

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROBLEM OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Oey Siau Hian

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
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AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROBLEM OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

being a Thesis presented by

OEY SIAUW HIAN

to the University of St. Andrews
in application for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

The Research was carried out in

St. Mary's College

University of St. Andrews

(Oey Siau Hian)

CERTIFICATE

I certify that OEY SIAUW HIAN has spent
nine terms at Research Work in

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS
that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance
No.16 (St.Andrews) and that he is qualified to submit
the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy.

(Robert Davidson)

CAREER

In 1951 I entered the Theological College at Jogjakarta (Indonesia) and completed theological training in 1954. In the following years 1954 - 1957 I worked in the Indonesian Christian Church as evangelist and assistant minister in some places in Central Java. In 1958 I went back to the Theological Academy of Jogjakarta, where I graduated with the Degree of Baccalaureus Theologiae (B.Th.).

In January 1959 I was appointed as a Lecturer in Old Testament Studies at the Theological Academy of Jogjakarta and in May 1959 I was ordained as a minister in the Indonesian Christian Church (Gredja Kristen Indonesia) in Central Java. After pursuing a special post-graduate course I passed a special examination in July 1959. This examination was sponsored and authorized by the Theologische Hogeschool of Kampen (Holland), which acknowledges it as being equivalent to the examination for the degree of "Candidaat in de Theologie" (Candidatus Theologiae).

On October 6th 1959 I matriculated in St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, as a Research Student and commenced research on the particular subject of the problem of the Mal'akh Yahweh in the Old Testament, which is now being submitted as a Ph.D. Thesis.

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1. The Nanking Theological Seminary Board of Founders, its Executive Secretary: The Rev. Dr. Frank T. Cartwright, and its Field Representative in South East Asia: The Rev. John R. Fleming, M.A., B.D.
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Last but not least, I extend my thanks to the University Chaplain, the Rev. Ronald D. Speirs, B.D., and his wife, for their personal kindness and consideration, and to other friends in Deans Court for the pleasant fellowship during the time spent on this research.

St. Mary's College
October 1961.

S.H. Oey

TO
MY BELOVED WIFE:

TREES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I. THE MOST COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THE THESIS

M(h)E	Mal'akh (ha)'Elohim
MY	Mal'akh Yahweh
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

II. FURTHER ABBREVIATIONS, MOSTLY BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

ANET	<u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u> relating to the Old Testament, ed. James B. Pritchard, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950.
ALW	<u>Archiv. für Liturgiewissenschaft</u> , Abt-Herwegen-Institut für Liturgische und Monastische Forschung, Abtei Maria Laach, herausgegeben von Dr. Emmanuel V. Severus OSB, Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1959.
ATD	<u>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</u> , Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
AV	Authorized King James Version of the Bible.
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, <u>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u> , Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959
BH	<u>Biblia Hebraica</u> , ed., Rudolf Kittel; textum Masoretic curavit P. Kahle, Stuttgart.
BJRL	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
BKAT	<u>Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament</u> , Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Verlag der Buchhandlung der Erziehungsvereins.

- BZAW Beihefte der Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen, Berlin.
- COD The Concise Oxford Dictionary, repr. 1958.
- DSS The Dead Sea Scrolls.
- EBi Encyclopaedia Biblica, ed. T.K. Cheyne, J. Sutherland Black.
- EBr. Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- ET The Expository Times, ed. A.W. Hastings and E. Hastings, Edinburgh.
- HBAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament, ed. Otto Eisfeldt, Tübingen.
- HDB Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- HKAT Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, ed. W. Nowack, Göttingen.
- HSAB Riesler, Paul, Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Bundes, 1. Aufl. Mainz 1924; 2. Aufl. 1929.
- HTR Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- IB The Interpreter's Bible, New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- ICC International Critical Commentary, eds. S.R. Driver, A. Plummer, C.A. Briggs, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- JBL Journal of Biblical Literature, New Haven.
- JTS The Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford.
- KAT Kommentar zum Alten Testament, ed. E. Sellin, Leipzig.
- KB Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- KHSAT Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments, übersetzt von E. Kautzsch, 4. Aufl. hrsg. von A. Bertholet, Tübingen, 1922.

- KV Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift, Kampen:
J.H. Kok.
- LXX Septuaginta, edidit Alfred Rahlfs, Stuttgart.
- MB Melanges Bibliques.
- MS(S) Manuscript(s).
- MT Masoretic Text, the traditional Hebrew text of
the Old Testament.
- NV Bijbel, Nieuwe Vertaling op last van het Neder-
landsch Bijbelgenootschap, Amsterdam, 1951.
- ODCC The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,
ed., F.L. Cross, London: Oxford University
Press, 1957.
- OTS Oudtestamentische Studiën, ed., P.A.H. De Boer,
Leiden.
- RB Revue Biblique internationale, Paris.
- RC Roman Catholic.
- RSV The American Revised Standard Version of the
Holy Bible and the Apocrypha of the Old
Testament.
- SPCK Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- TBC Torch Bible Commentaries, London: S.C.M. Press Ltd.
- ThR Theologische Rundschau, Tübingen.
- ThT Theologisch Tijdschrift, Leiden.
- TWzNT Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament,
herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel, Stuttgart:
Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1933.
- VT Vetus Testamentum, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- WC The Westminster Commentaries, ed., Walter Lock
and D.C. Simpson, London.
- ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,
Giessen, Berlin.

III. BIBLICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

- OT : Gen., Ex., Lev., Num., Deut., Jos., Jgs.,
I, II Sam., I, II Kgs., I, II Chron.,
Ezr., Neh., Est., Job, Ps(s), Prov.,
Eccles., Song of Sol., Isa., Jer., Lam.,
Ezek., Dan., Hos., Joel, Am., Obad.,
Jon., Mic., Nah., Hab., Zeph., Hag.,
Zech., Mal..
- NT : Mt., Mk., Lk., Jhn., Acts, Ro., I Cor.,
Col., I Thess., Gal., Hebr., Rev..
- Apocrypha : I, II Esd., Tob., S. of III YM [Young Men],
Sus., Bel., I, II Macc.
- Pseudepigrapha: Jub., T. of XII Patr., T. Reub., T. Lev.,
T. Jud., T. Ash., T. Dan., III Bar.,
I Ma..

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE TASK, SCOPE, AND MATERIAL OF THE STUDY

The task and character of this study is to make an exegetical and theological inquiry into the problem of the MY in the OT.

The scope of this study is limited to the field of the OT. However, in order to have a clear idea of the MY in the OT, it is necessary to make references to intertestamental sources, i.e. the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Septuagint, and the NT. As the OT cannot be fully understood without the background of the culture and religious beliefs of the ancient Near East, a portion of this inquiry is devoted to this comparative study.

For exegetical purposes, MT is cited as in *Biblia Hebraica*, edited by Rudolf Kittel. English references are taken from the RSV of the Bible and the Apocrypha unless otherwise stated.

II. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A certain obscurity surrounds the figure of the MY in the OT. References are sporadic and few.¹

In the whole OT the word מְלֵאךְ יְהוָה occurs fifty-eight times. Of the thirty-nine canonical books only fourteen mention this name, i.e. in Gen., Ex., Num., Jgs., I and II Sam., I and II Kgs., I Chron., Pss., Isa., Hag., Zech., and Mal.. This word appears most, viz. eighteen times, in the book of Jgs., but only in two chapters, i.e. chs.VI, XIII, which are similar narratives. In Num. this name appears ten times, but only in the narrative of Balaam.²

Nor are these sporadic references homogeneous. When the MY is mentioned for the first time in Gen.16, no explanation is given as to who the MY is, nor is there any clear description. The author seems to suppose that the contemporary readers were not unfamiliar with this figure. In this matter the Scriptures show a certain consistency. No clear-cut definition or explanation of its being is given. Its acts and words seem to be of more importance than its being.

There is a certain dynamic flexibility in the figure of the MY: in the name, its relationship with

¹Cf. G.F. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, vol.I, Edinburgh, 1874, pp.194f; P.Heinisch, "It is one of the obscurities in which the Old Testament abounds.", quoted by E.J. Sutcliffe on Gen.16:7 in A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scriptures (ed. D.B. Orchard), 1953, p.195.

²Complete references will be found in Ch.IV, p.90.

Yahweh, the forms of appearances, its acts and messages.

a. In addition to "MY" the name מְלֵךְ is most often mentioned, i.e. Ex. 23:20; 33:2; Num. 20:16; I Kgs. 19:5; Hos. 12:4 (MT vs.5); I Chron. 21:15; II Chron. 32:21; I Kgs. 13:18; or מְלֵךְ הָ , e.g. Gen. 48:16; II Sam. 24:16, 17; I Chron. 21:20; or לְמֵלֵךְ e.g. II Sam. 24:16; I Chron. 21:27. The suffix-forms מְלֵךְ כִּי and מְלֵךְ כֹּחַ appear in Ex. 23:23; 32:34; Mal. 3:1; and in Gen. 24:7,40 respectively. Sometimes it is called מְלֵךְ (ה) הָ and מְלֵךְ כִּי הָ (Gen. 28:12; 32:2). There are two other names each of which is a "hapax legomenon" in the OT, i.e. מְלֵךְ פָּנָיו (Isa. 63:9) and מְלֵךְ הַבְּרִית (Mal. 3:1). The obvious question is: are these similar names denoting one and the same subject or do they denote different beings altogether?

b. The MY is sometimes identified with and sometimes clearly distinguished from Yahweh. There is oscillation between the first person (I) and the third person (He) or between "the I" and "the Divine I" in its speeches. How are we to explain such apparent contradictions?

c. Variations likewise are found in the external appearances: an ordinary human being (e.g. Gen. 18:19; Jgs. 5:13), a flame of fire (Ex. 3), the warrior with sword in hand (Jos. 5:13). The way of its coming and its disappearance is quite as mysterious as the appearance--

forms. It appears like a passing traveller, disguised and unexpectedly (Gen. 18), or as a "man of God" to whom prayer is offered (Jgs. 13) and who disappears mysteriously in the flame of fire from the altar.

d. The MY is often the proclaimer of good news or promise, protecting, guiding Israel, making intercession for Israel (Zech. 1:9-17). On the other hand it also rebukes (Jgs. 2:1-5) and punishes Israel (II Sam. 24; I Chron. 21).

Such dynamic and contradicting features in the MY give rise to many questions and speculations. The problem will become clearer as we study the various interpretations proposed for the MY in Ch. II.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The MY problem is an old problem, as old as the Christian Church itself, perhaps even older. Until last century, however, the MY has been taken for granted or rather misused for doctrinal purposes.

While articles on the MY and discussions in commentaries and in general works on biblical theology have become more frequent in recent years³, no book on the subject exists in English or Dutch. The German

³vide infra Ch. II

dissertations of J. Rybinski and F. Stier are both the product of RC scholarship and have certain limitations. The way is open for a new approach which will make use of recent work in the field of biblical theology and will draw upon our increasing understanding of Hebrew life and thought.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS ON THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

To give the study historical perspective we look first at the main lines of interpretations which have been suggested by different scholars. In this field we confine our study to three things:

1. current interpretations with their traditional background,
2. representative scholars - this study, however, does not claim to be exhaustive,
3. one main aspect of the problem, i.e. the question who the MY is and how its relationship is with Yahweh.

The various trends of interpretation of the MY can be grouped into four major types:

- I. The Representation theory
- II. The Identity theory
- III. The Historical-critical approach
- IV. The Psychological approach.

I. THE REPRESENTATION THEORY

This theory considers the MY as one of the angelic beings, distinguished from Yahweh. The MY as such can

never be identified with Yahweh. He is sent by Yahweh with a special message or task and can therefore act and speak in His name with divine authority.

This interpretation seems to be the oldest and the most common one. This is evident from the usage of this term in the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Septuagint and in the NT itself.

In the Apocrypha. In the apocryphal books there is a varied use of this term. In I Esdr. 1:50,51 "his messenger" (LXX, vs. 48: του ἀγγελου αυτου) is identified with the prophets; in II Esdr. 1:38 the prophet Malachi is called "the messenger of the Lord". This name is also used as an appellative noun for some named (arch-)angels, e.g. for Uriel, who acts as an angel interpreter sent by God to Ezra (II Esdr. 4:1; 10:28). Raphael, the healing angel sent by God (Tob. 3:17), appears as an ordinary man (Tob. chs. V,VI), but he is actually one of the seven holy angels presenting the prayers of the saints and entering into the presence of the glory of the Holy One (Tob. 12:15); he is called "the angel of the Lord" (Tob. 12:22, ο̅ ἀγγελος κυριου),

Sometimes this name ἀγγελος κυριου is given to a particular angel sent by God to carry out a special purpose. Whether this name is given to one and the same angel, or not, is not clear from the texts, but it does

not seem so. In S. of III YM. vs. 26 the angel of the Lord (LXX: Dan. 3:49 ἄγγελος κυρίου, no article), descends into the furnace to save the young men from the flames. He is presumably one of the ἄγγελοι κυρίου ("angels of the Lord", vs. 27), in LXX: Dan. 3:58, who are called to praise the Lord. In Sus. the angel of the Lord seems to be a particular angel, receiving the sentence from God and executing the judgement upon the unrighteous men. In Sus. vs. 55 the LXX reads: ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου while the Theodotion text has: ἄγγελος του θεου, cf. vs. 59. In Bel. vss. 34,36,39, the angel of the Lord carries out God's providence towards Daniel (LXX Theodotion vs. 34: ἄγγελος κυρίου; in vss. 36,39: ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου referring to the one mentioned in vs. 34). In II Macc. 15:22,23 the "angel of the Lord" of the OT (cf. II Kgs. 19:35 and II Chron. 36:15,16) is now called "a good angel" (LXX: ἄγγελον ἀγαθον).

In the Pseudepigrapha. In these books, which are generally considered of a later date than the Apocrypha, the term "angel of the Lord (God)" is more often used, with an even greater variety in meaning, due to the unlimited development of the angelology in Israel.

In the Book of Jubilees¹ the MY of the book of Gen.

¹According to R.H. Charles written by a Pharisee in 135-105 B.C., to defend Judaism against the attacks of Hellenistic spirit; vide the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol.II: Pseudepigrapha, 1913, p.1.

is interpreted in several ways. In Jub. 17:11 (cf. Gen. 21:17) it is called "an angel of God, one of the holy ones"; in Jub. 18:9ff (cf. Gen. 22:11,15) it is called "I", i.e. the angel of the Presence, who is in charge of writing all the history from the beginning of creation. This "angel of the presence" is also identified with the guardian angel, who went before the camp of Israel (1:29); he is an intermediary angel between God and Abraham (2:1 cf. 12:22-27). There are many angels of the presence (2:2,18; 15:27). The angels of the Lord, mentioned in this book, seem to be entirely different from the MY of the OT. They are told to descend to the earth (4:15) and are called "watchers" (4:21; 7:21; 8:3); these "watchers" have a special task, i.e. to instruct the children of men in observing the omens of the sun, moon, and stars and in all the signs of heaven (4:15; 8:13). These angels of God married the daughters of men (5:1) and were punished (5:6) and afterwards became evil spirits or demons (10:5). The theophany in Gen. 18 is also described as the appearance of these angels of the presence (Jub. 16:1-4). In Jub. 27:21f. the same theophany at Bethel is maintained as in Gen. 28:12ff. with the difference that here they are called "angel of the Lord", while in Gen. 28 they are called "angels of God" (מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים). The MY here is not the

name of one particular angel; it signifies one of the eminent angels, the angels of the Presence.

The same is true in "The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs"². "Angels of the Lord" and "angels of Satan" are mentioned here in T. As. 6:4. The angel of the Lord seems to be one of the holy angels, God's minister to men, cf. T. Reub. 3:15; 5:3; T. Jud. 21:5; 15:5; 10:2; T. Lev. 9:6; T. Dan. 5:4 cf. 6:2.

