner

of Columbia University.[17] He speaks of religious thought as one of "the institutions of projective origin within our society."[18] His use of the term "projective does not necessarily carry with it only the negative implications of the earlier writers in psychology who discuss the concept of "projection." In Totem and Taboo, Freud speaks of projection as the pressure release of repressed feelings of hostility against someone who is also beloved "by displacement upon the object of hostility."[19] His specific reference is the attributing to the spirits of the dead the sense of hostility of those who mourn for them. Similarly Carroll A. Wise: "Sometimes guilt and the fear of punishment are projected upon God. God them becomes the accusing deity who knows one's sin and is preparing punishment. This is a form of externalizing conscience."[20] Or. Dr. Maurice Levine: "Another unhealthy mechanism of defence is projection. In this method of defence, the individual lessens his own inner conflicts by disowning the unacceptable impulses and claiming that they really belonged to someone else or to something else. A carpenter who is ashamed of a piece of work...projects on his tools his feeling of shame or the responsibility for his lack of success."[21]

Rather than making the value judgment upon the mechanism of projection, Kardiner accepts the tendency of the individual to seek rationalization for forces with which he is himself unable to cope openly. He speaks of the manner in which the mechanism of projection has become institutionalized within cultures and the implications of two systems of handling experience -- the "reality" system and the "projective" system -- existing side by side within the same culture. He speaks of "projective" institutions as within the "common sense" acceptance of most cultures and asks of the possibilities for changing

and modifying projective systems through the introduction of knowledge empiracally derived and verified by criteria outside the "common sense" of the culture.[22] He stresses the importance of the study of such institutions for our society wherein science has had marked impact upon the social utility of the projective systems employed in religion.

He makes two points of special interest to us in our investigation: 1) even the projective system must have roots in the experience pattern of the culture within which it seeks to operate — his example is the complete meaningless of concepts of redemption through atonement and suffering when presented by a missionary to a native who has grown up in a culture which lacks the idea of the sequence of punishment and reinstatement after an act interpreted as a misdeed[23] and 2) projective systems can continue to flourish upon the flimsiest of evidence concerning their efficacy "because they cannot be readily displaced and because a bad system has better anxiety-staying powers than no system at all." [24]

Religion to Kardiner falls within the category of projective systems based upon experience functioning with the aid of rationalizations, generalizations, systematization and elaboration to which category belongs the security system of the individual and his superego systems, that is, those dealing with conscience and ideals.[25] "This system is least subject to modification except by way of the institutions which gave it origin."[26]

The term "projection" as depicted in Kardiner and as accepted by Goodenough in his extensive study of the symbols of the Jewish cult in the Hellenistic world[27] has the implication of more positive value

judgment than is indicated in the more iconclastic literature parenthetically mentioned above. Using such a connotation, Casey traces the growth of psychoanalytic thought and its relationship to religious symbol and process.[28] He attempts a "more systematic consideration of the value of psychoanalysis for the study of religion." His emphasis is upon the phenomenon and the roots of the process of projection:

> "One of the main devices by which the unconscious acts upon the conscious is projection, in the operation of which the logical and evidential components of ideas and imaginative reconstructions of reality are obscured or pushed into the background...wherever the element of conscious or rational control is weak, the barriers let down for projection -- as in poetry, art, and religion."[29]

Kardiner, on this aspect, notes that empirical reality systems and projective systems have no difference internally in their logical or ratiocinative processes. The differences arise in the nature of their subject matter.[30]

Casey stresses that our emotional involvement in our own culture and our own religious symbolism frequently acts as a block to our ability to analyse them objectively:

> "The projective element in religious thought and imagination is easiest to grasp in the case of religions other than our own...The gods are terrible because by projection man interprets danger in terms of wrath and punishment. Dependence upon the regularity of nature is felt as reliance upon Someone..." [31]

> "Where do these projections come from, and why do they intrude so insistently upon the religious field? The answer lies in...the unconscious... Attitudes...taken up in infancy and early childhood...persist in the unconscious and penetrate in imperfect disguise into the society of adult impulses."[32]

The elements projected into religious life and their satisfaction through religious forms are the next to come under his scrutiny. "Protection" is the major function of the deity in his relationship to his worshipper; protection against 1)danger, 2) bad luck, 3) "against a sense of loneliness and indifference in life" and 4) "against a sense of guilt in all its manifold forms." [33] In most higher religions the deity manifests strength and benevolence of the type associated with a parent figure. Just as the savage god "is not an unfair infantile picture of the savage father in his savage home: terrifying, incalculable to the young in his whims and rages...exhibiting a rough but genuine affection..." in the same manner we find within "religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism, the pantheon of saints or angels provide and extension of the family circle." [35] Similarly in Christianity we find the element of Mary acting as mother-intercessor with the stern Father.

It is to some of the familial implications of the Aggadic literature that we will now turn our attention. Our purpose is to chart the relationship in psychoanalytic terms. To utilize psychoanalytic technique in approaching the literature does not imply a rejection of that which the literature seeks to accomplish. Casey points this out quite effectively:

> "This early sense of domesticity is too valuable to give up, even though it is subject to exceptions. Thus the religious man makes a home of his universe and preserves many of his original activities in it...[35] these attitudes may have a secondary validity and offer a clue to the apprehension of reality as a whole...[36]
> ...psychological analysis of the dialectic of religion, referring us to infancy and childhood, acquaints us with impulses which are often corrected or discarded in the process of adjustment to material requirements. The question, however, remains as to whether their implications are not as profound as their roots are deep...[37]
>
> "It is commonly assumed that the psychoanalytic way of looking at religion must be an outsider's way...this cannot be completely justified...the unconscious impulses and patterns which are revealed by analysis as immanent forces in religion are generally pervasive in human nature and can be neither completely eradicated nor controlled." [38]

Human needs continue to demand religious imagery. For the Jew, that imagery can be found in greatest detail within the literature of the Midrashic tradition. "If you wish to recognize Him at whose word the world came into being, study Aggadah." It is to the source and the picture of God, the Father portrayed therein that we concentrate our efforts.

Chapter II

GOD AS AN AUTHORITARIAN FATHER

The imagery of the picture of God as it appears in the Aggadah may be broken down into two dominant themes which occur again and again in the psychological literature: God as a stern, demanding, punitive -- and in Freudian terms -- castrating Father and, in opposition, God as a nourishing, merciful figure whose love and willingness to forgive form the key to a comforting and guiding relationship.

Erich Fromm offers a frame of reference within which we may discuss these elements. His approach to the Oedipus pattern of rivalry is less limited to the sexual competetition for the mother of the classical Freudian approach.[39] Drawing distinctions between the very young child's impression of his benevolent mother-figure and that of his authoritarian father-figure, he draws for us the prototypes of these separate relationships. It is from these convenient prototypes that we will categorize the specific references of Aggadic materials.

In Fromm's opinion:

> "The relationship of the child to the father does not have the same intensity as that to the mother, because the father never has the all-enveloping, all-protective, all loving role which the mother has for the first years of the child's life. On the contrary, in all patriarchal societies, the relationship of the son to the father is one of submission on the one hand, but of rebellion on the

> other, and this contains in itself a permanent element of dissolution...while the mother represents nature and unconditional love, the father represents abstraction, conscience, duty, law and hierarchy. The father's love for the son is not like the unconditional love of the mother for her children...but it is the love for the son whom he likes best because he lives up most to his expectations, and is best equipped to become the heir to the father's property and worldly functions." [40]

Arising from the separate relationships are also implications in terms of character development. From the demand quality of the paternal relationship one may find rising encouragement for the son to develop the positive qualities of reason, discipline, conscience and individualism; negatively, such a relationship encourages acceptance of such concepts as hierarchy, submission, inequality, and oppression.[41] In a similar way opposite directions are found in the forces produced by the tolerant pattern of mother-love.[42] Since, in the normal pattern of human development, both the maternal and the paternal influences play their parts we find ourselves faced with internally contradictory patterns of approach to the outside world.[43]

The father conscience and the mother conscience set up a tension which is reflected in theological argument and in certain otherwise contradictory emphases found in religious literature. [49]

It has been fashionable in and outside of psychological circles to think of the Jewish picture of God primarily in terms of a punitive

father-conscience. In the psychological literature Freud describes a pseudo-historical development which seeks to account for a God who is a stern Father around whom feelings of guilt and hostility center:

> "The strong male was the master and father of the whole horde, unlimited in his power which he used brutally. All females were his property, the wives and daughters in his own horde as well as perhaps also those stolen from other hordes. The fate of the sons was a hard one; if they excited the fathers' jealousy they were killed or castrated or driven out...then one or the other son might succeed in attaining a situation similar to that of the father in the original horde. ...the next...step...: the brothers who had been driven out...overcame the father, and... all partook of his body."

As the brothers quarrelled among themselves, guilt patterns forced an association of morality with a symbol -- with the tribal totem which came to replace the figure of the patriarchal father for future generations -- and so we find the prototype of religious association of a father with the concept of ethical obligation. [46]

Without using the approach of Freud many modern authorities indicate that reflected in the judgmental function of God, we see a relationship which, like that described by Fromm, is one of a father to his child. From the disciplinary action of the father the child absorbs an accepted sequence of action by the father in reaction to allowable and to reprehensible kinds of conduct.

It is interesting that in certain types of neurosis, the idea of doing wrong comes from what seems to be an external auditory source. In psychological terms: the Super-ego, to these neurotics, seems to act through voices external to themselves.[47] In a similar manner, a child recalls early explanations of discipline by the authority-parent. In the Aggadah God speaks to Moses frequently -- on one occasion He speaks to Moses in Moses' own voice.[48]

Similarly, the hero attachment of the child to his father ascribes to him qualities of omniscience and omnipotence. These qualities frequently are attributed to God in the Aggadah. He is present wherever the foot of man has trod. His omniscience is suggested in innumerable instances in the Aggadic literature.[49] He knows all secrets.[50] Whatever He desires, he can do.[51] He is the source of knowledge.[52] He can control even the involuntary faculties of man.[53] His presence can be felt before a transgression, after the transgression and at the time of repentance.[54]

The Aggadah draws specific designs around the authoritarian picture of the Holy One, Blessed be He and in some of them we may find relationships familiar to the growing child: 1) a demand that the child identify and emulate the Father; 2) a punitive figure ready to punish violations of His will; 3) an imposing figure whose very status demands an attitude of deference and subservience.

1. Imitatio Dei: The Demand for Identification.

Identification implies a relationship of imitation or concern which produces a deep involvement with the object of concern to the point where one person imitates or experiences the attitudes and emotions of of the person with whom he "identifies." In the life of the developing

child: "The outstanding identification takes place with that parent who was regarded as the source of the decisive frustrations, which in the patriarchal family is usually the father but which in exceptional cases may be the mother." [55]

We occasionally find such a relationship inherent in the Aggadic material. Sometimes identification is directly suggested: The world is God's garden and as God keeps it and watches out for it so must man.[56] That which He himself does he expects Israel to keep.[57] Since God loves judgment, His sons are expected to learn from him and to remove themselves from thievery.[58] On other occasions the pressure toward identification is indirectly indicated: Man is created in the image of God and therefor has an implicit identification with Him and His attributes. The ideals expressed by the attributes are most frequently described in a mechanism of comparison: Whereas a mortal or an earthly ruler does such and such, God reacts to the same situation in a manner which implies moral perfection. Again we are grateful for the work of Dr. Cronbach who has gathered such references in an essay entitled: "The Manner of Flesh and Blood." [59]

2. <u>The Punitive Father</u>: The Conditional Element of Divine Love

The punitive aspect of God has been suggested as a "projection" of the irate father as known within the family situation by the growing child. He manifests himself through conscience as expressed in the feeling that one has "done wrong" and therefore projects onto the celestial "Punisher" the retribution familiarly associated with this situation in childhood.