In "The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch", also called III Baruch³, an "angel of the Lord" (1:3; 3:1; 10:7) is sent to Baruch to show him the various heavens and to interpret them to Baruch. He is called "the angel of the powers" as far as he is showing the mysteries of God (1:8; 2:5). In the latter verse he is called Phanuel, which is according to I En. 40, one of the four angels of the presence. He belongs to the class of the arch-angels (10:1), subordinated to Michael, the Commander of all angels (11:4,7,8). From these evidences it is clear, that the name "angel of the Lord" is not the special title for Phanuel only, but is an appellative noun

²According to R.H. Charles, written between 109-106 B.C., op. cit. p. 282.

³dating from the beginning of the second century A.D., vide R.H. Charles, op. cit. p.259.

applicable to other angels too.

The varied use of this term in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha is based on the influence of a far-reaching developed angelology in Israel, rather than on a real interpretation of the MY of the OT.

The Septuagint consistently translates $\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta$ with $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\upsilon\beta\iota\omicron\upsilon$ and $\text{דִּיקְלָהּ הַלְּבָנִים}$ with $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$. In a few relevant places, e.g. Isa. 63:9 and in Jgs. 6:14, 16 the LXX differs slightly from the MT⁴. Whether this translation is based on a different interpretation of the MT or of other ancient texts on this particular subject, is difficult to say. "Commonly, however, the differences between the Hebrew and LXX are only verbal."⁵ Rybinski may be right when he said, "... dass die LXX an einen kreatürlichen Engel gedacht hat."⁶

The NT has been to a considerable extent influenced by the pre-NT judaistic literature and the LXX.⁷ The term "angel of the Lord (God)" in the NT is closely related to the angelic belief of the late post-exilic

⁴Cf. Exegesis on these verses in Ch. IV.

⁵Cf. ODCC, p. 1241, ad loc.

⁶J. Rybinski, Der Mal'akh Jahwe, 1929, pp. 15f.

⁷Cf. R.H. Charles, op. cit. pp.180f and et passim; ODCC, loc. cit.; James D. Wood, The Interpretation of the Bible, 1958, p.25; L. Diestel, Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche, Jena, 1869, pp.8-14.

and the intertestamental period. In the synoptic Gospels the angel of the Lord appears at the annunciation of Jesus' birth (Mt. 1:20-24; Lk. 1:11,13,18,19; 2:9,10,13); he appears to manifest God's special guidance towards the child Jesus (Mt. 2:13,19). There are some peculiarities of this angel of the Lord, compared with the MY in the OT:

- a. Whenever the angel of the Lord appears in the narratives for the first time, we read *ἄγγελος κυρίου* (without article), translated as "an angel of the Lord". This is also the case in other places: Acts 5:19; 7:30; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7; 27:23).
- b. The angel of the Lord calls himself "Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to you ..." (Lk. 1:19). This reminds us of "the angels of the Presence" in the Pseudepigrapha and of Gabriel, mentioned in Dan. 8:16ff; 9:21ff.
- c. The angel of the Lord appears sometimes in the company of a multitude of the heavenly host (Lk. 2:13); this, however, never happens in the pre-exilic times.

In Jhn. 5:4⁸ it is mentioned, that "an angel of

⁸This verse is most likely a later interpolation. It is omitted by the main stream of textual tradition including S, B, C, some of the earlier papyri, the D text, sy and vg^{800d} (cf. Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece, 1950, ad loc.)

the Lord" occasionally troubled the water in the pool of Bethesda. This reminds us of Raphael, the healing angel, mentioned in Tob.; but no clear indication is given here who is meant by this "angel of the Lord".

In Acts the angel of the Lord is mentioned several times. He is the angel-deliverer for Peter (Acts 5:19; 7:30, 35, 38); Stephen, in retelling the theophany at the burning bush (cf. Ex. 3), mentioned the angel of the Lord.⁹ Philip is told by ἀγγελος κυριου to go to Gaza (Acts 8:26); the angel appeared to Cornelius in a vision (Acts 10:3, 7), which is also called "an holy angel" (Acts 10:22). In Acts 27:23 Paul testifies, that at that night ἀγγελος του Θεου stood by him. In this verse it is clear, that οὐ εἰμι, ὧ καὶ λατρευω is referring to Θεου and not to ἀγγελος; ἀγγελος του Θεου is also distinguished from God, for he said to Paul, ".... lo, God granted you all those who sail with you."

In Gal. 4:14 Paul told the Galatians, that in the beginning they did not despise, nor reject him, but received him as "an angel of God, [even] as Christ Jesus." It is not the purpose of Paul to identify literally the ἀγγελος Θεου with Christ Jesus. There is a certain

⁹ Nestle's text has ἀγγελος; other versions of the so-called Koine, the D text (Bezae Cantabrigiensis), most of the MSS, and most important Syriac translations have the interpolation.

climax in Paul's speech: despised - rejected; angel of God - Christ Jesus. This expression is also an application of Jesus' saying in Mt. 10:40 and Jhn. 13:20; cf. also Acts 14:11f. In Rev. there is an ordinary angelic being, to whom worship is prohibited (23:8,9) and who is clearly distinguished from Jesus (cf. vs. 16).

Among the Church-fathers this Representation theory is held by Augustine (354-430). He was primarily concerned with the distinction of the three Divine Persons in the One God. The pre-Augustine Fathers were more concerned with the analysis of the Divine Persons, and especially with the Second Person in God and they tried to associate the MY with the Second Person. Augustine on the other hand tried to solve this problem from the viewpoint of the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁰ His interpretation of the Bible is sometimes allegorical, which he borrowed from the Alexandrian School, sometimes literal, especially in the NT.¹¹

¹⁰ Rybinski remarked that there is no fundamental difference between the pre-Augustine Fathers and Augustine himself concerning this point, cf. J. Rybinski, op. cit. p.105. In any case it is clear that they consider the MY from the dogmatical viewpoint.

¹¹ "... whatever there is in the word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative.", Christian Doctrine, III, Ch.X, quoted by: James D. Wood, op. cit. pp. 66ff.

Augustine's way of interpretation is clearly influenced by doctrinal presuppositions. One of these presuppositions in interpreting the MY is as follows:

For the nature itself, or substance, or essence... which is God ... cannot be seen corporeally: but we must believe that by means of the creature made subject to Him, not only the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but also the Father, may have given intimations of Himself to mortal senses by a corporeal form or likeness.¹²

Augustine declares, that the three Persons in God: Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, can appear in the MY.¹³ But this does not mean that they will be visible.¹⁴ The MY itself is considered as an ordinary created angel and made subject to Him. Through this MY God appeared to the eyes of mortal men, and in His own substance. The trinitarian God appeared to Abraham in the form three men¹⁵; and to Lot in the form of two angels¹⁶. Referring to the MY-appearance in Ex.3, he said, that it was an angel who

¹²On the Trinity, II, Ch. XVIII, 35.

¹³Ibid., Chs. VIII, IX, X.

¹⁴Ibid., Chs. VIII, IX, 16, "the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit remain not only invisible, but also unchangeable."

¹⁵Ibid., Chs. X, 19; XI, 21.

¹⁶Ibid., Ch. XII.

spoke in the person of God (ex persona Dei). A man also could speak in the person of God, e.g. in Ps. 81:8, 10¹⁷. In this way of representation the "Divine I" used by the MY in its speeches, is solved by Augustine by saying, "and indeed these Scriptures often reveal the angel to be the Lord, of whose speaking it is from time to time said "the Lord said"."¹⁸

This view was also advocated by Augustine's contemporary Jerome (342-420), who translated anew the whole Bible from the original languages into Latin: the Vulgata. His interpretation on the MY is in some ways reflected in his Latin translation. In Ex. 3:2 we read in the Vulgata, "apparuitque ei Dominus in flamma ignis de medio rubi."; so the יהוה אלהים in the MT is here translated "Dominus" (not angelus Domini), cf. also Num. 22:31ff. In Jgs. 13:6, however, we read, "... vir Dei venit ad me habens vultum angelicum"; while in the MT we read יהוה אלהים (LXX: ἀγγελος κυριου), cf. also vs. 16. His view is clear from his commentary on Gal. 3:19. mentioned by Trip:

"Wenn der Apostel sagt, dass das Gesetz durch die Engel gebracht sei, so will er damit zu erkennen geben, dass überall, wo im alten Testament erst von

¹⁷On the Trinity, III, Ch. XX.

¹⁸Ibid., Ch. XXIII.

dem Erscheinen eines Engels die Rede ist und gleich darauf Gott redend eingeführt wird, in der That ein Engel, einer unter vielen Dienern erschienen ist, aber in diesem spricht der Mittler,...."19)

Through Pope Gregorius I the Great, who is called the "doctor ecclesiae" this view seems to be rooted and established in the RC Church and is generally followed by RC theologians.

In the Middle Ages, before the Reformation, Thomas Aquinas (died in 1274) considered the MY as an ordinary angel, not even one of the superior angels sent in the ministry of God. He said, "Thus with Dionysius (Coel. Hier. XIII) we must say, without distinction, that the superior angels are never sent to the external ministry."²⁰ Referring to Gen. 18 and 19, he considered the "three men" and the "two messengers" as ordinary angels; he said:

Yet Divine Scripture from time to time introduces angels so apparent as to be seen commonly by all; just as the angels who appeared to Abraham were seen by him and by his whole family, by Lot and by the citizens of Sodom...²¹⁾

c/ His arguments are greatly influenced by Augustine, as is evident e.g. in Summa Theologia Q. XLIII, art. 7. The MY is a visible apparition of the Divine Person given

¹⁹Lib. II. Cap. 3. Opp. Tom. VII, pars 1, p. 441, Venetiis, 1769; quoted by Ch. J. Trip, Die Theophanien in den Geschichtbüchern des Alten Testaments, 1858, pp. 42ff.

c/ ²⁰Summa Theologia, Q. CXII, art. 2; English translation by Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

²¹Ibid. Q. LI, art. 2.

to the Fathers in the OT. These visible apparitions were formed by the ministry of angels. These angels thus signified the Divine Person. The Divine Person was as such not immediately present in the angels. His approach is purely dogmatical and philosophical.

Martin Luther also adhered to the representation theory. He used the principle of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. He saw in the MY an ordinary angel, which has assumed a human form and appearance.

Concerning the MY in Gen. 16 he said:

Etsi autem homines quoque vocantur Angeli; tamen Angelum indutum specie hominis hunc fuisse existimo. Cum enim se ostendunt hominibus, speciem corporis, in qua apparent, assumunt. 22)

The MY is similar to the angel who guarded the Paradise, the two angels who saved Lot from Sodom, the angels who stood beside the empty grave of Jesus or the angel who spoke to the disciple at the ascension of Christ.

Concerning Gen. 18, he said that the appearance of the three men was a theophany through angels in human appearance. He also referred these "three men" to the divine Persons of the Trinity, saying:

²² Martin Luther, In Primum Librum Mose, ad loc. 1550

Apparitio haec trium virorum, est apparitio Domini ... singulare testimonium de articulo Trinitatis notandum est, quod tres viri apparent, et Mose subinde loquitur, ac si unus fit. Mysterium Trinitatis occulto sensu elicatur ex hoc loco. 23)

In defending this he based his interpretation on Jesus' words in Jhn. 8:56, saying:

... si enim vidit diem Christi, sine dubio etiam vidit divinitatem eius: si divinitatem, non potuit id fieri sine cognitione Trinitatis. 24)

In this line Luther saw in the Mal'akh in Gen. 48:15:16 one and the same God, i.e. God the Son as the Benedictor.

Thus the theophanies through the MY in the OT are not considered as a theophany of God "nach seinem Wesen und seiner Substanz", but rather as types or examples which point out to the salvation in Christ and thus serve to confirm our faith.²⁵

The Representation theory found its followers in the following century among the Remonstrants in Holland. The theophany through the MY was considered as an angelophany. The angel represents the Person of God and is as such called Yahweh himself.²⁶ In the spiritual atmos-

²³ Ibid., ad loc.

²⁴ Ibid., ad loc.

²⁵ Cf. Ch. J. Trip, op. cit., p.48

²⁶ Adherents to this view were H. Grotius, Clericus, Calixtus, Philip A. Limborgh: cf. Ch. J. Trip, op. cit. pp.72f; Fr. Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, Vol.II, 1889, p.18.

phere of the 17th and 18th centuries, marked by the Renaissance and fascinated by the new ideas of Rationalism and Deism, this view could indeed easily be adapted to these patterns of modern thoughts.

As a reaction against this spirit of the "Aufklärung", a new supra-naturalistic theology came into being in the 19th century. Its aim was not to have a radical break with the Aufklärung, but to have a "scientific" interpretation of the Bible and a "higher criticism" consistent with orthodoxy. In this period the representation theory became the common and dominating one, even among those who tried to free themselves from Rationalism²⁷. The main issue now raised is: whether the MY on all occasions is one particular and the same angel or not.²⁸

Stuedel is of opinion that the MY is an angel sent by God for every individual case, but leaving it uncertain whether it is always one and the same employed angel or not.²⁹

²⁷ However, not without struggle; cf. Delitzsch, op. cit., p.19.

²⁸ Cf. J.H. Kurtz, History of the Old Covenant, vol.I, 1859, pp.186-201; G.F. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, pp.191-95.

²⁹ J.C.K. Hofmann, Alttestamentliche Theologie, p.259, mentioned by Kurtz, op. cit. pp.180-83.

J.C.K. Hofmann, adhering to orthodox principles in his appreciation of the OT, esp., the Messianic prophecies, on the other hand, says that it is always one and the same angel, by whose means God established His relation to Israel in the OT. Referring to the MY in Ex. 13:21 and 14:19 he says:

Denn was Engel thun, das thut Jehova durch sie; und wo sich Jehova an der körperlichen Welt bethätigt und durch körperliches offenbart, da geschieht es durch Zwischenwirkung der endlichen Geister. 30)

He considers this as most obvious, because מַלְאָכָיִם does not denote מַלְאָכֵי but another person different from the king himself, i.e. the messenger. Thus parallel to this the MY is a creature different from God the Son.³¹

The first view finds its followers, among others, in M. Baumgarten, who interprets the word מַלְאָכָיִם as the concrete spiritual messengers of God (cf. Ps. 104:4). They are so absorbed in the ministry of God, that they become "die reinen Representanten und Organe Jehovas". Opposing Hengstenberg's view, he says:

... so kann man ihm nicht zugeben, dass diese Bezeichnung nothwendig jedesmal denselben meinen müsse. Denn die Bestimmtheit ist im Hebräischen

³⁰ J.C.K. Hofmann, Weissagung und Erfüllung, 1841, pp. 127, 131.

³¹ With this he is opposing Hengstenberg.

ebenso wenig in anderen Sprachen (s. Berhardy griech. Synt. 315) immer die Identität mit einem Bekannten, sondern kann auch auf die Anschaulichkeit der Rede beruhen, welche den Leser in die Szene versetzt. 32)

The second view is followed by J.H. Kurtz. He sees in the MY one particular angel among the angelic princes, who bears the name of Michael (Dan. 10:21; 12:1), and presides especially over Israel; in more ancient historical books he is described as the MY. He says further:

We therefore agree with Hofmann (Script. Demonstr. I, 33) in the opinion that this angel is specially meant whenever the Angel of Jehova appears as engaged in some service particularly connected with the history of Abraham and his chosen seed. 33)

This view, however, does not hold good in cases when an angel-representative of the Lord is sent to persons who are beyond the circle of the chosen seed, e.g. to Hagar and Lot.

X One of the remarkable phenomenon in Biblical interpretation in this period is, that most of the scholars, RC as well as Protestant, tried to understand and to solve the MY problem from the later post-exilic and the NT

³²M. Baumgarten, Theologischer Commentar zum Pentateuch, 1843, p.195

³³J.H. Kurtz, History of the Old Covenant, vol. I, 1859, pp. 198f, an English translation from the second German edition of 1853.

standpoint, e.g. Ch. J. Trip, who says:

Unsere Erklärung wird endlich bestätigt und als die einzig richtige dargestellt durch das neue Testament: מַלְאָכִים = ἄγγελος κυρίου. ... Ist der Ausdruck Engel des Herrn im neuen Testament Übersetzung desselben Worts im alten Testament, so würden wir zu Ungereimtheiten kommen, wenn wir hier, an einen andern, als einen erschaffenen Engel denken wollen. 34)

This hardly seems consistent with his general attitude, formulated at the end of his book:

... wie sehr wir Ursache haben auf dem geschichtlichen Boden der Schrift stehen zu bleiben, jede Periode der Offenbarung Gottes nach ihrem geschichtlichen Geiste aufzufassen und in keine derselben irgend etwas Fremdes hinein zu tragen. 35)

Franz Delitzsch's view is rather vague in this matter. He says, that the MY is the medium and the mediator of God's self-manifestation, but not God-manifest himself. The MY has Yahweh within him and yet he is an organ of whom Yahweh makes use. He is Yahweh's מַלְאָכִים and yet he is not, because he is not the direct Presence of God, which mortals cannot look upon. 36

In the 20th century this view is still prevalent particularly among RC scholars.

³⁴Ch. J. Trip, Die Theophanien in den Geschichtsbüchern des Alten Testaments, 1858, p.210.

³⁵Ibid., p.215; in the same way also J. Knabenbauer, Erklärung des Propheten Isaias, 1881, pp.680f.

³⁶Fr. Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, vol.II, 1889, pp.19f.

Eduard König, bases his arguments on the philological meaning of the word מַלְאָכַי, which according to his view, originally means "sending" (Sendung) and as an "abstractum pro concreto" it means "messenger" (Gesandter). Secondly he tries to interpret the MY in the Pentateuch from the late post-exilic verses, e.g. Zech.1:12; Dan. 10:13; 12:1, as well as from the NT texts, e.g. Mt.20:23; 26:39; 27:46; Acts 7:30. In this way he tries to have one homogeneous meaning for the MY and concludes:

... dass mit dem Mal'akh Jahwe eine überirdische Wesenheit gemeint ist, die vom Lenker der Gottesreichsgeschichte zum direkten Eingreifen in dieselbe entsandt wurde ... 37)

J. Rybinski, following Augustine and the scholastic doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, rejects the idea of self-manifestation of Yahweh through the MT in the OT. However, he acknowledges a certain development too in the MY conception: in the oldest books the MY functions as a Representative of God and a Plenipotentiary, but in the later books the MY becomes no more than an ordinary messenger. These later revelations, clearer than the older ones, are due to the divine providence, which gradually and continually gives new revelation to men. Thus we have to interpret the older revelations by the

³⁷ E. König, Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1923 pp.189f, 195.

later ones. In identifying the angel he also follows Steudel and Baumgarten. As F. Nötscher rightly remarks, this method could only be justified, if on all occasions in the OT we have to do with one and the same being.³⁸

K. Barth, associates the MY with Michael in Dan.10: 13,21; 12:1. The MY is called "Gottes Botschafter", but also "der Zeuge Gottes", testifying with his appearance, words, and deeds "das heilsgeschichtliche und damit urgeschichtliche und endgeschichtliche Werk Gottes". The "Botschafter" is to be understood in diplomatic terms, having as such "die ganze Autorität, Herrlichkeit und Macht Gottes hinter sich und für sich",³⁹

E. Jacob starts from the etymological meaning of the word מַלְאָכִים, which, according to him, can have no other meaning than that of "messenger". However, the scope and the attributes of the messenger can be subject to variation. Therefore, he says, that the MY varies between a representative and an ordinary messenger. The stress is laid on what distinguishes him from Yahweh

³⁸F. Nötscher, "Rezension des Arbeit Rybinskis", in ThR, 1930, p.279; F. Stier also opposes Rybinski's way of interpretation, by saying, "Die harmonisierende Methode wird leicht zu gewaltsamen Harmonistik", Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testament, 1934, p.23

³⁹K. Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik, III/3, 1950, pp. 575f.; Cf. J. Blaauw, Gezanten van de Hemel, pp.65-69.

or on the bond which unites him to Yahweh.⁴⁰

Likewise W. Baumgartner concludes that the MY is not a particular angel distinguished from the other angels, but it denotes God's messenger distinguished from human messengers.⁴¹

II. THE IDENTITY THEORY

According to this theory the MY is a self-manifestation of God, entering into the world of the creatures. In this sense it is identified with the Godhead, one in essence with Him, but distinguished from Him.

This theory appears in two forms:

1. the identity is applied to the Second Person of God (the Logos theory).
2. the identity is applied to Yahweh himself, regardless of the distinction of the Divine Persons.

1. This view has its traditional background in the Alexandrian Logos doctrine represented by Philo. The Philonian Logos was considered as an emanation from God,

⁴⁰ E. Jacob, Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.75

⁴¹ W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem des Jahwe-Engels", in Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt, 1957, p.243; Schweizerisches Theologische Umschau, 14, 1944, pp.97-102

being personified and being considered as an intermediary and intercessor between God and the creatures. By the Logos Philo understands the operative reason of God, and consequently as the power of God, and as such identical with the essence of God. It appears as a power and as a person; as a person being the first-born son of God, the Man of God, the Image of God.⁴² It is as such God's instrument (organon) in the creation of the world and equivalent to the "Word of God" of the Jewish tradition. Philo was preceded and influenced by the Alexandrian Judaism, which had developed the theology of Wisdom. This is evident from some of Philo's writings, where Wisdom is identified with Logos, e.g. De fuga, 137-8 (M, I, 566). It is a union of Greek and Hebrew ideas.⁴³

Philo found a confirmation of the theory, that God shows himself to imperfect beings through angelic intermediaries on account of their feeble vision, in

⁴²A. Harnack, History of Dogma, vol. I, 1894, p.110; H.A. Wolfson, Philo, vol. I, 1947, pp.232, 234.

⁴³Cf. J. Lebreton, History of the Dogma of the Trinity, 1939, pp.161, 167; H.A. Wolfson, op. cit. pp.255, 258, 264ff.

the theophanies through the MY in the OT.⁴⁴ According to Philo's interpretation it was the Logos, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and to Hagar in the desert, who wrestled with Jacob, who manifested itself in the cloud guiding Israel through the desert.⁴⁵

This identification of the Logos and the MY was important for the Philosophical and religious thoughts of the people at that time. It was a world "in which the idea of the Logos was part of the common stock of religio-philosophical speculation and belief".⁴⁶ In this spiritual atmosphere the Christian apologists tried to prove against the Jews the divinity and worship of Christ, the Son, and His distinctness from the Father. Against the Gentiles the substitution of "Messiah" by "Logos" made the idea more accessible. Hodgson remarks, that "both in preaching and thinking the identification of Christ with the Logos was an obvious expedient to be tried."⁴⁷

⁴⁴Cf. H.A. Wolfson, op. cit. pp.367-85, "each angel which appeared to individual persons according to the scriptural narrative is called by him Logos" (p.377). Dealing with the prophecy in the OT, Philo considers the angels as intermediaries of prophetic communication. The MY is thus considered as one of such angels. (Wolfson, op. cit. vol.II, pp.44f).

⁴⁵Cf. De Somn. I, 232-39; Wolfson, op. cit. pp.379f.

⁴⁶L.Hodgson, The Doctrine of the Trinity, 1943, p.121.

⁴⁷Ibid.

But the idea of the Philonian Logos is quite different from the Christian Logos. Harnack says, that the synthesis of the Messiah and the Logos did not lie within Philo's horizon.⁴⁸

Hodgson also points this difference out by saying, that the Logos doctrine arose in the world of philosophical thought and to that world it belongs. It implies an ultimate reality which is impersonal; the Christian Logos doctrine, however, is inseparable from the doctrine of the Trinity, which arose in the world of religious devotion to the personal God.⁴⁹

With this difference in mind several of the Church-fathers saw in the MY-appearances the Word of God, the Logos, as a prefiguration of the Incarnation. This identification, involving efforts to clarify the divine Persons in the Trinity, is purely Christian. Thus although the same word "Logos" was used and applied to the same MY in the theophanies, the exegesis of the apologists is different from that of Philo.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Harnack, Op. cit., p.113.

⁴⁹L. Hodgson, op. cit., p.113; J. Lebreton, op. cit., pp.165, 440f, 447f.

⁵⁰Cf. J. Lebreton, op. cit., p.165; J. Lebreton, Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité, Tome II, 1928, p.669; A. Harnack, op. cit., p.114.

Among the Apologists Justin Martyr made use of this particular (Christian) Logos-idea in his apology against the Jew Tryphon. Referring to the "three men" in Gen. 18 he says that one of them was God himself appearing to Abraham and accompanied by the two angels.⁵¹ He identifies the MY as Christ, who is called Angel and God, but whose position is, however, under the Father superior, called the Maker of the universe. Christ is said to be "the servant of God" and that is why He is "serving the Father".⁵² He has been born of the Father of His own will and had several other titles: Reasonable Power, Glory of the Lord, Angel, God, Lord, Word, Chief Commander, Man, King, Priest.⁵³

Among the Church-fathers we mention Irenaeus, who sees in the "two angels" in Gen. 19, the manifestation of the Son, who spoke to Abraham in Gen. 18. In Gen. 19:24 it is the Son, who received from the Father authority to judge the men of Sodom for their sins. The theophany through the MY in Ex. 3 is also referred to the Son, e.g. on Ex. 3:8 he comments, "It is he

⁵¹Cf. Dial. c. Trypho, Ch. LVI, 1.

⁵²Ibid. Chs. LVII, 3; LVIII, 3 cf. LXI, 1; CXXVII, 3.

⁵³Ibid. Chs. XXXIV, 2; LXI, 4.

[the Son] himself who descended for the salvation of men."⁵⁴ Thus he concludes, that "when he [the Son] became incarnate and man, he summed up in himself the long roll of humanity, supplying us in a concise manner with salvation."⁵⁵

From the North African school it was Cyprianus, who declared that Christ is at once Angel and God.⁵⁶

Novatian starts from the dogmatical pre-supposition that Christ is the image of the invisible God the Father. Gradually and by progressing, human frailty is to be strengthened by the image to that glory of being able one day to see God the Father. Therefore he interprets the MY-appearances in Gen. as the self-manifestation of the Son; he says "but the Son of God is the Word of God: and the Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us; and this is Christ."⁵⁷ Thus he concludes, that Christ is both God, because He is the Son of God, and angel, because He is the Announcer of the Father's mind.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Against the Heresies, III, 6, 1.2.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 18, 1

⁵⁶ Testimonies against the Jews, II, 5.

⁵⁷ Concerning the Trinity, Ch. XVIII.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Chs. XVIII, XIX.

Athanasius, "the Father of orthodoxy", adopts a rather uncertain attitude. He sees in the MY the Word and the Son, as an object of worship in unity with the Father, e.g. in Gen. 48:15,16 and Gen. 32:22ff.

Concerning these verses he says, that "it could be no other than God the Word and Son; and the reason why he [Jacob] called Him an Angel was because it is He who is the revealer of the Father."⁵⁹ But this is, according to his view, not applicable to all MY-appearances, e.g. to Manoach (Jgs.13), to Moses (Ex.3:2), to Gideon (Jgs.6), to Joshua (Jos.5:13f); in these cases they saw only an angel through whom God's voice was heard. The criterion of distinction between the MY as the Son, and the MY as a created angel, is not made clear. He simply says, "And those holy persons, who beheld visions of Angels, knew very well when they had seen only an Angel, and when they had seen God."⁶⁰

Eusebius of Caesarea, considers the MY as the manifestation of Christ, God and Lord, His image, Word of God, the Second Lord which is not God the Father Almighty. Christ is also called the Servant of God, who ministers

⁵⁹ Against the Arians, oration III, 12,13,14.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

for His Father among men and brings His Word.⁶¹ The distinction and the identity between the MY and Yahweh is solved by Eusebius in the subordinate position of the Second Lord who is God himself, sent by the Greater God, the Almighty Father, Maker of all things, who could speak of Another than Himself, e.g. in Gen. 18:14, 19; 35:1 etc. Further he says, "And you could find many other similar instances occurring in Holy Scripture, in which God gave answers as if about another God, and the Lord Himself as if about another Lord."⁶² The subordination theory of the Son to the Father is thus read back into the MY.

The reading into the texts of dogmatical pre-suppositions was the general attitude and interpretation among the Church-fathers before Augustine. This is evident from a letter from the Fathers of the first Synod in Antioch (265) addressed to Paul of Samosata before his deprivation of his office as bishop, which declared that *ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ πατρὸς κύριος καὶ θεὸς ὢν, μέγας βουλῆς ἄγγελος*, which appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses in the burning bush.⁶³

⁶¹Cf. Demon. Evang., Book V, Chs. VII - XVII.

⁶²Ibid. Ch. XVI; for the subordination see Ch. XI.

⁶³Cf. Trip, op. cit. p. 32.

In the Reformation period this Identity theory was followed by Calvin to a large extent. He adopted the orthodox and conservative view, but yet with a remarkable modification. In his commentary on Gen. 16:7 he points out, "I do not, however, disapprove the opinion of most of the ancients; that Christ the Mediator was always present in all the oracles, and that this is the cause why the majesty of God is ascribed to angels."⁶⁴ Thus he sees Christ among the "three men" who appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18:2); one of them excelled the other two, i.e. the Chief of the embassy, Christ their Head. He says:

Christ, who is the living image of the Father, often appeared to the fathers under the form of an angel, while at the same time, he yet had angels, of whom he was the Head, for his attendants. ⁶⁵)

Yet he says that the three represent the Persons of the one God.

On the other hand Calvin considers the angel in itself as an ordinary angel (messenger), employed by God for a special purpose and in a special way, so that God's majesty shines through it. This is clear in his commentary on Gen. 31:13, in the same book, saying:

⁶⁴J. Calvin, Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis, English translation, 1847, ad. loc.

⁶⁵Cf. Ibid., on Gen. 18:9

It is not wonderful that the angel should assume the person of God: either because God the Father appeared to the holy patriarchs in his own Word, as in a lively mirror, and that under the form of an angel; or because angels, speaking by the command of God, rightly utter their words, as from his mouth.

It seems that Calvin does not attach great importance to the outward appearance of the angel as the visible manifestation of God. In Gen. 32:22-30 for instance, he does not identify the unknown antagonist of Jacob as the MY, but calls it "the wrestling angel" or simply "God".

Another interesting interpretation concerning the relationship between Christ and the "Angel" is given in his commentary on Gen. 48:16; he says:

... it is necessary that Christ should be here meant, who does not bear in vain the title of Angel, because he had become the perpetual Mediator.

He had not yet indeed been sent by the Father, to approach more nearly to us by taking our flesh, but because he was always the bond of connection between God and man, and because God formally manifested himself in no other way than through him, he is properly called the Angel. 66)

This does not mean a mere identification of Christ with an angel. Referring to Hebr. 2:16, he recalls, that Christ never put on the nature of an

⁶⁶ Ibid., ad. loc.

angel and became one of the angels as he did become true man. Calvin is aware of the problem of the distinction and the identification between the MY and Yahweh, but does not solve it.

This Calvinistic interpretation had many followers among the Orthodoxy in the 17th century. Trip mentions some of these followers:⁶⁷ Pareus, Witsius, and Trommius. They speak of the MY as an uncreated angel, the Mediator of the Old and New Covenant, the appearance of the Son of God before the Incarnation, etc. The general attitude of the Dutch theologians at that period was also reflected in the Bible translation, called the "Statenvertaling van de Bijbel".⁶⁸ Concerning the MY in Gen. 16:7 a marginal note says, "Het hoofd der Engelen, de Heer Christus, die daarom ook Heere genaamd wordt."