> "The ego behaves toward the superego as it once behaved toward a threatening parent whose

> affection and forgiveness it needed...the need for punishment is a special form of the need for absolution...The superego is heir of the parents not only as a source of threats and punishments but also as a source of protection and as a provider of reassuring love...Complying with the superego's demands brings not only relief but also definite feelings of pleasure and security of the same type that children experience from external supplies of love. Refusing this compliance brings feelings of guilt and remorse which are similar to the child's feelings of not being loved any more." [60] (Fenichel)

In a similar vein we find Goodenough describing this basic childhood relationship which continues in projected form into adult life:

> "He still desperately needs for his self-realization...the flow of loving approval he formerly had, but he finds that these are now to be bought at a price: they no longer come to him as a gift...and the child soon learns...that the ultimate authority is not the mother but the father..." [61]

Freud stresses the continuity of the parental relationship which has now become internalized in the form of the superego:

> "The Super-Ego is the successor and representative of the parents (and educators) who superintended the actions of the individual in his first years of life; it perpetuates their functions without a change." [62]

It is the deep concern of the Ego to retain the love and affection of its master.

Fromm stresses the importance of the concept of disobedience in Jewish and Christian tradition:

> "The sin of Adam and Eve is not explained in terms of the act itself; eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not bad per se; in fact, both the Jewish and the Christian religions agree that the ability to differentiate between good and evil is a basic virtue. The sin was disobedience, the challenge to the authority of God, who was afraid that man, having already 'become as one of us, to know good and evil,' could 'put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever.'" [63]

The "punitive" God-father does appear in the Aggadah but far less frequently than might be expected.

The Aggadah pictures God as having abundant resources for His punitive purposes. He has the power to manifest His anger upon all men even as He did upon the generation of the Flood and upon the generation of the Dispersion and upon the populace of Sodom and upon Pharoah.[64] His messengers serve as the bearers of anger, wrath, fury, destruction.[65] His wrath is provoked by slander, subservience to men and transgressions of the words of the Torah.[66] Jochanan ben Zakkai weeps before his death because he is soon to come before a judge who — unlike flesh and blood -- cannot be bribed, argued against or appeased.[67] But He may occasionally be pacified by sacrifices.[68]

The choice of compliance or non-compliance lies with man. God rewards and punishes according to the deeds of man upon whom the complete responsibility must rest. It is he who has the choice of pleasing or displeasing the deity.[69] God has placed good and evil before man; he may choose either and be rewarded accordingly.[70] When Moses is asked whether God restrained him from entering the Promised Land, he answers that what happened to him was the result of his own actions and the responsibility lies with him rather than with God.[71] God intensifies the punishment of the wicked and heightens the reward of the righteous even after death when each is shown the reward of the other that they might know what could have been theirs.[72] Therefore, since the choice lies within man's power, he has the intelligence to determine whether his heart (ego) will guide him to Eden or Gehinnom.[73]

The ambivalent feelings which are forced upon the child -- love and protection if he submits; deprival of love and punishment if he does not -- are clearly present in the Aggadah. So we find him saying: "Only when they do My will are they My children..."[74] or the Aggadic source admonishes: "Hearken to thy Father who is in Heaven. He deals with thee as with an only son, but, if you do not, He deals with thee as a slave..."[75] or it explains, citing Deuteronomy 32:6: "Is He not thy father and thy owner?" -- "If thy father, why thy owner? When the Israelites do God's will, He has pity upon them, as a father has pity upon his children. When they do not do His Will, he rules over them as an owner rules over his slaves..."[76] God is compared to an orchard owner who waters the entire orchard but cultures and prunes (symbols of manifesting love, attention and interest) only the most promising plants. He places goodness in the world and rewards only His faithful ones.[77]

God's punitive aspect is rarely pictured as the purely mechanical retributive action of a stern, unyielding Father. The motivation for repentance is as much the pain and anguish projected into the father-figure as it is the fear in the transgressor of the punishment to be visited upon him. "If you come back to me, is it not to your Father in heaven that you come back? As it is said, 'For I am a father to Israel.' (Jer. 31:8)" [78] It was this quality as symbolized by the Shechinah which vanished when Israel sinned. [79]

God's hand is always stretched out for the repentant.[80] The repentant needs bring no sacrifices, his confession is adequate.[81] When one repents God even counts his sins to his advantage.[82] God is also pictured as a bit less ready to forgive: He is "reasonable" in forgiving the transgressor who prays, supplicates and "bargains with Him" -- it may be that the element of bargaining is required to pacify God's hurt feelings.[83] The Lord rewards "clean hands and a pure heart." [84] He is even willing to credit future generations with the merits of the former generations and the latter with the merits of their posterity.[85] He is not quick to punish; He waits until the wicked has expended his full store of wickedness.[86] He hopes for the repentance of the wicked, not their extinction.[87] Repentance is like the sea — anyone can wash in it at any time.[88] (It is noteworthy that the sea is frequently described as a symbol of security, of mother-womb protection and peace.) Not only is God hesitant in visiting punishment but he prefers and aids submission to His Will.

It was God's original wish that man should live as God -- without death, like the angels. Then man sinned.[89] Adam, even then, was offered the chance of repentance. But he refused. He manifested rebellion and was driven out. [90]

God is pictured as always seeking to re-establish rapport between Himself and His children. The gates of repentance are always open.[91] God is pictured as saying: "I testify by heaven and earth that I sit and hope for Israel more than a father for his son or than a mother for her daughter, if only they would repent that My words could be fulfilled."[92] If man will simply indicate to God his willingness to seek repentance, God will cooperate with him and aid him: "Open for Me a door of repentance as big as the hole in a needle and I shall open for you larger doors."[93] Once man repents He is regarded by God as if he did not sin.[94] When the sons of Korach and David repent they are given loving names.[95] Had Korach, himself, repented he would have been forgiven.[96] Even sufferings are not visited upon man by a vengeful deity who delights in their hurt -- rather they are a purification of heart which enables man to enter the world to come.[97] He allows a long period of time for the wicked to repent.[98] Such evil as is brought into the world comes not arbitrarily but is brought into the world by God in His wisdom[99] implying that even in the case of evil its presence arises as a challenging element which tries and purifies His children.

Prayer and sacrifice reflect this softer side of the authoritarian Father in Heaven. God is not bothered or annoyed by the constant petition of mortals -- rather he is happy when this occurs.[100] God wants people to pray to Him so that He will be able to receive them.[101] He answers no matter what the language is in which He is called or by which name He is called.[102] It is the prayers of the Righteous which turn God's attribute of wrath to that of mercy.[103] One of the most charming bits of imagery in the Aggadah describes the angels as weaving man's prayers into a garland to adorn the head of God.[104]

God utilizes even the device of sacrifice as a method for guiding man into conformity with the pattern of conduct He would teach. He doesn't need sacrifices but man does.[105] Sacrifices are interpreted as "gifts" [106] but they will not be needed even for atonement in the world to come. [107] God abhors the idea of transgressors giving to Him of the profits of their transgressions, He wants prayer as the symbol of their submission.[108] He prefers the performance of charity to the offering of sacrifices.[109] He is not unapproachable, one may bargain with Him even to the point of threat -- but this is done through the prayer relationship and is continued until He accedes to the demand.[110] This may be regarded as an extension of the "Promethean element" which Dr. Blank has described in Biblical prayer:

> "Men who pray figure prominently in Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish tradition. But these men do not all pray alike. Some of them pray in a mood of submissive penitence -- this is the commoner, the approved way. Others, strange though it sounds, stand up to God in prayer and demand their due. In distress and danger, they defend their rights, the rights of men, against the encroachments of an arbitrary or tyrannical God." [111]

The concept of the "Promethean" relationship forms a convenient transition for us. Certainly the Father-figure presented by the literature to this point does not justify the description of a terrifying, punitive God of wrath. But elements of arbitrariness and of demand arising from the father-son relationship and from the "need of God for Israel" do present themselves in the literature.

3. God's Sovereignty and His "Need for Israel"

Just as a father-son relationship requires a son upon whom the father may exercise his influence, so a God who remains unknown in His world, who has no identification with His creatures and who remains unknown even to those created in His image -- such a God can have little or no conscious interaction with His creatures. The very idea of the necessity of the interaction between the sentient "minds" as well as the projection into the God idea of qualities of personal pride and glorification -- all imply the existence of familial models in terms of which man's theology is described.

"It was not for their works that the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, or for their father's works...but to make God a name..." [112] With each of His great deeds for Israel, His name became greater.[113] Noah could have been saved without all of the involvement with the Ark but it was of importance that he serve as an example to the nations of what God intended to do.[114] God's sovereignty depended upon the appearance of a sentient man who would understand and serve Him. His rule did not begin until the appearance of Abraham.[115] Although other nations of the world needed instruction even more than Israel, Moses was sent to Israel because they were the first to make God sovereign.[116] God's concern for Israel arose only because of their Sinaitic agreement to "do and listen." [117] God needs his creatures and is pictured as saying: "When I conquer I lose; when I am conquered, I gain. I conquered the generation of the flood. But did I not lose, for I destroyed my world." [118]

The attitude expressed here seems to be that as much as I am needed by Father, Father also has a deep and profound need for me. But He is

great and He is powerful. He cannot change His attribute of judgment or it would destroy His world. [119]

He does not have to be good to man. "I shall be gracious unto whom I shall be gracious -- even though it is not proper and I shall be merciful unto whom I shall be merciful even though it is not proper." [120] Since God is not obligated to do good to man, He does it of His own free will. [121]

The element of dissatisfaction of the sibling when favoritism is indicated to the rival but "less worthy" sibling also appears and strengthens the authority implications of the father-figure: the greatest treasure of God will be given to the person who has nothing whether or not he is worthy. [122]

But no-one can hold God responsible. Even Moses had to come to Him in supplication.[123] He can set the Torah and the sword as alternatives. [124] His secret reasons for doing things -- His "ways" -- remain known only to Him.[125] In His authority, He demands submission -- the broken heart rather than pride.[126] Even prayer is a form of trembling before Him.[127] And prayer should not be indulged in frivously or at unspecified times lest it bother Him.[128] He owes nothing to the patriarchs, rather they owe Him as a result of the contractual nature of their covenant.[129] He is capable of jealousy but it is a "controlled" jealousy.[130] He controls destiny and allows things to happen when He sees fit to let them happen.[131]

In none of the three aspects into which the material covered suggested itself do we find the authoritarian God attributed to Jewish tradition appearing with anything resembling the prototype intensity that is so glibly attached to the God of Israel by those who do not know Him as seen by the tradition. Three areas of His authoritarian

personality have been described: neither as demanding Father, nor as the Father who compels us to imitate His ways, nor as the overwhelming figure whose very nature demands subservience -- in none of these do we encounter a God of Wrath who is devoid of the softness of love and the identification with his children which manifests itself in concern.

Chapter III

GOD AS THE LOVING FATHER

Since the traditional picture of God in Judaism has been one of a deity devoid of human procreative drives and needs, and without any suggestion of a consort, we may find within the picture of God -- as a competent, essentially masculine personality -- some of the elements of softness and sympathy which are usually relegated to the Mother-figure of Mary or the self-sacrificing Brother-figure of Jesus in Christian tradition.

The sense of nearness and the all-forgiving love and ecstacy associated with the mother-aspect is referred to in the later mystical literature in terms of the Shechinah -- the immanent, indwelling presence of the Almighty. But even before this aspect of the tradition grew into considerable importance, the nature of the relationship between the Jew and his God was bound to include the elements of identification, of unconditional love, of "special regard" in the family of sibling nations and elements reflecting the urge to return to the mystical union which formed the earliest clearly recollected sense of security and warmth -- that of association with the mother.