Andreas Rivetus, professor in Leiden, adopts a modified and critical attitude. Concerning the MY in Gen. 32 he comments:

Er herrscht hierüber [i.e. whether it is a created or uncreated angel] Verschiedenheit der Meinungen. Mehrere der alten Kirchenväter waren der Ansicht, dass die göttlichen Erscheinungen an an die Erzväter und Propheten, Erscheinungen des

⁶⁷Cf. Trip, op. cit., pp.60-70

⁶⁸commissioned by the General Synod at Dordrecht in 1618-1619 and completed in 1637.

Sohnes gewesen, der zu seiner Zeit Fleisch annehmen würde. Dieses ist aber nicht absolut von allen Erscheinungen, wo Engel genannt werden, zu verstehen, sondern nur von solchen, in denen der erscheinende Engel sich den Namen Gottes oder göttlichen Eigenschaften und Werke zueignet. 69)

In the 18th century, as has been stated in the previous subsection, the Representation theory gained more ground, under the influence of liberal and rationalistic theology. In the 19th century, however, as a reaction against the rationalistic theology, there was a tendency to return to orthodoxy with a new and modified approach:

1. The old orthodox Christological interpretation of the MY is still defended and advocated in the first half of the 19th century.

E.W. Hengstenberg can be considered as the chief representative of this orthodox group. He sees in the NT the distinction between the Deus absconditus, who is transcendent and omnipresent, and the Deus revelatus, the Second Person, who has become flesh and visible to human eyes. He reads back this truth in the OT revelation and concludes that in principle the distinction does exist too in the OT, although not as clearly as in the NT. Thus he sees in the MY the Revealer of God, the

⁶⁹ quoted by Trip, op. cit., p.63

Son or the Logos, one in essence with God, who communicates Himself to the patriarchs and is later on considered as the mediator of the visible theocracy. The MY is exalted above all created angels and is indistinct from Christ.⁷⁰ "We are fully justified in assuming that all revelations of God to the patriarchs were given through the medium of the Angel of the Lord."⁷¹

J.P. Lange starts from the presupposition that there is an organic development of revelation from the Old to the New Testament and that the revelation of the Trinity in the divine Being is introduced through the revelation of the duality. Thus the form of the Angel of the Lord in Gen. passes to the Angel of his Face, or the personified Face of Jehovah himself in Ex., then to the Prince over the armies of God in Jos., and finally to the Archangel, the Angel of the Covenant of the later prophets.⁷² The MY is Yahweh himself, as far as it is

⁷⁰E.W. Hengstenberg, Der Christologie des Alten Testaments, 1829, I Th., 1. Abth., pp.245, 246-7. 249; cf. R.Stier, "Andeutungen für gläubiges Schriftverständnis", quoted by Trip, op. cit. pp.85f.

⁷¹E.W. Hengstenberg, History of the Kingdom of God under the OT, 1871, p.213; but on the other hand, referring to Hebr. 2:2, he says that the Gospel excels the Law, so that the MY should be distinguished from the Christ, and not merely identified. (cf. Calvin, *supra*).

⁷²J.P. Lange, Genesis, Engl. trans., 1868, p.388.

Yahweh's self-manifestation; it is Christ as far as it is "das plastische Bild seiner Zukunft", it is the MY as far as it contains in itself "symbolische Elemente der subjektiven Anschauung". The MY is "Christus auf dem Wege seiner Menschwerdung."⁷³

There is, however, no indication of such an organic and systematic development of the figure of the MY. The harmonistic dogmatical interpretation is rather artificial here. But in any case a certain "historical" approach has been made, which is important.

X G.F. Oehler, again, adopts a rather modified attitude. The MY is not merely a personification, but a real hypostasis. It vacillates in a peculiar manner between a modalistic and a hypostatic conception of the angel, so that it seems impossible to him to bring the matter to a definite intelligible expression. But, according to the NT view, he still tends to see the Logos, the Son of God, in the MY, because "it is the Logos, the Son of God through which revelations to Israel are mediated, and therefore works in the Mal'akh".⁷⁴ On the other hand he realizes that in the NT, the Son of God is nowhere identified with the MY as if His incarnation

⁷³J.P. Lange, Leben Jesu, II, pp.45f.

⁷⁴G.F. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, vol. I, 1874, pp.191-95.

had been preceded.

Among the Dutch scholars we find H. Bayinck adhering to this kind of interpretation, but also with certain reservations. He sees in the OT the threefold cause: Father, Word and Spirit, especially in the field of the particular revelation, in the work of re-creation. Yahweh, the God of the Covenant reveals Himself through his Word. The MY is then considered as the bearer of this Word, the Ambassador of the Covenant. Thus, God, and particularly his Word is present in the MY, in a unique way. But the MY as such, i.e. as the angelus increatus, is not found in every passage, which mentions the MY. In this point he disagrees with Hengstenberg, saying:

Niet altijd, waar de uitdrukking Engel Gods of Engel des Heren in het Oude Testament voorkomt, is aan de angelus increatus te denken, gelijk Hengstenberg meende ... Maar in die plaatsen, die vroeger reeds werden genoemd (vgl. deel I 34lv.) gaat het subject, dat in de engel des Heren spreekt en handelt ver boven een geschapen engel uit. 75)

This kind of interpretation is, however, losing ground among the biblical scholars in the last few decades.

Wilhelm Vischer in his book "The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ" strangely does not deal with the figure of the MY. It seems, that he does not consider

⁷⁵ H. Bayinck, Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, II, 1908, pp. 262-65.

the MY as the self-manifestation of the Logos. On the other hand he follows Luther's interpretation of the "unknown wrestler" with Jacob (Gen. 32) and sees in him not an angel, "but our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal God and yet was to become a man ... He was well-known to the holy patriarchs, for He often appeared to them and spoke with them."⁷⁶ It is not clear what he exactly thinks of the MY in the above mentioned book.

2. The identification is applied to Yahweh himself regardless of the distinction of Persons in God.

This view came into being with the rise of "Higher Criticism" at the beginning of the 19th century. The MY is considered as an appearance-form of Yahweh himself in the OT. This view found acceptance among liberal scholars who considered the MY narratives as pure myths, as well as among orthodox scholars. The idea of myth in the "Urgeschichte" and the mythological interpretation arose at the end of the 18th century, when J.G.E. Eichhorn's book "Urgeschichte" was published in 1792/93, and reached its extreme development with D.F. Stauss. In his book "Leben Jesu" (1835) he regards the mythological interpretation as an advance on that of his predecessors, as the synthesis of a thesis with

⁷⁶ quoted from Luther by Vischer, *op. cit.*, p.153.

antithesis.⁷⁷ He considers the whole Biblical history as a compilation of myths, especially the theophanies and the miracles. The influence of this mythological view should not be underestimated.

F.D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) says:

The narratives of Abraham, Lot, Jacob, of the call of Moses and Gideon and the prophecy of Samson, bear the stamp very clearly of what we are accustomed to call "myth". Indeed, in many of them God Himself and the Angels of the Lord are so interchanged that the whole can be thought of as a Theophany in which the appearance perceived by the senses need not be that of a being independent and different from God. 78)

De Wette tries in his interpretation to reconcile the claims of religious feelings with the demands of rational thought; and thus he subordinates criticism to the high aim of promoting religious life. He interprets mythical elements as figurative representations of truth.⁷⁹ Considered from the NT viewpoint he cannot see any value in the MY of the OT. He says:

⁷⁷Cf. H.J.-Kraus, Geschichte der Historisch-Kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments, 1956, p.136; James D. Wood, The Interpretation of the Bible, 1958, p.132; L. Diestel, op. cit., pp.696f, 732f, 737f.

⁷⁸F.D. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, Ch.XLII, 1928, p.156. Towards the end of last century this mythological interpretation of the OT found a strong advocate in I. Goldziher in his book "Mythology among the Hebrews".

⁷⁹Cf. James D. Wood, op. cit., p.134; L. Diestel, op. cit., pp.588, 611, 747, 755.

Die Engel gehören zu den mythischen, Sinnbildern der Gotteserscheinungen und Gotteswirkungen, deren Mythologie der Mo-saische Monotheismus, als eine geringeres Uebel statt des grössern des Polytheismus, dulden musste ... Sie sind nicht für die Andacht und den Glauben, sondern dienen bloss der Mythologie. Auch haben ihre Erscheinungen keine sittliche wesenhafte Bedeutung. 80)

Vatke, who follows the Hegelian evolutionism, sees in the MY of Genesis the temporary appearance-form of Yahweh on earth. It is, however, considered as pure myth, a symbol of the true appearance-form of God in Christ.⁸¹

A more positive interpretation was adhered to by the orthodox biblical group, who based their arguments on biblical and theological grounds, but are not un-influenced by the mythological interpretation.

K.H. Sack deals with the MY in the frame of the preparation of the "Eintreten Jehovah's in der Menschenwelt", which is ultimately realized in Jesus Christ. The MY is considered as the earliest preparation for Yahweh's entry into the human world; it is the visible appearance of the true God. The MY is also called "seinen göttlichen Maleach".⁸²

⁸⁰Biblische Dogmatik, 1834, Ch. CI, quoted from Trip, op. cit., p.92; L. Diestel, op. cit., p.733.

⁸¹Vatke, Die Biblische Theologie, 1835, p.43.

⁸²K.H. Sack, Christliche Apologetik, 1841, p.296.

G.A. Meier starts from the idea of the omnipresence of the transcendent and self-revealing God. He sees in the MY a "sending" of Yahweh and a temporary form of self-manifestation of Yahweh distinguished from the transcendent God. In this sense only there is talk of distinction between the MY and Yahweh. The Mal'akh exists as such only temporarily:

... der Engel scheint mit seiner Erscheinung auch selbst wieder aufzuhören, er ist nur für den einzelnen Fall, nicht für immer, Vermittler zwischen Gott und seinem Volk; so ist er nur noch die Andeutung einer Unterscheidung, die als notwendig durch die beide Momente der Transcendenz und der Offenbarung gegeben ist. 83)

It is, however, not clear how the distinction between the MY and Yahweh is to be explained, if the MY is the Deus Revelatus himself.

F. Hitzig considers the theophany as "dichteri- sche Fiktionen".⁸⁴ He starts from the ambivalent relationship between God and God's spirit. The רוח יהוה goes from Yahweh, but is still identified and unified with Yahweh. He sees in this theory the analogy in human beings, i.e. the similar relationship between

⁸³G.A. Meier, Die Lehre von der Trinität in ihrer historischen Entwicklung, I, pp.12f, quoted from Trip, op. cit., pp.93f.

⁸⁴F. Hitzig, Biblische Theologie und Messianische Weissagungen des Alten Testaments, 1880, p.53.

soul and breath.

Wie leicht es fiel, also zu unterscheiden zwischen Gott und Geist Gottes, zeigt I Reg. 22, 21; und doch an dieser Stelle, nach dem Ausgehen des Geistes hört Jahwe nicht auf Person, d.i. Geist zu sein; und andererseits ist jener Geist nicht von ihm verschieden, denn er tritt ja erst aus ihm heraus. 85)

He combines this idea with the basic idea of the omnipresence of Yahweh, who manifests Himself and acts with people and concludes, " ... wenn er nun dennoch im Einzelfalle handelnd erscheint, so benennt ihm die Sprache, analog jener Greirung des רִיחַ יְהוָה, in diesem Falle מלאך יהוה "Gesandter Jahwe's." 86 In this way he considers the MY as the invisible God himself, omnipresent yet appearing and acting in a particular place. As the prophet represents the speaking Yahweh, so does the MY manifest the acting Yahweh. 87

Herman L. Strack, commenting on Gen. 16:7 says about the MY, that it "ist doch nicht - wenigstens gilt das für die Patriarchenzeit und die Zeit Moses - ein geschaffener Engel, sondern die unmittelbare Erscheinung Gottes selbst, Jahwe selbst in menschlich-angelischer

85 Ibid., p. 62

86 Ibid., p. 64

87 Ibid.,

Erscheinung."⁸⁸ Strack seems to distinguish the MY in the early period and the MY in the later period.

H. Schultz tends to adopt this view with some reservations. He sees in this view an undeniable element of truth and a high degree of probability. But the meaning of the very word itself makes him hesitant and prevents him from accepting this view wholeheartedly. He asks, "But how should the fact that God himself becomes visible and shows Himself in action be considered as "manifestation" or a "working of God"? It appears inconceivable to him that the old Hebrew language would have used one and the same word to describe a theophany and a supramundane person distinct from God. Thus he concludes, that the MY is the form of self-manifestation of Yahweh to man for special ends; it is His whole being and will. This form of manifestation is a personal being who is not God. But what this being is, is of absolutely no consequence.⁸⁹

A.B. Davidson sees from the manner in which the MY speaks, a theophany, a self-manifestation of God.

⁸⁸H.L. Strack, Die Bücher Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus und Numeri, 1894, p.54.

⁸⁹H. Schultz, Old Testament Theology, vol.II, 1895, pp.218-23.

He considers the translation "the angel of the Lord" as the correct one. The mere manifestation of Yahweh creates a distinction between it and Yahweh, though the identity still remains. It is to go beyond the OT, or at any rate beyond the understanding of the OT writers, to see in the MY the distinction in the Godhead. Yet he is willing to admit "that it is not unnatural with the ancient Church to suppose that these preliminary theophanies of God in human form were manifestations of the Son, who at last was manifest in the flesh."⁹⁰

W. Eichrodt distinguishes the MY of the early narratives from the MY of the later narratives. The MY from the ancient Israelite period, i.e. before the period of the Kings, is considered as an uncreated angelic figure, as a special appearance-form of God. The MY after that period is rather an angelic messenger sent by God. This distinction is due to the religious development in Israel. The ancient MY is thus a special kind of theophany in which the transcendency of God is fully recognized, but at the same time men try to comprehend God's redeeming purposes and immediate activities through

⁹⁰ Cf. HDB, I, 1898, pp.94ff; A.B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, 1904, pp.297ff.

a temporary embodiment of it in a visible figure and "mask".⁹¹

In recent years this view, in which the MY is understood as a form of self-manifestation of Yahweh, has gained ground among biblical scholars.

III. THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL APPROACH

The Bible is no longer considered as "one flat level", in which proofs can be given by mere comparison of texts. It has historical dimensions. In general, no homogeneous meaning and place can be given to the MY in the OT. In fact, the influence of this approach is visible already in some of the previously mentioned scholars, e.g. Vatke, Hitzig, Strack, Eichrodt, who make a distinction between the MY of the ancient narratives and the MY of the later ones.

This approach is found in two mutually interacting forms: 1. The religious-historical approach, including the so-called Sinai-Canaan theory.

2. The text-critical approach or the Interpolation theory.

⁹¹Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testaments, B. II, 1935, pp. 6ff; Cf. also H.W. Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, repr. 1959, pp.104-107; Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.247.

1. In the second part of the 19th century this view was clearly announced by W.H. Koster in his article "De Mal'ach Jahwe".⁹² He makes an important distinction between the MY-conception before, during, and after the Exile, due to the influence of the rise of angelology in Israel. The pre-exilic conception of the MY sees in the MY a manifestation of Yahweh himself on earth, which, however, as an appearance-form should be distinguished from Yahweh, the King of Heaven. The divinity in the MY lies in the מַלְאָךְ, מַלְאָכִים, or מַלְאֲכֵי, according to Ex. 23:21; 33:14,18,22,23; cf. 32:34 and Isa. 63:9. The idea of "angels" is wholly unknown in this period. He also points out the differences in the MY-conception with J and E, and the pluriformity of the MY. He recognizes several phases in the MY-conception in this period. In the post-exilic period the MY becomes an independent being, "an angelic being", due to the angelology.

Although this theory is sometimes too systematized and forced into the texts, it undoubtedly marks a step forward.

E. Kautzsch follows in outline Koster's theory. The difference here is, however, that he sees three

⁹²in ThT, IX, 1875, pp.369-415.

phases in the development of the MY conception in the OT. In the oldest narratives the MY is indeed considered as a temporary form of Yahweh's self-manifestation and is in so far distinguished from Him as it does not bear the full glory of Yahweh. But with the source E and afterwards, owing to a development in deeper spiritual insights, the MY can no longer be considered as Yahweh's self-manifestation; it then becomes Yahweh's representation.