Goodenough describes the early infancy of the child as a source of religious symbolism:

> "His infancy has been concentrated into an experience of one mother..this is simply the great beneficent personality, in which only a quite developed child can distinguish different persons... and it is the unchangeable nature of this earliest experience...which furnishes the most important common ground of understanding between us and remote civilizations." 132

This mother love, the caresses and nourishments of all those who fed and cared for him in his earliest moments blend into a sense of a great, caring, warm, loving mother. This link between generations is founded upon the common basis of experience which has differed little through the centuries.

This first, great impression has additional overtones of religious significance. Fromm points out:

> "Her care is not dependent upon anything the child does for her, or any obligation the child has to fulfill; it is unconditional...To be loved by her means to be alive, to be rooted, to be at home." [133]

He indicates that from such love develops our feelings of life, freedom and equality but that this love also provokes the negative aspects of over-reliance which can stunt our sense of individuality and which can keep us bound to the dependent level of the child -- incapable of progress. [134]

Fromm's position is especially interesting to us because he moves the mother-figure into a position which the limited perspective of the Freudian approach had denied to her. In Fromm's analysis she is significant in terms of value development and guidance; in Freud's system she is the target for sexual Oedipus rivalry with the authoritarian father. In Tillich's review of Fromm's Sane Society, he makes the following salient comment upon this:

> "Most interesting is the chapter on the 'incestuous' bondage of man to his mother. First of all, Fromm denies that this bondage is sexual in principle (though it can become so accidentally) thus rejecting Freud's concept

> of the Oedipus complex. He elaborates Freud's patriarchal attitude and comes to the conclusion that Freud 'degrades the mother into the object of sexual lust. The goddess is transformed into the prostitute, the father elevated into the central figure of the universe.' In a footnote he adds: 'On this elimination of the mother figure, Freud does for psychology what Luther did for religion.'" [135]

Fromm rejects the sexual, Oedipal rivalry as the sole tie between mother and son and replaces this with the concept of an "irrational affective" tie that continues to influence his attitudes throughout life.[136]

The relationship to God in this sense is more of the immediate sense of trust implied by the word: "bitachon" rather than the idea of theological faith implied in the term: "emunah." [137]

Even the Midrash comments upon the frequency with which terms implying this kind of relationship occur in the Bible:

> "You will find that the 'good' attributes of God are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible and in abundance. This is so as regards beneficence, lovingkindness, mercy, righteousness, faithfulness, redemption, blessing, peace." [138]

We will investigate this "irrational affective" tie in terms of 1) God's identification with the fate of His people or creatures, 2) God's unconditional love, 3) God's relationship to Israel as the favorite sibling and 4) such elements indicating either ambivalence or attempts at mystical union as have significantly presented themselves in the literature covered.

1. God's Identification with the Fate of His Children and Creatures:

God is deeply involved in the fate of His people and in the fate of all His creatures. The relationship is one of mutuality. The identification between God and His people is such that the happiness and achievement of each is bound to express itself in the good of the other. Thus we find God saying to Moses:

> "Am I not He whose sons ye are and whose Father I am? Ye are my brethren and I am your brother...hence they say that if a man enhances the glory of heaven, his own glory is enhanced with that of heaven..." [139]

In a similar fashion do we find the identification of God with His people described as analogous to that of a king who exiles his rebellious wife and sons only to invite one of them to return that he might say to him: "Whatever I do I do for the sake of my name which rests upon you." [140] In effect God deals with His children because they bear His image and neither can be free from the involvement of one with the other.

At the moment when Moses sang his song of victory at the Red Sea the angels shared in His rejoicing, raising their voices in song only to be silenced by God who says to them: "The works of My hands are drowning in the sea and you would sing a song before Me?" [141] This universalistic concern marks the identification of God with all the "works of His hands" as well as with Israel.

The cries which come to God in times of trouble disturb Him for they make Him know the evil decrees that He has brought into being. [141] His involvement is emotional: God has a secret place where He can hide and weep. [142] He is with Israel in time of trouble [143] and partakes

of their suffering as they suffer.[144] He weeps along with Israel.[145]

So great is God's involvement with them that He says: "It is as if I am held captive among them."[146] The Torah indicates in its outset that it must have been He who adorned Eve as a bride; at its conclusion that it must have been He who buried Moses and in its center He is pictured as visiting the sick — "for all His ways are loving-kindness."[147] It is He who therefore manifests concern upon those who have none else to care for them. With similar concern He orders guideposts set up that unintentional murderers might find their way to the cities of refuge.[148]

His throne depends upon the unity of Israel. They are likened to ships which are bound together that a palace might be built upon them. So long as the boats remain unified, the palace is supported -- when they each go their own ways, the palace falls. God needs His sons to keep His status and He needs them all working in harmony together.

2. God's Unconditional Love for His Children

As we have indicated in our discussions of Fromm, the mother-love pattern differs from the father-love in that it is felt as unconditional. The love of the mother does not depend on and fashion upon the specific performance by the child of certain actions. Whether the child conforms or fails to conform, his mother continues to love him simply because he is her child.

This element appears in the God picture drawn by the Aggadah even where the provocation is great:

> '"But they beguiled Him with their mouth,
> and lied to Him with their tongue, for their heart
> was not steadfast in Him, neither were they faith-
> ful to his covenant' (Ps. 78:36) and in spite of

this, He was merciful, forgiving sin..." [149]

We encounter God saying: "...even though they have become rebellious I do not abandon them; but with them I dwell..." [150] Even though the gates of prayer may be occasionally closed, the gates of mercy are always open. [151]

This raises the familial problem of inequality of treatment for if the wicked child is not punished, then what is the benefit derived from being the righteous son? Rabbi Meir suggests: "If God treats in this way those who anger Him, how much more is there for those who do His will." [152]

Each night, the tradition tells us, the soul goes to heaven to stand with God and, even though He finds it wanting, He returns it by morning. [155] Or in another instance the unconditional quality of God's love is expressed as follows:

> "To him who has anything to his account with me I show mercy, that is I deal with him through the attribute of mercy; but to him who has nothing I am gracious, that is, I deal with him by gift and gratis." [154]

He sent mannah from heaven even on the day that Israel made the golden calf. [155] It was this element of mercy which saved Adam from death in his sin and tempered the punishing wrath of God so that Adam was merely evicted from the garden.

God recognizes the stubborn and bothersome qualities of Israel but He cannot hurt them for having these qualities. This holds true even though He warns Moses that he may be stoned by them.[156] His love does not depend on whether they are male or female,[157] righteous or wicked.[158] David is credited with saying that there is no evil in God.[159] The term "erech apayim" (long suffering) is interpreted to

mean both the righteous and the wicked because of the dual form of "apayim." [160]

God is considered most praiseworthy when He manifests this quality of unconditional love: "when He pays the 'lazy workers' and gives them their full reward -- and it is a great good." [161] He is the source of their salvation. [162] And they may be called His sons, according to Rabbi Meir, even when they are not acting like His sons. [163]

3. Israel as the "Favorite" Sibling in the Family of Nations

Erich Fromm speaks of the patriarchal pattern as the model for most of the relationships in the Old Testament:

> "The entire Old Testament is an elaboration of the patriarchal principle...In the family structure... we find always the figure of the favorite son: Abel as against Cain; Jacob as against Esau; Joseph against his brothers; and in a broader sense, the People of Israel as the favorite son of God." [164]

This theme is carried over into the Aggadic literature and we find many references to the "special" relationship existing between Israel and God. The rich imagery of the Song of Songs is used to express the intense interplay of love between God and Israel:

> "'My beloved is mine and I am his' (Cant. 2:16). Israel says: He is my God, and I am His people; He is my Father and I am His son; He is my Shepherd, and I am His flock; He is my guardian, and I am His vineyard...He sings of me, and I sing of Him; He praises me and I praise Him...He says to me, 'Thou art fair, My friend,' and I say to Him, 'Thou art fair, my beloved and pleasant.'" [165]

In other imagery God calls Israel His "daughter," "sister," or "mother." [166] Israel is a "solitary lamb." [167] But any such favoritism in the family of nations is bound to provoke certain reactions in the "siblings" who are not included in God's special circle of affection. This resentment does find its way into the literature. The nations of the world attempt to shatter the bonds of love between Israel and God. [168] The angels rebuke God for favoring Israel and He replies that Israel's conforming to God's wishes (obeying the Torah) merits that they be given special treatment. [169] The angels consistently opposed, not only Israel, but mankind. They opposed the creation of man; they opposed the giving of the Torah, and they opposed the building of the Tabernacle. [170] (This tension also appears in terms of Sinai where Israel refuses to deal with the accompanying angels -- as the other nations did -- and insisted upon chosing God, Himself.) [171]

The Torah had been offered to the other nations first, but only Israel accepted it. [172] God chose Israel out of love for them because they were righteous. [173] From the day man was created, the nations complain, Israel has been God's chosen. [174] Similarly:

> "God said: 'You have made me the only object of your love in the world, so shall I make you the only object of My love in the world.'" [175]

God considers Abraham, David and Israel as His three "finds." [176] Israel chose God and God chose Israel -- there is an element of mutuality in the affection. [177] Israel followed God into the wilderness by faith alone. [178] Because they made God One, He will make them one nation on their own land. [179] He gave them the Torah not only as a gift [180] but

as a weapon for defense and a means of preserving them in life. [181] He gave them new moons, the Sabbath and the intercalated year as His special gift to them. [182] God revealed the secrets of His achievements to them. [183]

Another symbol of the special relationship is the idea of God attaching His name to them (the theophoric element in the name Israel: "He wrestled with God") in order to protect them. [184] This is even though He is God over all peoples. [185]

Israel is given special treatment and consideration: they were allowed to rebuke God and hurl invective at Him after the crossing of the Red Sea. [186] God consistently lightens the punishment they deserve. [187] The covenant itself expresses His special love for them. [188] God does not desert them even when they are in slavery. [189] He purified Himself when He took them out of Egypt. [190] He is with them even in the impurities of exile. [191]

Israel turns to Him when they are in trouble. The other nations beset Israel and place upon Israel all forms of trouble and oppression, and when all turn against Israel, Israel still turns to God. [192]

An interesting division of opinion appears in the problem of how Israel relates to the fellow nations in the human family. The first body of opinion speaks of God dealing only with Israel and expecting them to be the exclusive group which hews to His standards: "The Holy One Blessed be He said I do not warn idolaters concerning idolatry, but only you." [192] It is in their midst that God is sanctified. [193] "I created this people for Myself; they shall recount My praises." (Is. 53:21) as a result of which only they are to praise Him. [194]

A completely opposite pattern appears in the literature which

places upon Israel the obligation to distribute Torah among the nations.[195] God is pictured as wanting to treat the other siblings equally as soon as they will relate to Him properly. "God is on the watch for the nations of the world to repent so that He may bring them under His wings." [196] God's love for Israel does not imply a lack of regard for others since any stranger who will abandon his idol worship may join Israel.[197] He is then better cared for than an Israelite and special provisions apply to him.[198] To pervert justice to the stranger is to pervert justice towards God.[199] The stranger and the Israelite are essentially equal.[200] God's doors are always open to receive anyone,[201] a convert can even someday perhaps attain priesthood.[202] Anyone who fears God is well received by Him.[203]

Israel, therefore, in the eyes of the tradition clearly occupies the place of the favorite child among the nations -- a child who is especially loved and who receives from God special privileges. The one salient point to be added is that there are those who contributed to the tradition who saw this favoritism as a means for bringing many others under the category of Israel. The symbolic position of the favorite son was not an inaccessible one.