Es ist begreiflich, dass eine solche, wenn auch nur vorübergehende und das volle Wesen Jahwes nicht erschöpfende, Verleiblichung dem religiösen Empfinden bei weiterer Vertiefung des Gottesbegriffs anstößig werden müsste. Man beseitigte indes den Anstoss nicht ohne weiteres durch die Umsetzung des Mal'ak jahwe in einen geschaffenen Engel, sondern hielt noch an einer Representation Jahwes fest, wenn auch mit schärferer Hervorhebung des Unterschieds zwischen ihm und Jahwe selbst. 93)

To this second phase belong, e.g. Ex. 23:20ff;⁹⁴ 32:34; 33:2; II Sam. 14:17,20; 19:28. But from II Sam. 24:16 onwards the MY becomes an ordinary angelic messenger, because Yahweh commanded him to stop the destruction (also in I Kgs. 19:7; II Kgs. 19:35; Pss. 34:8; 35:8). With the pre-exilic prophets this becomes even more

⁹³E. Kautzsch, Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1911, p.86.

⁹⁴In this verse the expression "for my name is in him" means according to him "for he is a representation of my Substance."

explicit.

Kautzsch's theory is even smoother and more complicated than Koster's'. It fits into the evolutionistic religious development ideas taught by Vatke. His interpretation of Ex. 23:20ff and II Sam. 24:16, which are considered crucial texts in his theory, is doubtful.

The RC scholar Heinrich Gross in a recent article "Der Engel im Alten Testament"⁹⁵ tries to understand the MY from the viewpoint of the gradual development of God's revelation in the Bible, not according to the laws of Evolutionism, but "nach bibel-immanenten Gesetzen wird Gottes Heilshandeln und in ihm sein Wesen je mehr je tiefer offenbar".⁹⁶ So God requires the angels in the various phases of the development of the revelation. In the course of this development he sees three outstanding phases, which are marked by modified conceptions of the MY., i.e.:

1. the time of the Patriarchs, Moses and Judges, in which the MY can at most be defined as "eine Erscheinungsforms Jahwes".

Hinter dem Engel Jahwes, besser noch in ihm steht unsichtbar gegenwärtig Jahwe ... Sein Kennzeichen ist, dass Gott sich ihm als Mittel der Erscheinung sehr eng verbindet, ohne jedoch ganz in ihm, etwa

⁹⁵ in ALW, Bd.VI/1, 1959, pp.28-42.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.29.

in einer hypostatischen Union, einzugehen. 97)

In this period he ascribes to the MY a special place, not on a par with any created being. It is thus more than a representation, but less than an identity.

2. the time of the kingdom; the MY is now more separated from Yahweh. The substantial distance between Yahweh, as the universal God, and the MY increases and consequently the functions of the MY become more extensive. At the same time "sie stehen nicht mehr, wie bisher der Engel Jahwes unmittelbar neben Gott als Gesprächspartner der Menschen."⁹⁸

3. the post-exilic time; this distance becomes immense, spiritual as well as local. The functions of the angels become more important and they occupy a prominent place as intermediaries. The characteristic function of the angels is represented by that of the MY as angelus interpres.

It is clear from this survey, that H. Gross still adopts the traditional RC interpretation of the MY.

0. Proksch splits the first phase into two other phases: the Patriarchal period and the time of Moses

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.35

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.36

and the Judges. It is in these two periods that the MY underwent a great change. The first period goes back to oral traditions in which Yahweh is conceived of as appearing in human form without the radiance of glory. In the hieros logos of the cult-places in the second period, Yahweh is distinguished from the MY. This change is caused by Moses' experience of the theophanies at the Sinai. Here Moses is so deeply impressed by God's might and glory, that the human appearance-form of the MY is considered as inadequate to embody the divine Being.

He says:

Der Gott der Väter, der sich im Engel (Gen.48:16) versicherte, war freilich seinem Wesen nach mit dem Gotte Moses identisch (Ex. 3:6,14); aber die Auffassung des Gottes vom Sinai war mit viel grösserer Kraft und Tiefe erfüllt als die altväterliche ... Die Kraft der neuen Gottesanschauung zerriss mit der Zeit die Hülle des Engels, die ihr keine adäquate Form mehr bot. 99)

One branch of this religious-historical approach is the so-called Sinai-Canaan theory. This theory starts from the pre-supposition that in the ancient belief of Israel Yahweh is considered as having the Mount Sinai as His abode. From Moses onwards, however, Yahweh is omnipresent and always present among Israel wherever they go. To reconcile these two beliefs the expression MY is employed. In this way they try to

⁹⁹O. Proksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments, B.I, 1950, p.422.

understand the identity and the distinction between the MY and Yahweh himself.

Thus Rudolf Smend believes, that the distinction can only be explained from this viewpoint, i.e. the "Bedürfnis, das Wohnen Jahwes an einen Orte und sein Erscheinen und Wirken an vielen Orten mit einander zu vereinigen. Dieser Wohnort Jahwes ist aber der Sinai".¹⁰⁰

Ed. Meyer sees in the MY a product of naïve theological reflection and reaction against the danger of polytheism. Therefore the Israelites employ the idea of the MY, the messenger of the God of the Sinai. He is as such considered as Yahweh's representative in Palestine and dwells in the various cult-places. The MY is considered as

ein wesensloser Schemen, der nur als theologische Formel Bedeutung hat, durch die man sich über den Widerspruch zwischen dem religiösen Postulat und der kultischen Praxis hinwegzuhelfen sucht. 101)

¹⁰⁰ R. Smend, Lehrbuch der Alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte, 1893, p.45.

¹⁰¹ Ed. Meyer, Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme, 1906, p.206; Cf. also Ad. Lods, "L'ange de Yahwe et l'"âme extérieure", in BZAW, XXVII, 1914, pp.277f.; B. Stade, Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd.I, 1905, pp.96-99.

This view is criticized by: F. Stier, op.cit., p.132; E. König, op. cit., p.192 footn.5; O. Proksch, op. cit., pp.421f.

2. The Text-critical or the Interpolation theory. The MY is, according to this view, a result of theological reflection and the revision of the ancient narratives by redactors in later periods by interpolating the word "Mal'akh". This interpretation is, however, not consistently carried out, so that we still find the MY and Yahweh alternately in the texts.

This view is clearly represented by H. Gunkel. He sees in Gen. many stages from crude mythology to an attractive and modern belief in divine providence.¹⁰² The oldest myths are very naïve and tell about God's appearance on earth and about God, who communicates freely and immediately with man. In the following period, however, this could not be accepted; the theophanies are now enveloped in a mysterious atmosphere: the darkness of the night or the incognito appearance of God. In the following phase interpolations are introduced into the texts. He says:

Noch spätere Recensionen setzen für die Gottheit selbst ein untergeordnetes göttlichen Wesen ein, das J "Jahwes Bote", E "Gottes Bote" nennt; diese Umarbeitung ist aber nicht consequent geschehen. 103)

At the same time the theophanies occur in dreams or the MY stays in heaven and calls the patriarchs; the

¹⁰² Cf. H. Gunkel, Genesis, 1901, p. XLVII.

¹⁰³ Ibid. (cf. also Ibid., pp. 170f.)

self-revealing God is now more veiled and remote. In the last stage of this mythological development Yahweh does not appear any longer in a particular place in history. He now reigns as the "letzter verborgene Hintergrund des Ganzen."¹⁰⁴

G. von Rad adheres to the same view, but with some modifications. This speculative revision of older myths is considered an important "literarische Theologisierung", not commonly adhered to in wider popular circles and therefore does not represent Israel's idea of the MY¹⁰⁵. On the other hand he is reticent as to when and how this interpolation has been carried out. He remarks:

Ob diese Auswechslung ein bewusster literarischer Eingriff war, oder ob sich schon viel früher im Stadium der mündlichen Überlieferung diese Umbildung vollzogen hat, ist schwer zu sagen. 106)

M.J. Lagrange declares that the MY has always been an angelic representation of Yahweh, as the word "mal'akh" means "messenger" or "ambassador". The apparent contradiction between the distinction and the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. This view is followed by: B. Stade, *op. cit.*, pp.96-99; C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, 1918, pp.53f.; J. Skinner, Genesis, 1930, pp.286f.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. "מַלְאָכִים", im AT", in TWzNT, Bd.I, pp.75f.

¹⁰⁶ G.von Rad, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd.I, 1957, pp.284f.; Das erste Buch Mose, ATD, 1956, p.163.

identity can only be solved through the theory of interpolation, which has been carried out in early period; this can still be seen from the Greek translation (LXX), which, according to him, represents the ancient condition of the texts.

Il prouve que, même à une époque très basse, l'ange fut introduit dans la texte, car personne ne donnera ici la préférence aux Septante comme représentant l'ancien état du texte. 107)

He finds this rule: "là ou les anciens disaient sans scrupule "Iahvé", les modernes ont dit avec plus de précision "l'ange de Iahvé".¹⁰⁸ Against the objection why the interpolation has been carried out imperfectly, he replies, that we should never have the idea of denying the immediate communication of God through the "internal words" (par des paroles intérieures).¹⁰⁹ Secondly, it is also due to the reverence and cautiousness of the interpolators towards the ancient texts.¹¹⁰

These latter arguments are the least cogent, and do not provide any real solution to the problem.

E. Koehler also speaks of an irregular and almost

¹⁰⁷ M. J. Lagrange, "L'ange de Iahvé", RB, XII, 1903, p. 219.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 220.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 221

arbitrary use of representation by replacing Yahweh with the MY to avoid anthropomorphism.¹¹¹

This theory is unsatisfactory. Why has this interpolation been imperfectly carried out? The constant alternation between the MY and Yahweh throughout the texts is remarkable. It is unlikely that this is merely due to slovenliness or ignorance of later redactors. It is doubtful too, whether at that early stage the redactors had a clear angelology.¹¹²

IV. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

This approach has not been widely used. von Rad is right when he indicates, in this matter, that "zu ihrer näheren Bestimmung ist es dienlich, nicht von den theologisierenden Stellen, sondern von seiner volkstümlichen Bezeugungen auszugehen".¹¹³ To understand popular belief in the MY an understanding of Hebrew psychology is helpful.

Adolphe Lods, using material from comparative

¹¹¹L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, p.123.

¹¹²Cf. also W. Baumgartner's objection against this interpolation theory in his article "Zum Problem des Jahwe-Engels", in Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt, pp.245f.

¹¹³Cf. "אֱלֹהִים im AT", in TWzNT, Bd.I, p.75.

religion, tries to understand the MY from the viewpoint of animistic psychology. According to this primitive way of thinking, certain parts of the personality can be detached from it without ceasing, for that reason, to belong to it and without the personality itself, on its side, ceasing to exist. These detached parts are still the personality itself, but at the same time they are distinguished from it.¹¹⁴ For this detached part he used the term "L'âme extérieure" or "outward soul". Applying this animistic psychology to Yahweh himself, he says:

Transportez cette notion de psychologie "primitive" à un être divin, et vous avez des concepts qui ressemblent fort à celui mal'ak. 115)

The MY is thus "le messager, l'ange en qui s'incarne et se manifeste le double divin".¹¹⁶

This particular view finds little support among the biblical scholars. The application of animistic psychology in the person of Yahweh (God) himself raises many problems. Moreover the clear distinction between the MY and Yahweh, especially in the post-exilic period, gives the strong impression that the MY is a subordinate

¹¹⁴A. Lods, op. cit., p.270.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p.275.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.277.

my "ange" de
Yahweh

personality distinguished from Yahweh's personality.¹¹⁷

J. Pedersen takes a more moderate view. He discerns changes in traditional beliefs in the course of time. According to the oldest belief, the MY is considered as a "man of God" (Jgs. 13:6), who is exclusively a manifestation of God, having no other personality than that of Yahweh. But later, when Yahweh's personality and unity become strongly accentuated, a change occurs in the conception, and Yahweh's mal'akh becomes an independent divine personality, subordinate to Yahweh and it becomes the highest heavenly servant or angel. Further he says, that it is probably the result of this later conception that the stories of the patriarchs sometimes mention mal'akhs of Gods instead of gods.¹¹⁸

A positive interpretation has been suggested by A.R. Johnson. The fact that the MY is frequently indistinguishable from Yahweh himself can be conceived of as another aspect of the oscillation as between the individual and the corporate unit within the conception of God, who at one time in Israel has been worshipped as

¹¹⁷Cf. E. Jacob's objections in his Theology of the Old Testament, 1958, pp.76f.

¹¹⁸J. Pedersen, Israel, its life and culture, III-IV, 1953, pp.495f.

a chief member of a pantheon, a heavenly Court. From this view-point the oscillation between subject and object in the speeches of the MY is to be understood. This has its parallel in the fact that in the conception of man the human $\eta\sigma\beta\alpha$ or "messenger" may be similarly indistinguishable from the human $\gamma\iota\tau\alpha$ or "lord". But the MY has a double significance, i.e. a celestial and a terrestrial order. That is why it is possible for the MY to be taken for a "man of God" or "prophet". In this case the prophet is for the time being an active extension of Yahweh's personality and as such he is Yahweh in Person.¹¹⁹

G.A.F. Knight also speaks of the MY in terms of "the alter ego" of God among the Israelites or the "extension of the nephesh",¹²⁰

This new psychological approach indeed sheds new light upon the MY problem.

Another type of psychological approach which must be mentioned separately is called: the Style-psychological and text-historical interpretation, used by

¹¹⁹ A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, 1942, sec.ed. 1961, pp.36ff.

¹²⁰ G.A.F. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, 1959, p.79; From Moses to Paul, 1948, p.56.

F. Stier.¹²¹ He starts a priori from the traditional RC standpoint, that the MY is an ordinary created angel, which can never be identified with Yahweh. The MY in the OT is not considered as a theological problem any more, but "zunächst ein stil-psychologisches Problem, dass ins Licht stilistischer Parallelen der atl. und sonstigen orientalischen Literatur zu stellen ist".¹²² He is therefore mainly concerned with the aspect of the stylistic problem of "das Gottes-ich" in the speeches of the MY. In this case he sees an analogy in the speeches of the prophet, in which the prophet speaks as if he is Yahweh himself. The prophetic speech is then introduced by the expression "ne'um Yahweh" or "ko'amar Yahweh", while in the MY-speeches these introductory words are omitted. Thus the problem centres on this strange phenomenon. He suggests the following explanations:

1. it could be caused by the psychological condition of the author himself:
 - a. the author did not hear the message spoken by the angel any longer, but heard God's speech directly from His mouth. In this case the

¹²¹F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testa-
ment, 1934, a dissertation.

¹²²Ibid., p.9.

texts were written as a result of a lively psychological process. 123)

- b. or the author has been so much influenced by the frequent repetition of the many Yahweh-speeches, that he simply "forgot" the speaking subject for a moment and unconsciously fell into the style of the direct Yahweh-speech.

2. it could be a matter of literary style.

- a. an abbreviated form of an ancient Oriental messenger's speech, in which the introduction "Thus saith Yahweh" is omitted.
- b. or it could also be a stylistic form of "ellipse".

3. it could be a matter of interpolation.

- a. interpolation of the whole verse, to show more concretely the probability of this psychological and text-historical development of the "divine I".
- b. or the word "mal'akh" has been afterwards interpolated before the original word Yahweh.124)

is/ The problem, whether the MY in the OT indicates one particular angel or used as an appellative, is solved by Stier from the viewpoint of the late-judaistic angelology and the NT. Thus he concludes, that the MY does not always indicate one particular entity, but is often used as an appellative. The MY is a "heavenly vizir", who shares in the authority of the Godhead. As such he is not only Intercessor and

¹²³ Cf. Lagrange's "internal words", vide supra, p.57.

¹²⁴ Cf. Stier, op. cit., pp.10-18.

Helper, but also heavenly Judge, who will anew play an important role in the eschatological times.