4. God and the Idea of Mystical Union:

The symbolism used in the description of God also suggests that by somehow relating to God one can achieve peace and satisfaction and acceptance (which are qualities indicative of a mother-child relationship.)

God is suggested as the always-loving figure to whom one can turn when one's parents fail to live up to the perfection which the young child attributes to them:

> "Rabbi Berachiah said: God said to the Israelites, 'My children, if you see the merit of your fathers failing, or the merit of your mothers tottering, come and cling to my love.'" [204]

Numerous suggestions of the nourishing mother are found under the interpretations of God as the nourisher of all,[205] who has the amazing ability to satisfy the personal needs of the many diverse creatures He has made. [206]

God appears distant, yet He is near.[207] He is on earth as well as in Heaven.[208] He has deep concern for the small and the weak, He is the protecting source of strength for those who feel inadequate. He chose Sinai, the smallest of the mountains, and gave it historical significance.[209] In addition He appeared in the lowliest of plants, the thorn bush.[210] God does not despise the poverty of the poor as do mortals.[211] He accepts the sacrifice of the poor man before that of King Agrippa.[212] He stands at the side of the poor man [213] for rich and poor are alike in His eyes.[214] He favors the pursued over the pursuer.[215]

In God's eyes the performance of deeds of lovingkindness are more important than righteousness or learning Torah.[216] If you are upright ("tammim"), you are with God.[217] If you would have God with you, be as upright as Abraham.[218]

Similar to the concept of nearness and comfort is the symbolic significance of the idea of peace which is as necessary on earth as it is in heaven.[219] Peace is the name of God.[220] The second day is not described in the same manner as are the other days of Creation. The second day lacks the phrase "and it was good" because of the strife that took place on that day between the waters. [221] Moses and Aaron

are regarded by God as ideal brothers because they lived together in peace.[222] It is God who has the power to smooth out the strife between brothers.[223] It is the angels of peace who stand near to God; the angels of wrath are kept far away.[224]

God therefore in His qualities of comfort and love is pictured as someone who is so identified with His children that He cries at their hurt; as one whose love is forthcoming no matter how great the provocation against Him; as one who -- in spite of His concern for all mankind -- has a special relationship to Israel, His favorite child; and who also emerges as a symbol of nourishment, of peace, of concern for the individual no matter how lowly.

Chapter IV

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

From the material cited in this study, it would seem that the Midrashic "personality" of God stresses the qualities of gentleness and love over those of wrath and stern demand. The punitive aspect of God does appear but rarely does it appear without qualifications which stress God's patience and His involvement with His creatures or His people. It is impossible to read through considerable amounts of Aggadic materials without noticing the stress toward the gentle and the sympathetic.

This has been demonstrated in such general categories as: God's unconditional demonstrations of love, God's identification with fate of His children, His generosity toward them -- especially toward Israel.

The symbolic relationships indicated in the literature reflect a familial structure in which one finds a Father setting an example for His sons, disciplining them -- but only after long provocation and with the motivation of their own good.

God is pictured as "needing" Israel in much the same manner as any father "needs" a son to carry on His name. It is important to Him that those who bear witness to Him -- in whom He is reflected -- exemplify those qualities which would give to His name the connotations which give Him a feeling of pride and satisfaction.

Yet He gives His love even to those who fail to live up to His hopes and He is concerned with the significance of each human life, no matter how lowly its bearer. God is the Father who loves his children whether or not they meet his expectations.

The paradoxical seems to be blended into the personality of God -- the catalyst being a deep loving concern for His children, especially

those who are associated with His name. He is awe-inspiring, yet gentle; He is near, yet far; He is demanding and punitive, yet forgiving and loving. Carroll Wise comments upon this element in religious thought:

> "The reality of religion, then, is the reality of human experience. There is no aspect of human experience that does not find expression in religious symbol. Religion functions between two worlds, the inner and the external, the actual and the ideal, the relative and the Absolute, the finite and the infinite. It aims at the reconciliation of opposites which produces living values..." 225

The Aggadic picture of God contains the contradictions which emerge from the individual life situation with its sometimes loving, sometimes punishing father. It does have a dominant motif: God is essentially good. His motivations are primarily those of concern for the welfare of His children. But He is hardly to be described as the "God of Wrath and Judgment" who is cited as the unfortunate opposite of the "God of Love of the New Testament."

Examples of this type of reference abound in the literature which describes religion in psychological terms.

Goodenough opines:

> In "a religion like talmudic Judaism, in which the mother element has become quite unrecognizably obscured in the dominant pattern of the relation between a boy and his father...here the individual is given the rewards of this life and the next strictly on the basis of obedience," 226

but is constrained to qualify this by saying that although mercy and repentance can be had, they were not such important qualities that a specific divine personality emerged to handle them.

Even Fromm adds to this conception:

> "The most important change...is that of a shifting of emphasis from a purely patriarchal to a blending between matriarchal and patriarchal elements. The Jewish God of the Old Testament had been a strictly patriarchal God; in the Catholic development, the idea of the all-loving and all-forgiving mother is re-introduced..." [227]

although such a statement conflicts with the existence of "mother-love" elements in the Jewish tradition which are contemporaneous with and may well antedate Catholic tradition. The presence of this material is amply documented in this study.

Two of the more influential studies of religion which have utilized psychoanalytic terminology and method are those of Oscar Pfister and R. S. Lee.