In fact, Stier does not offer a particular solution in the problem. His suggestions, according to the style-psychology, are not convincing; in themselves they have a strongly subjective accent. It cannot be denied that particular ancient Oriental style forms play a considerable role in the OT literature, but it is too tentative to concentrate the MY problem on and to solve it mainly from this aspect. Stier's theory has been criticized by e.g. A.R. Johnson, who says:

... Stier's treatment of the subject is too analytical and suffers from a failure to fit the material into the context of the general Israelite conception of personality, human and divine. (125)

and F. Nötscher, who remarks:

Ebendeswegen darf man aber auch nicht, wie Stier es tut, nach der entgegengesetzten Seite konstruieren und scharfe Grenze zwischen Jahwe auch da gezogen finden wollen, wo dies (meines Erachtens) nicht der Fall ist. Da ist beim Verfasser durchaus nicht alles bloss aus den Stellen selbst erklärt. Es geht vielmehr keineswegs immer ohne gewisse Gewalttätigkeit ab. (126)

These in outline are the current trends of interpretation. None is wholly satisfactory. It is time to take a new look at the problem.

¹²⁵A.R. Johnson, op. cit. p.28, footn. 2.

¹²⁶in ThR, XXXIV, 1, 1935, pp.8-11. In this present study we will meet Stier's suggested solutions again in Ch.IV, where his arguments will be discussed further.

CHAPTER III

YAHWEH, AS THE REVEALING AND SELF-CONCEALING GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In considering the problem of the MY in the OT, we must first consider the central figure in the whole OT, i.e. Yahweh himself. Who is this Yahweh in the history of revelation in the OT?

Yahweh is the unique God of the OT. He is revealing Himself to and acting with the Israelites, who have been elected as His people. The OT describes Yahweh according to the living relationship that Yahweh established between Himself and His people. The unique God revealed Himself in unique ways to a particular elected people, according to His unique plan of salvation and redemption.

Yet he is the God who does not reveal Himself fully to men. He is ultimately still the unsearchable, the transcendent God beyond all human reason. He is the Deus revelatus but at the same time remains the Deus absconditus (cf. Isa. 45:15). This specific character of God, revealed in the whole history of mankind and especially in the history of His people, must

first be realized before we begin research into the MY.

I. THE PERSONAL, ACTING AND LIVING GOD

One basic feature of Yahweh in the OT is that he is a personal God. He is not merely an abstract idea, or an eternal principle, or a philosophical doctrine or the product of mystical experience. He is personal, possessed of an independent existence, will and power.

H.W. Robinson says:

The personal name, Yahweh, denotes a personality and character which are, in many respects, as distinct and clear-cut as those of any human figure in the OT Behind the thunder which is His voice, the cloud which is His chariot, the hail and lightning which are His weapons, there stands a personal being whose thought, feelings and will are as real as those of men. 1)

This personal character of God creates the irreversible "I - thou" relationship between Yahweh and His people, which is realized in the Covenant.² God is "I" and man is God's "thou".³ In this personal relationship Yahweh is called "the God of Israel", "your God", "our God" and the converse "my people", "my servant", "my heritage" is addressed for the people (cf. Isa. 40;

¹H.W. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, sec. ed., repr. 1959, p.60.

²Cf. about the Covenant, vide infra, par. III.

³Cf. W. Vischer, "Words and the Word", in Interpretation, III, 1, 1949, p.5.

42; 47:6; Ezek. 37:23,27). Thus Yahweh in the OT can be terribly near, concrete in His revelation and self-manifestation, intervening in the affairs of life at the most unexpected moments.⁴

From the very beginning God reveals himself in a personal relationship with men. Men are involved in God's works and God is involved in the works of men. There is nowhere even the faintest inclination to the thought of a God without consciousness or will. God of the Old Covenant is thoroughly self-conscious, independent of the world, free, personal and sovereign.⁵

Recent research into the meaning of the name יהוה has likewise tended to stress that the very name implies a living, active, and personal God, who is present among the people.⁶

⁴Cf. J. De Groot, Macht en Wil, [no date], p.347.

⁵Cf. H. Schultz, Old Testament Theology, vol.II, sec. Engl. ed., 1895, pp.100-16.

⁶Cf. E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, 1958, pp.51f.; De Groot, op. cit., p.150; W. Vischer, op. cit., p.5; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, p.43; E. Schild, "On Exodus III 14 = 'I AM THAT I AM'", in VT, 1954, pp.296-302.

Per contra: S.D. Goitien, suggesting the root meaning of the word as "passionate love", in "YHWH the Passionate", in VT, 1956, pp.1-9.

W.F. Albright, adopts the causative meaning of the word and interprets Yahweh as the Creator of life; cf. his From the Stone Age to Christianity, sec. ed., 1957, pp.260ff. This view is confirmed by Obermann, in "The Divine Name YHWH in the Light of Recent Discoveries", JBL, LXVII, 1949, pp.301ff.

Whatever view we take it is now generally accepted that the meaning of יהוה is anyhow connected with the idea of the living God.

Another implication of the presence of the living God is, as E. Jacob remarks, that the presence of Yahweh corresponds each time to a new approach, which signifies punishment or blessing, or usually both at once, e.g. Ezek. 6:3; 7:27; 11:10; 12:16 in which the name Yahweh is connected with judgement and in Ezek. 34:30; 37:13,14,27; Ps. 99:8, which is connected with promises of blessings.⁷ This revealed name יהוה itself, however important it may be, does not lead Israel to the "knowledge" (יָדַעַתְּ) of God.⁸ But in the whole course of Israel's history they will know and experience the deepest meaning of this name.

Against this background of the personal, acting, and living character of Yahweh we have to see the MY in the early stage of revelation as His self-manifestation using a pluriformity of appearance and carrying out various tasks.

II. THE SELF-REVEALING AND SELF-CONCEALING GOD

The name יהוה can never reveal the deepest character and essence of God. God remains ultimately the Mysterious One and cannot be fully penetrated by

⁷Of. E. Jacob, op. cit., p.53.

⁸vide infra; par.III

human mind. Proksch says that the name "Yahweh" is "undeutbar", a mystery, but then a revealed mystery (ein offenbar Geheimnis); a revelation which is at the same time a concealment.⁹

The OT never pretends to "know" Yahweh fully. The "knowledge" (דָּעַת) of Yahweh is accompanied by the consciousness that Yahweh is transcendent, concealed and unsearchable. The Israelites knew that there is an unbridgeable distance between Yahweh and men. Yahweh is enthroned in heaven and man dwells on earth (Ps.115:16; 113:4-6; 102:19). On the other hand Israel experienced the living personal relationship created by Yahweh. Yahweh is called the Keeper of Israel (Ps.121).

Vriezen remarks:

... that God is transcendent but also enters into a relationship with the world. Yahweh as the holy, absolute God stands in a direct relation to the world, not only because He has created the world but also because all creatures live by His power and because He has intercourse with men in many ways; He is the giver of life, He is loving and merciful. 10)

These ideas of self-revealing and self-concealing

⁹Cf. O. Proksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1950, p.234; A. Alt's interpretation on Ex. 3:4 in ZAW 1940-41, p.160; E. Jacob, op. cit., p.51 footnote.

¹⁰Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.163.

could be summarized in the idea of God's holiness in the OT. God is a holy God. This is the main theme of the OT in its description about God. The etymology of the word $\psi\eta\eta$ (adj. $\psi\eta\eta$) is, however, not clear.¹¹ The generally accepted root meaning seems to be after the accadian verb gadāšu which means "to shine".¹² Some other scholars suggest another root meaning "to separate",¹³.

On the one hand $\psi\eta\eta$ implies the remoteness and the exaltedness over all the peoples, e.g. Ps. 99:1-5; 47:8-10; the wholly otherness of God from men, e.g. Hos. 11:9, that fills the mind with blank wonder and astonishment¹⁴, so that men cannot understand His deeds (Isa. 28:21) nor can His thoughts be compared with human thoughts (Isa 55:9,9). He is as such the Unapproachable One (Ex. 3:4-5; 19:11-13), even for the seraphim around His throne (Isa 6:2), covering their faces so that they cannot behold Him, and covering their feet so that He

¹¹Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, op. cit., p.149 footn.2.

¹²Cf. KB, p.825.

¹³Cf. N.H. Snaitch, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, 8th impr. 1960, pp.24-32.

¹⁴Cf. R. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, A Pelican Book, 1959, p.40.

cannot behold them.¹⁵ In this passage the two suggested root meanings of שָׁרַף could be justified, as it flows one into the other: the brightness of the holiness of God keeps any creature at a distance and makes them "separated". Snaitth says that we should rather think of "separated to" than of "separated from"¹⁶. This unapproachableness has been symbolized in the structure of the Temple, where Yahweh is present in the dark rear chamber, the $\text{קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים}$, the Holy of Holies, and excluded from human communication, except from the high priest once a year.

On the other hand, God reveals himself and communicates himself as the Holy One (Num. 20:13b; Lev. 10:3; Ezek. 20:41; 28:25). His holiness is then closely connected with his קְבוֹרָה (Isa. 6:1-3), which is "the radiant power of His Being, as it were the external glorious manifestation of His mysterious holiness".¹⁷

In communicating Himself with men His holiness is also closely linked with מִשְׁפָּט (justice) and יְרֵמָה (righteousness), cf. Ps. 99:4-5; Isa. 5:16; Ezek. 28:22. The holy God is near (e.g. Isa. 55:5-6) and is in the midst

¹⁵Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, op. cit., p.149

¹⁶N.H. Snaitth, op. cit., p.30.

¹⁷Th. C. Vriezen, op. cit., p.50.

of Israel (Isa. 12:6). Moreover He enters into a Covenant relationship with Israel, which is part of the essential holiness of God for ^{the} OT. (cf. Ps. 99:6-9)¹⁸. Thus in this special relationship the Holy One is the jealous God (e.g. Jos. 24:19), but He is also called the Redeemer of Israel (e.g. Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5 etc.).

In connection with our present study, it is very important to keep this character of the Divine Being, as the Deus revelatus and the Deus absconditus, in mind. He is the Living God: no static picture or image of Him can be made. According to the nature of this self-revealing and self-concealing God, we shall see that the self-manifestation of God sometimes could be identified with and sometimes clearly distinguished from God himself.

III. THE COVENANT GOD

The "knowledge" of God (יְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים) in the OT is not based on philosophical reasoning, but on the experience of Israel, living in close relationship with God.¹⁹ This is fundamental to Israel's faith.

This relationship, which is ultimately based on

¹⁸Cf. R. Davidson, The Bible Speaks, 1959, p.75.

¹⁹Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, op. cit., p.131.

the divine election of Israel as the people of God (cf. e.g. Deut. 7:6-8; 9:4ff; 10:12-15; Am. 3:2; etc.), has been realized and established by God in his Covenant (בְּרִית) with the people. The etymology of the word בְּרִית is uncertain. It has been associated with the root בָּרָה which means "to eat" and בְּרִית should originally mean "sharing of meal", "alliance", "mutual obligation".²⁰ The verb originally used was כָּרַת, "to cut". This recalls one of the most ancient rites, where the participants had to pass between the two halves of one or a few beasts that were killed (cf. Gen.15; Jer. 34:18ff). It seems that this expression of כָּרַת בְּרִית has a deeper meaning. L.A. Snijders suggests that this expression means "to cut or kill a covenant" in this sense, that parallel to the death of the sacrificed animal and by means of the oath, "the covenant was transported into the world of absolute life. Then no deceit could annul its validity. It had been released from all transient relations".²¹

Later on more appropriate verbs have been used: הִקִּים, "he establishes or institutes", e.g. Gen.6:18;

²⁰Cf. KB, p.152

²¹W. Brede Kristenzen, Inleiding tot de godsdienst-geschiedenis, 1955, p.125, quoted by L.A. Snijders in his article "Genesis XV. The Covenant with Abraham", in OTS, XII, 1958, p.273.

9:9,11,17; 17:7,19,21 - all P, and as such the covenant is brought into force and existence; another verb is: נתן "he gives", e.g. Gen.17:2; Num.25:12.²² It is a one-sided initiative that does not impose or restrict the free decision of the other party.²³

What did happen when Yahweh established the Covenant with Israel? At least three things happened:

1. that the ברית was a free gracious act from Yahweh, as the initiating participant, e.g. in Gen.15 and Deut.7-10. This created a steadfast covenant, because it was "the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love ... to a thousand generation" (cf. Deut.7:9; cf. Gen.17:13). It was a covenant relationship with the people and not with the individual. The individual, e.g. Abraham, Moses, etc. was "pars pro toto".
2. that Yahweh entered into a bond of communion in which Israel was bound to Him completely and made dependent on Him.²⁴ In all aspect Israel's life became Yahweh-

²²Cf. J. Beggich, "Berit. Ein Beitrag zur Erfassung einer alttestamentlichen Denkform", ZAW, 60, 1944, pp.1-10.

²³Cf. L. Koehler, op. cit., p.62.

²⁴Cf. Th.C. Vriezen, op. cit., p.142.

centred.

3. that this exclusive communion relationship with Yahweh implied mutual obligations: Yahweh would love, bless and multiply Israel (Deut. 7:13,23). On the other hand Israel had to worship Yahweh and obey carefully all the commandments (cf. Deut. 7:11,12; 8:1,6,11; 26:17,18; 30:7-10; Jer. 7:23). At the conclusion of the Covenant at Sinai Moses took the book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." (Ex. 24:7,8). It was due to this promise that Yahweh punished Israel when Israel broke the Covenant by replacing Yahweh with other gods; but, peculiarly, the Covenant itself was never abolished by Yahweh. It should never be understood in terms of a commercial bargain in the spiritual history of Israel, because the limitations and conditions are no part of the essential nature of the Covenant itself.²⁵

E. Jacob summarized these meanings of the Covenant in three categories: election - bond - obedience.²⁶ The Sinai Covenant (Ex. 24) could be considered as the

²⁵ Cf. T.H. Robinson, "Covenant in the Old Testament" in *WTJ*, LIII, 1941-42, pp.208f.

²⁶ E. Jacob, *op. cit.*, p.212.

explicit development of the pre-mosaic covenants made by Yahweh with Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:17,18; 17:13,14), because these previous ones were ultimately not made merely with Abraham personally. It was an "everlasting" covenant, and in Abraham Yahweh saw and included his descendents. Here the previous ones were solemnly renewed after the deliverance from Egypt. Thus the Priestly author distinguished in Israel's history three covenants: the Noachian, Abrahamian, and the Mosaic Covenant. There is a certain development of the Covenant in the course of the history. Jacob remarks, that the covenant-makings later than Sinai are renewals, or extension to a wider association, of the Covenant.²⁷

The uniqueness of this unusual conception of a covenanted people in the Near Eastern world was the fact, that the whole people entered into a special legal pact with its God and ordered its common life accordingly, so that it occupied a central part in life.²⁸

It is in this framework of the living covenant relationship that we have to see the anthropomorphical theophanies of Yahweh in the OT, especially in pre-exilic times.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cf. G.E.C. Wright, The Challenge of Israel's Faith, 1946, p.90.

IV. THE PRESENCE OF GOD

According to the Covenant relationship Yahweh is present among Israel.²⁹ This presence of Yahweh has been described in many places as "dwelling in the midst" of Israel or the people, e.g. Ex. 29:45,46. This presence is one and the same time a searching (cf. Num.5:3; 35:34; 14:14; Deut.6:15) and a comforting presence (Deut.7:21; 23:14; Isa. 12:6; Hos.11:9; Joel 2:27).

Yahweh's presence in Israel was symbolized by the Ark and the Tabernacle. The Ark (אֲרוֹן) contained the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments and Yahweh's presence rested on the כַּפֹּת (der. from כָּפַר, which means "to cover, to atone; the accadian kapāru means "to wash away"). From there Yahweh met Israel, from between the two cherubim and spoke to them. Therefore the Ark is also called אֲרוֹן הַעֵדוּת, the Ark of Testimony (Reminder), e.g. Ex. 25:21,22, or called אֲרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה, the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh (e.g. Num.10:33; 14:44), or called אֲרוֹן יְהוָה, the Ark of Yahweh (e.g. Jos.3:13; 4:5) or אֲרוֹן בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים, the Ark of the Covenant of 'Elohim (e.g. Jgs.20:27;

²⁹For the relationship between the name YHWH and this "presence", vide supra, par.I, p.67.