Lee's Freud and Christianity: speaks of symbols as those mechanisms which enable unconscious drives to be manipulated without bringing them to the conscious level.[228] God the Father is a projection of infantile associations -- ambivalent because they include the good, loving father as well as the violent, dangerous, punishing father.[229] As the child develops he learns a more mature picture of his father. Through contact with Christianity, he does things because of moral conviction, rather than through fear of punishment, but as for the Pharisees:

> "Their God was simply a projection of the unconscious father-image, the core of the Super-Ego, and because they gave supremacy to it, their

> God was not the real God with whom Jesus was concerned and Who could be seen in the lilies of the field, in the farmer sowing his crops or a father welcoming home a long lost son, that is, a God discoverable by the /rational/ Ego. Theirs was an authoritarian God, the projected infantile image of the father, unmodified by knowledge of the real father." [230]

Similarly we find such references in the classic work of the Zurich pastor who knew and worked with Freud, Oscar Pfister. In his Christianity and Fear he strives to show that the central concept of the teaching of Jesus was love and that this should be the central element of Christian dogma. Through love one can conquer fear and the love-destroying defenses engendered by fear. Liberation from fear caused by a sense of guilt may be had in Christianity by love "which turns toward Christ or directly to God who in this process ceases to be a punishing Jahveh and becomes the loving Father preached by Jesus." [231] The Jewish God-symbol was inadequate because, since the Jewish God lacked a consort: "the paternal principle in the psychological sense thus dominates without any leniative element of maternal gentleness." [232] Even the prophets who spoke of a benevolent God spoke of His benevolence as conditioned upon obedience.[233] And in "later" Judaism:

> "Hope for the resurrection and for rewards in the beyond, for the Messiah and the salvation associated with his appearance, faith in angels and in supramundane spirits filled the gap between a dreaded God and mankind -- all these contributed to turn the piety of the Pharisees and the learning of the scribes into a lasting

> source of pleasure for all who were disposed to a corresponding degree of fear; whereas all who were not so disposed suffered severely under this form of piety and felt repelled by it. Psychologically it is easy to understand why Christianity proved less popular among the great bulk of the Jews than among the Romans who represented the opposite extreme -- a super-abundant impulsiveness coupled with absences of ideals (and of sublimation). There was on one hand the gloomy and meticulous piety of Jewish Law, whose strict commandments were a powerful source of religious fear...on the other hand the fear resulting from the moral decay associated with the Roman Empire..."

The opposing fears were comprised through love which managed to bridge the gap between "overstrict and misguided conscience" and "unbridled impulsivity."[234]

But with all of Pfister's stressing of Jesus as the teacher of an unconditional God of love, it is interesting to note his conclusion:

> "The whole of theology should be irradiated by the principle 'God is Love' understood as Jesus understood it. The definition of God as a loving father must imply, as it did for Jesus, the attributes of goodness, mercy and justice, but also an intense moral gravity whence it follows that God is not afraid to inflict a painful punishment precisely because He is guided by goodness...God's justice is to be taken as an instrument of love...the view which does not

> subordinate the justice of God to love... [leaves only] the strict, hard and angry God of Judaism." [235]

It is interesting to note how closely the God concept which Pfister reads into the mind of Jesus approximates -- although somewhat more severely than in the Aggadah -- the picture of the Holy One, Blessed be He which is drawn by Jewish Rabbinic tradition.

The rabbinic tradition draws from the Old Testament the attributes of gentleness and love expressed in Exodus 34:6, 7 and around these verses builds the most frequently cited Midrash dealing with the important Jewish concept of imitatio dei:

> "Our sages taught...Just as He is merciful, so shall ye be merciful; just as He is gracious, so shall ye be gracious..." [236]

It may be surmised that the concept of imitatio dei forced the development and amplification of the "mother-elements" in the personality of God as depicted in the Aggadah. For to imitate the stern, punishing, wrathful God which our prototype-producing critics assign to us would be running contrary to the ethical admonitions with which Old Testament literature abounds and would set up an internal contradiction. The Jewish God concept had to develop along lines which included unconditional love and elements of benevolence which are characteristic of "mother-love" as well as "father-love."

It is in this very element of imitatio dei and in the nature of the Jewish God-personality that Judaism may have a significant contribution to make to American and European culture. One of the most prevalent sources of anxiety in our society is the cultural supression of elements of gentleness in the developing male. All elements of identification with the mother and with the qualities associated with

the mother are severely suppressed. The ideal male is a variant of the Teutonic hero -- rough, rude, demanding, independent. The female must manifest the qualities of weakness which make her the exact opposite of her warrior mate. For a male to manifest softness is to provoke anxiety-laden hostilities from those who have been taught to suppress these qualities within themselves.

The God described by the Aggadah is the ideal which the Jew would imitate. He is the cast from which we would mold rachamanim bnei rachamanim -- competent males with an openly gentle touch.

In spite of cultural changes which bring with them important changes in the role of the father of the family -- changes described by Riesman[237] and Fromm[238] -- there are elements of continuing significance in the Aggadic picture of God -- a God worthy of imitation, a God quite different from the picture drawn of Him by those who do not know the Aggadah.

Abbreviations Used in Cross-Citation of Sources

Ar.--Arachin

B.T.--Babylonian Talmud

Ber--Berachot

Cant--Song of Songs

Deut.R.--Deuteronomy Rabbah

Ex.R.--Exodus Rabbah

Gen.R.--Genesis Rabbah

J.T.--Palestinian Talmud.

Koh.R.--Koheleth Rabbah

Lam.R.--Lamentations Rabbah

Lev. R.--Leviticus Rabbah

Mid. Ps.--Midrash Tehillim

Ned.--Nedarim

Num. R.--Numbers Rabbah

Pesik.--Pesikta

Pesik. Rab.--Pesikta Rabbati

Pirkei d.R.El.--Pirkei d'Rabbi Eleazer.

R.A.--Rabbinic Anthology (Montefiore and Loewe)

R.H.--Rosh Hashanah

Sam.--Samuel

San--Sanhedrin

Sho.T.--Shocher Tov

Suc.--Succoth

Tanh.--Tanchuma

Yal.K.--Yalkut Melochim

Yal. Koh.--Yalkut Koheleth

Yal. Ps.--Yalkut Tehillim

Yal. Tol-- Yalkut Toloth

Yeb.--Yebamoth

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