I Sam.4:4; II Sam.15:24). From these names it is clear that the Ark in the early traditions was closely connected with the presence and the Covenant of Yahweh. In Num.10:35f and I Sam.4:3ff the Ark is even treated with divine honour and as such identified with Yahweh. That the Ark manifested the terrible effective presence of the holy God, is clear from the disasters that happened to the Philistines, when they had the Ark in their midst (I Sam.5) and when the Ark was brought back to Bethshemesh (I Sam.6; cf. also II Sam.6:6,7). In this connection R. Davidson says:

The Ark was intimately associated with God, indeed to some it may have been God, present in the midst of His people to bless, travelling with them in their wanderings, carried with them into battle. 30)

Thus the Ark was not merely considered as a container of the Decalogue tablets, but as a symbol of Yahweh's presence and holiness, and even considered as Yahweh's throne, occupying the holy כִּסֵּא in the Temple.³¹ This view seems still to be in existence, may be in a lesser degree, in Israel up till the time of

³⁰R. Davidson, op. cit., p.63.

³¹Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, Hoofdlijnen der Theologie van het Oude Testament, Tweede druk, 1954, p.279.

Jeremiah, cf. Jer. 3:16f.: the prophet reminded the people that in the future Jerusalem would replace the Ark as the throne of Yahweh.³³

The Tabernacle also expressed and guaranteed Yahweh's presence among Israel. It was Yahweh's temporary dwelling-place on earth. This is clear from the various names given to this Tabernacle:

a. $\int\text{נֶשְׁבֵּת}$, derived from the root-verb $\int\text{נָשָׂה}$ which means "to dwell temporarily"; This $\int\text{נֶשְׁבֵּת}$ was carefully designed according to a pattern given by God himself (cf. Ex.25:9; 26:1, 6-35, etc.), and it was anointed and consecrated by Moses (Lev.8:10). And when Moses had finished consecrating it, the leaders of Israel "offered ... before the Lord ... before the tabernacle" (Num.7:3). The presence of Yahweh was seen by the cloud that covered the tabernacle by day and by the appearance of fire by night over the tabernacle (Num.9:15-23).

b. שִׁבְעֵת , derived from שָׁבַע , holy; and in this sense it means Sanctuary, i.e. the dwelling-place of

³³Per contra: H.W. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.131; L. Koehler, *op.cit.*, p.122.

The Ark itself seems to disappear at an earlier time; it is officially mentioned for the last time in II Chron. 35:3, in a description about the reformation of Josiah.

the Holy One in Israel's midst (Ex.25:8). It may not be profaned, because the consecration of the anointing oil of God is upon him (Lev.21:12). It is also called **הַמִּקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה**, the Sanctuary of Yahweh, the Holy One (Num.19:20, etc.)

c. **אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד**, the Tent of Meeting; it is the place where Yahweh met Moses and the people (Ex.30:36; 29:42,43) and spoke to them (Num.1:1; Deut.31:14, etc.). It was covered with cloud and filled with the glory of the Lord (Ex.40:34).

d. **אֹהֶל הַעֵדוּת**, the Tent of Testimony, because of the Ark of Testimony, that was kept within it (Ex.40:3, 20; Num.9:15; 17:4-10; 18:22, etc.).

With the historical development of the revelation in spiritual history of Israel, this oldest materialistic representation gradually became less significant, until all cognizance of it ceases with the Exile.

The presence of Yahweh was also represented by the **פְּנֵי**. This word is a plural form derived from the verb: **פָּנָה** which means "to turn (towards)"; and **פְּנֵי** means then "the side turned towards someone else", or simply "face", "countenance", or "the visible side". E. Jacob remarks, that

the whole personality of Yahweh is concentrated

in his face, his love as well as his anger, although the latter is expressed rather by the turning away or the absence of the countenance. The face is thus the presence of God without any reservation. 34)

Therefore this "panim" could have some slightly different meanings. It could mean "he himself", cf. Pss. 34:16; 44:3; 80; 16; Lam.4:16; II Sam.17:11; Deut.7:10. Very often it means God's love, mercy, and blessing by His presence: Zech.7:2; Ps.4:6; 89:15; II Chron.30:9; Num.6:24-26. On the other hand the turning away of God's "panim" or the hiding of His "panim" means God's anger, lack of God's blessing, which made people afraid, cf. Job.34:29; Ps.10:11; Isa.54:8; 57:17; 59:2; 64:7; Jer.33:5; Ezek.39:23., because all creatures can only live by His grace. It is obvious that פָּנִים represents the person himself, that is why it also means someone's presence, e.g. Deut.4:37; Ex.33:14,15; Gen.4:16; I Sam.1:22; Ps.139:7; Isa 63:9, etc., and to seek God's mercy is called "to appease the face of Yahweh" (Zech. 8:21f. cf.7:2); and to seek communion with God by way of private prayers is called "to come into his panim" (Ps.95:2, קָרַם קַנְיֹו) or "to pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord (פָּנֵי יְהוָה , Lam.2:19; I Chron.16:11; Pss.100:2; 105:4). In the presence of

³⁴E. Jacob, op. cit., pp.77f.

Yahweh there is life and fulness of joy and security, e.g. Pss. 116:9-11; 21:6; 52:9; 41:12; 31:20. It is a good place to dwell for the upright (Ps. 140:13), but the wicked and the nations will tremble in His presence, e.g. Isa. 19:1; Job 23:15; Isa. 64:2. On the other hand, away from the presence of Yahweh means disaster, e.g. Gen. 4:16; Pss. 51:11; 88:14f; Jon. 1:3, 10; 2:4; Mal. 2:3.

The dogmatic idea of the "omnipresence" of God is not developed yet in the OT. In any case it is clear, that the presence of Yahweh is not fully bound to a certain place on earth. Yahweh remains in heaven (I Kgs. 8:22, 27, 31-37; Pss. 2:4; 103:19; 115:3ff, etc.). His presence could be among nations, and ultimately in Sheol as well as in the uttermost parts of the sea (Ps. 139; contr.: Pss. 6:5; 88:12-14; 115:17; Isa. 38:18; this conception seems to have undergone some development; cf. Jacob, op. cit., p. 304).

This $\text{D}^{\prime}\text{J}^{\prime}\text{J}^{\prime}$, in the sense of "presence" of Yahweh, seems to manifest himself also in the MY.³⁵

³⁵Vide exegesis on Isa. 63:9; cf. also in this connection the name $\text{b}^{\prime}\text{h}^{\prime}\text{J}^{\prime}\text{J}^{\prime}$ in Gen. 32:30 and the name of the goddess Tanit in the Phoenician mythology as "Penê Ba'al" (i.e. face of Ba'al), i.e. the special form of Ba'al's self-manifestation.

V. ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND ANTHROPOPATHISM

In describing God the OT uses a great variety in words and expressions. Words itself are insufficient for an adequate description of God. Words are used to build up certain images or pictures which could represent one aspect of the Godhead. Thus the OT employs "pictorial language" and therefore the description of God becomes richer and more varied. Yahweh is described as an animal (Am. 1:2; Hos. 11:10), as a material thing (Deut. 32:4, 30f; Ps. 91:2), as natural phenomenon (Ps. 27:1 as light; 121:5 as a shadow).

In connection with our present study we shall mainly pay attention to the anthropomorphism and -pathism. By this is meant the habit of thought and language which speaks of God according to human "pathos" or human "morphè".

Thus God was assumed to have bodily organs: lips, tongue, and breath (Isa. 30:27,28); if God's hand is stretched out who will turn it back? (Isa. 14:27b); His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory (Ps. 98:1b); His eyes behold, his eyelids test the children of men (Ps. 11:4b); my cry to Him reached his ears; smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth (Ps. 18:6,8); the Lord smelled the pleasing

odor ... (Gen.8:21); the Lord descended to see the city .. (Gen.11:5); the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong men shouting because of wine (Ps.78:65); in that day the Lord will whistle for the fly.. (Isa.7:18). God is pictured as a potter (Jer.18), as a shepherd (Ps.23), as an archer (Lam.3:12), as a woodcutter (Isa.9:14), as one that was ancient of days (Dan.7:9). God was supposed to have emotions too: he could be sorry (Gen. 6:6; I.Sam.15:35), he could laugh (Ps.2:4), could be wearied by the feasts of the people (Isa.1:14; Am.5: 21ff), could rejoice (Isa.65:19), could cry, gasping and panting like a woman in travail (Isa.42:14); could anger fiercely (Isa.13:13), could have compassion (Isa.14:1), be jealous (Joel 2:18), love (Isa.48:14), repent (Jon.3:10), etc.

This use of anthropomorphic language about Yahweh was born from the consciousness of Yahweh, as a personal, living, and acting God.³⁶ This way of speech and description expresses the rich varieties and the unity of God's activities and attributes.

The importance of this anthropomorphism has been pointed out by De Groot:

Willen wij aan de belijdenis van God als persoon, als machtige, als Schepper en Gebieder vasthouden,

³⁶Cf. G.E. Wright, op. cit., p.83; De Groot, op. cit., p.207.

dan kunnen wij van het gebruik van anthropomorphistische zegswijzen geen afstand doen. "Weil das Alte Testament in Anthropomorphismen vor ihm redet, deshalb steht sein Gott als der persönliche und lebendige Gott vor den Menschen ..." (Köhler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p.6). Inderdaad, God is de persoonlijke en levende God en daarom: anthropomorphismen. 37)

After all, "anthropomorphism" is not the special characteristic owned by the OT only. No living religion can altogether avoid speaking of God in terms borrowed from man's experience. The attempt to avoid all anthropomorphism leads at last to a barren philosophy, in which God merely becomes an abstract negation or principle, e.g. the *το μη ὄν* of Philo or the "Tao" in Taoism, until finally nothing is left at all except a Nothing, as perhaps in the most thorough going way in Buddhist philosophy and mysticism.³⁸

We see anthropomorphical language throughout the Bible. It is not true to say that it is merely a product of a naïve, primitive, underdeveloped and crude conception of God. Jesus still used this anthropomorphical language, when He spoke of the Father's hand

³⁷De Groot, *op.cit.*, p.197; other positive estimations given by: O. Weber, *Yahweh der Gott und Yahweh der Götze*, 1933; W. Vischer, "Words and the Word", in *Interpretation*, III, 1, 1949, p.7; E. Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.39.

³⁸Cf. W. Vischer, *op.cit.*, p.7.

(Jhn.10:29), of the Father's house with many rooms (Jhn.14:2), of the Father as the Vinedresser (Jhn.15:1), of the face of my Father (Mt.18:10). Paul spoke of the judgement seat of God (Rom.14:10) and of God's field (I Cor. 3:9), of Christ, seated at the right hand of God (Col.3:1). Even in our "modern" way of thinking we cannot get rid of all "anthropomorphical" expressions about God. We still speak of God's hand, voice, etc. We speak of God as "He" in the third person, masculine, singular and call Him our "heavenly Father".

Israel has experienced God's acts in her life. Yahweh is the personal, acting, and living God. Thus it is natural for Israel to describe this God in a "human" way of speech, using human images and thoughts, feelings, and desires. The warmth and vitality of this anthropomorphism and -pathism survived from the earliest days until later days when the more exalted idea of God was found. Even the prophets and the devotional literature of Israel owed much of their unique power to the intensity of this personalisation (not personification!) of Yahweh, which expressed so vividly, yet so naturally, the corresponding intensity of religious experience.³⁹

³⁹Cf. H.W. Robinson, op. cit., p.62.

On the other hand Israel was always conscious of the antithesis between God and man. God is different from man (Hos.11:9). Man is "dust and ashes" before God (Gen.18:27). W. Vischer remarks, that the biblical anthropomorphisms do not remove the distinction between God and man, and in no sense permit us to exchange God and man. It does not abolish the essential separation between God, the Holy One, and man, as sinner.⁴⁰

Thus the OT never tries to present a complete and realistic picture of God in anthropomorphical language. That is never the purpose of biblical anthropomorphism.⁴¹ When the elders and Moses stood on the Mount of Sinai and saw the God of Israel, it was actually just the "feet" of God they saw (Ex.24:10). According to Deut. 4:12, when God manifested himself at the mount of Horeb, it was only his "voice" that was heard and no similitude was seen at all. Even the glory of God could not be shown to Moses. Moses had to take his place in the cleft of the rock, and God's "hand" covered him while God would pass by. Moses was only allowed to see the

⁴⁰Cf. W. Vischer, op. cit., p.6.

⁴¹Cf. Th. Boman, Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen, 1952, p.85.

back parts, not His face (Ex.33:18-23). Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. There was no talk at all of a concrete visible figure of God; only the "voice" of God was heard (Isa.6:1,8) and the "train of God's garment" was seen filling the temple. Jeremiah mentioned only the "hand" of God which touched his mouth (Jer.1:9). Ezekiel only heard the voice of one that spoke and what he saw was just the likeness of the glory of God, not the glory of God itself (Ezek.1:28). The whole "vision of God" seen by him is extremely vague and confused and can never be painted in a clear picture. Even at the day of the Lord, when Yahweh shall go forth to fight as a warrior against the nations, it is said that only his "feet" shall stand upon the mount of Olives (Zech.14:1-4).

Therefore these mentionings of bodily organs cannot be considered as anthropomorphism in the strict sense of the word, applied to God. They are, as Th. Boman calls, "bildliche Ausdrücke, die mit dichterischer Freiheit seine [i.e. Yahweh's] Eigenschaften beschreiben"⁴².

There are indeed certain limitations in the case

⁴²Th. Boman, op. cit., p.86.

of anthropomorphical description of Yahweh's attributes and activities. These limitations make biblical anthropomorphism different from general ancient anthropomorphism.⁴³

Nevertheless Yahweh sometimes "appeared" to men either in an obscure or concrete way. But no attempt whatever is made to describe the form of God's appearances. In the narrative passages such theophanies are introduced by the word: וַיֵּחַדֵּן ("and Yahweh appeared or manifested himself"), cf. Gen.26:2,24; Deut.31:15; I Kgs.9:2; etc. Only the words that were spoken by God are recorded. Sometimes we read a clear introduction, such as וַיֵּחַדֵּן (e.g. I Sam.3:10 "... and stood ...") or וַיֵּחַדֵּן (e.g. Gen.28:13; Am.7:7; 9:1), which suggest the idea of God's appearance-form in an human form.⁴⁴ The reverence for God made the author hesitant to describe the form of God's appearance. He knew that God is more than this form and that heaven and earth cannot comprise His glory. In a particular era in the history of redemption, however, God sometimes manifested Himself in a clearly human appearance and form: the MY, in whom His Person is manifested and personalized in a unique way.

⁴³Cf. J. Hempel, "Grenzen des Anthropomorphismus im Alten Testament", ZAW, 1939; E. Jacob, op.cit., pp.41f.

⁴⁴Cf. J. Barr, "Theophany and anthropomorphism", in Suppl. VT, VII, p.32.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXEGETICAL SURVEY OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH PASSAGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. THE NAME מְלֶאֱךָ יְהוָה OR מְלֶאֱךָ הַאֱלֹהִים .

The name מְלֶאֱךָ יְהוָה appears in the OT no less than fifty eight times¹; מְלֶאֱךָ הַאֱלֹהִים ten times²; once we read מְלֶאֱךָ פְּנִיּוֹ (Isa. 63:9) and מְלֶאֱךָ הַקְּבִרִית (Mal. 3:1). Sometimes it is just called מְלֶאֱךָ (Ex. 23:20; 33:2. Num. 20:16. I Kgs. 19:5. I Chron. 21:15. II Chron. 32:21), it is called מְלֶאֱךָ הַמְּלָכִי (Gen. 48:16), מְלֶאֱךָ הַמְּלָכִי (Ex. 23:23; 32:34. Mal. 3:1), or מְלֶאֱךָ הַמְּלָכִי (Gen. 24:7, 40). These different expressions denote that the nature and character of the described cannot be entirely comprised in one name.

The precise etymological origin of the name is

¹in: Gen. 16:7, 9, 10, 11; 22:11, 15. Ex. 3:2. Num. 22: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34, 35. Jgs. 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11, 12, 21 (twice), 22 (twice); 13:3, 13, 15, 16 (twice), 17, 18, 20, 21 (twice). II Sam. 24:16. I Kgs. 19:7. II Kgs. 1:3, 15; 19:35. I Chron. 21:12, 15, 16, 18, 30. Pss. 34:8; 35:5, 6. Isa. 37:36. Hag. 1:13. Zech. 1:11, 12; 3:1, 5, 6; 12:8. Mal. 2:7.

²in: Gen. 21:17; 31:11. Ex. 14:19. Jgs. 6:20; 13: 6, 9. I Sam. 29:9. II Sam. 14:17, 20; 19:27.

uncertain. The noun מַלְאָךְ is commonly accepted as derived from the Hebrew root-verb מָלַךְ, which is not frequently used. It has been probably derived from the Arabic root la'aka, which means "to send someone with a message". Thus according to this derivation מַלְאָךְ has its basic meaning of "someone sent with a message", or simply "messenger".³

The ancient Hebrew meaning of the term, however, seems to be more varied. Originally it expressed the abstract meaning of "message" or "sending", for which the biblical Hebrew has no special term; then it was also applied to the concrete meaning of "messenger".⁴

³Cf. BDB, p.521; KB, ad loc.; von Rad, "מַלְאָךְ im AT", in TWzNT, Bd.I, pp.75ff. Other derivations, which do not find general acceptance have been suggested, for instance, by: Karpe (Journal As., ser.IX. 9, p.128; cf. J. Rybinski, Der Mal'akh Jahwe, 1929, pp.10f.) suggests that the word מַלְאָךְ is a participle of the verb מָלַךְ, and means "he, who is going or treading" or "messenger". He referred it to Yahweh himself who is present in the MY. As such he distinguished "Yahweh, who is going or treading" (Isa.63:3) from "Yahweh, who is sitting upon the Cherubim" (Ps.18:10). J. Barth considered the word מַלְאָךְ as belonging to nouns formed with the prefix מִ-. He said, "Mit dem Präfix 'ma' und 'mi' bildet das semitische Nomina, welche sowohl die reine Handlung als auch das concrete Sachwort in seinen verschiedenen Ausstrahlungen, wie die Person, den Ort, das Werkzeug der Handlung bezeichnen können" (Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen, Leipzig, 1894, p.233; cf. Rybinski, loc. cit.)

⁴Cf. E. König, Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1923, pp.189f, 195; vide supra Ch.II; H. Gross, "Der Engel im Alten Testament", in ALW, p.28.

Especially in the expression מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה or מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹהִים we have to take this ambiguous meaning into account.

In the sense of "messenger", the sender could be a divine as well as a human being; thus it could be a heavenly (divine) messenger or an ordinary human messenger. This latter usage is no less common throughout the OT. Anyone else, who is sent with a message can be called a "mal'akh", e.g. in: I Sam.23:27; II Sam.11:19, 22ff; I Kgs.19:2; II Kgs.5:10; 6:32f; 9:18; 10:8; Ezek. 23:40; Prov.13:17; 17:11; Job.1:14, etc.

In the first sense מַלְאָךְ does not express one particular heavenly messenger. It is a "nomen officii", expressing the relationship to the divine Sender and its inherent idea of message. In the special case of the name מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה, or מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹהִים, however, it expresses what von Rad calls "die einzige religiös schärfer umrissene, persönlichere Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Engelwelt".⁵

In the Septuagint and in the NT מַלְאָךְ is translated as ἄγγελος; later on it was translated into Latin as "angelus"; and from this Latin translation is derived

⁵ von Rad, *op. cit.*, p.75; this opinion is opposed by W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem der Jahwe - Engels", in Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt, p.243; also vide *supra* Ch.II, par.I.

our word "angel". From this process of translation it is obvious that the original Hebrew meaning comprises more than our word "angel".

Etymology by itself, however, can never finally decide the meaning of a word in usage. In this sense Baumgartner's opinion to solve the MY problem "einfach vom hebräischen Sprachgebrauch" is not convincing.⁶ Objections have been raised by several scholars against a theological understanding which is mainly based on philology and etymology.⁷

A sound exegesis and a careful examination of the relevant passages are necessary.

II. EXEGESIS

The core of our research must be an exegetical study of the MY passages in the OT. We follow the order of the canonical books in the OT.

⁶Baumgartner, op. cit., p.241.

⁷Eichrodt calls this kind of approach a "missliche Sache", cf. Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd. II, 1935, pp.6ff; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1953, p.22; De Groot, Macht en Wil, p.75f; W.H. Bennet, Religion of Post-exilic Prophets, 1907. pp.138f; H. Gross, op. cit., p.28; von Rad, loc. cit., stresses on the necessity of starting from the "volkstümliche Bezeugung".

Gen.16:7-14 (J)

This is the first appearance of the MY recorded in the OT. It seems that Hagar in the beginning addressed him just like an ordinary human being. We notice some interesting points in the conversation:

1. the MY knows her name and her status as slave of Sarai (vs.8).
2. the MY knows her pregnancy, announces the birth of a son, decides the name of the child and knows the affliction of Hagar (vs.11).
3. he consoles her with the proclamation of the promise and blessings (vs.10).
4. he foretells the future of Ishmael (vs.12).

We see here that the MY is identified with Yahweh himself: in vs.10 the MY is the subject of the blessing and speaks with the authoritative "I"; in vs.13 is said that it was Yahweh who spoke to her and Hagar addressed the MY as "god" ('Elohim): "Thou art a God ('Elohim) of seeing ... Have I really seen God ('Elohim) and remained alive after seeing him?" The MY here speaks with such an authority and power that could only be ascribed to God. The story says that the MY appeared to Hagar, but to Hagar's conviction it was God himself, that is to say God in self-manifestation, who addressed

her.

On the other hand the MY is clearly distinguished from Yahweh: in vs.11b he speaks of Yahweh in the third person, "... because the Lord has given heed to your affliction."

Special attention should be paid to the translation of vs.13:

Vs.13a: יָסַךְ לִנְיָוּתָא , thou art a God of vision (manifestation). The RSV translates it as "thou art a God of seeing"; the AV: "thou God sees me", in accordance with the LXX and the Vulgate; qui vidisti me. יָסַךְ is a participium c. suffix of the verb יָסַךְ (= to see), thus it could be translated as "seeing me". But it could also mean a noun, i.e. "appearance, cf. Job 33:21.⁸ Hagar was conscious of the fact that God himself was speaking through this MY. Thus she called him "God of seeing", i.e. God who sees me, or if we use the second possible meaning it could be translated as "God of appearance", i.e. God who manifested himself and made himself visible through the MY.

Vs.13b:

This is difficult to interpret, hence it has been

⁸Cf. KB, p.864.

suggested: הָגַם הֵלֵם רָאִיתִי אַחֲרָי רָאִי

a. הָלֵם should be read as אֱלֹהִים and רָאִיתִי should be inserted before אַחֲרָי, so that it should be read as:

הָגַם אֱלֹהִים רָאִיתִי וְאַחֲרָי רָאִי.⁹

Thus the RSV translates it as: "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?"

b. Biblia Hebraica (ed. Kittel) suggests another reading:

הָגַם הֵלֵם רָאִיתִי אַחֲרָי אֵל רָאִי

"Have I also here looked after God that seeth [me]?"

(AV). It expresses Hagar's wonder at seeing Him who had seen her in her sorrows (cf. vs. 11). אַחֲרָי here is taken as a preposition, connected with the verb רָאִיתִי: "to look after" in the sense of "to follow with the eye".¹⁰ If we take אַחֲרָי in the temporal meaning, then the meaning of the AV translation in this place is rather obscure.

In both cases of conjectures the basic meaning, however, remains the same, i.e. expressing Hagar's wonder.

⁹J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels, 323f, 324 Al.; Ad. Ehrlich, Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel, Leipzig, 1908/14; O. Procksch, Die Genesis, 1924, ad loc. Cf. BH, ad loc. footnote.

¹⁰Cf. COD, p. 706.

It is true, as Stier said, that the traditional expression "to see God" in the ancient world had the metaphorical meaning of "to experience God's grace and help".¹¹ But from the expressed wonder of Hagar, the contents of the message and the name-giving to the place: בְּאֵר לַחַי רֵאִי, it could be assumed that it was more than a merely "experiencing God's grace". It was rather a theophany through the MY, as it was expressed in the name בְּאֵר לַחַי רֵאִי itself, which the RSV translates as "the well of one who sees and lives".¹²

Thus in this passage the MY is identified with Yahweh. It has often been objected that an ordinary messenger sometimes acts on behalf of the sender and that a messenger of God would obviously act as if he were God himself. Indeed this could happen and even the prophets sometimes could speak of God in the first person, "I", as if he were God himself, cf. Deut.29:5,6; Isa.22:19f; Jer.9:3,6. But it never happens that an

¹¹F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel, 1934, pp.38f.

¹²B. Davidson, in The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, 1956, ad.loc. said, that the etymological meaning of this name is "well of life of vision", i.e. life retained notwithstanding the vision of God; BDB, however, translates it as "well of the living One that seeth me", p.91; KB declares that the meaning of this name as well as that of בְּאֵר לַחַי רֵאִי is unexplained, p.864.

ordinary messenger or a prophet was addressed as "Yahweh" or "God".

We see this feature too in the story of Jacob at Penuel (Gen. 32:23-30). The "unknown man" is identified with God in vss. 26, 28, 29, 30. But on the other hand he is also distinguished from God: vs. 25, and also his whole external appearance and his wrestling clearly distinguished him from the God who was manifesting Himself in him.¹³

Thus the MY is more than ordinary messenger. He is here a special self-manifestation of Yahweh or a personification of the theophany.¹⁴

The form of the MY is not described here, but from the dialogue it may be concluded, that the MY appeared in ordinary human form. This human form of appearance seems to be the most obvious one, cf. Gen. 18; 19; and probably Gen. 28:10-17 and Gen. 32:23-30 (vide infra).

Gen. 18; 19:1-28 (J)

In this passage the name MY is not mentioned at

¹³vide exegesis on Gen. 32:23-30, pp. 116-121.

¹⁴Cf. Skinner, Genesis, ICC, pp. 286f;
G. Ch. Aalders, Genesis, deel III, KV, 1949, p. 28.

all. Yet it is clear from the beginning that this deals with a theophany. From the contents of this passage it is clear that the three visitors to Abraham were no ordinary men. Later on they are called הַמַּלְאָכִים (19:1,15).

In Gen.18:1 we read that Yahweh appeared to Abraham, but in the following verse when Abraham lifted up his eyes he saw just "three men" standing before him. According to eastern custom Abraham welcomed his guests with the greatest honour and hospitality. His way of greeting, however, does not necessarily mean adoration or worship.

The following conversation in Ch.18 between Abraham and them is interesting because of the alternation between singular and plural form employed in the narrative: vs.3: My Lord, if I have found favor in your sight ... (sing.); vs.4: ... and rest yourselves under the tree, ... (plur.); vs.5: So they said, "Do as you have said, ... (plur.); vs.9: they said to him, "Where is ... (plur.), LXX: *Εἶπεν δε προς αὐτον* ... (sing.) vs.10: He said, "I will surely return to you ... (sing.) Then suddenly in vss.13-15 it is Yahweh who speaks to Abraham and Sarah. Also after the visitors have left the house and Abraham with them, it is Yahweh who speaks to Abraham (vss.17,20,26,27, etc.) and stands

before him (vs.22).

That they were no ordinary men is evident from: vs.9: they knew Sarah as Abraham's wife; vs.10: the promise and assurance of the birth of a son; vs.13: He knew the reactions and the thoughts of Sarah.

Another peculiarity is the identification and the distinction of them with Yahweh: vs. 13: the speaker is called Yahweh; vs.14: he speaks of Yahweh in the third person; vs.17: again they are identified with Yahweh; vs.19: he speaks of Yahweh in the third person; vss. 20,21ff: they are identified with Yahweh.

A. R. Johnson observes here an oscillation as between Yahweh and the three (or at least two) "messengers", as between the singular and plural forms of reference, so that it is not clear whether the singular is a singular of individualization or that of a collective unit.¹⁵

In Ch.19 we see again the identification and the distinction between the two men (messengers) and Yahweh: vs.13: "... because the outcry against its people has become great before Yahweh, and Yahweh has sent us to destroy it". In 18:21 it is said, that Yahweh decided to go down to see Sodom for personal investigation.

¹⁵A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, sec.ed. 1961, p.34.

Thus in the following verse the mal'akhim went towards Sodom; and after the supplication of Abraham, Yahweh went his way to Sodom (18:33). But in 19:1 we read that the two mal'akhim came to Sodom. In 19:16 when Lot lingered to obey, the mal'akhim seized him and his family by the hand to save them, "Yahweh being merciful to him". The saving action of the two mal'akhim is identified with that of the merciful Yahweh! Here also the two mal'akhim act on their own initiative and not just as a "messenger", cf. vss. 10,11.

In 19:21,22 the two mal'akhim answer Lot's prayer with the authoritative "I": "Behold, I grant you this favor also ... Make haste, escape there ...". In the act of destruction the actions of the two mal'akhim are identified with the Lord's (cf. 19:13,22,24). They were sent by Yahweh to destroy, but the sequel shows that it was the Lord who rained brimstone on Sodom and it was Yahweh, who destroyed the cities (19:29) and there is no talk any more of the mal'akhim. On the other hand a distinction is made between the Lord who rained brimstone on Sodom and "the Lord out of heaven". Yahweh, represented in the mal'akhim on earth, rained brimstone and fire from heaven, which is the dwelling-place of the invisible and transcendent Yahweh. Thus it is clear that through these two mal'akhim Yahweh himself is the only Subject in

the dialogues (vss.17,21) as well as in the actions.¹⁶

If we compare this mal'akhim-appearance, which is called a theophany (18:1) and realized in the appearance of three or two "men", with the previous appearance of the MY in Gen.16, then we see remarkable similarities.

- a. the same outward appearance, i.e. as an ordinary human being; here they are called "mal'akhim".
- b. the same impression and reaction on human beings.
- c. the oscillation between identity with and distinction from Yahweh in both narratives.

In addition to that, we see here another important feature, i.e. the oscillation between the plural and the singular. Two questions then arise: a) were all the three mal'akhim angels and one of them was the MY or b) were they all angels representing the one Yahweh?

We notice that the three "men" acted together in plural, but on the other hand they acted in singular too. Gradually one of them seems to be the primus inter pares. But in Ch.19 we see Yahweh represented in the other

¹⁶"Es ist bezeichnend für den Glauben Israels, der letztlich überall doch nur Jahwe handelnd wusste und nicht irgendwelche Zwischenmächte (Am.3:6; Isa.45:7), dass am Höhepunkt des Geschehens doch Jahwe direkt und ohne Vermittlung redend und handelnd auftritt (Vss.17 und 21)"; cf. von Rad, Das erste Buch Mose, Genesis, ATD, 1956, ad loc.

mal'akhim too (19:19ff). Thus Delitzsch, Proksch, von Rad and others are of opinion that all the three or two mal'akhim are Yahweh himself in self-manifestation.¹⁷

It is not likely that one of them is the Primus inter pares, because they often acted as one corporate unity (18:5,9).¹⁸

The three or two mal'akhim represented Yahweh. That is why we have the same oscillation in both cases between the plural and the singular. Thus we can say that Yahweh went to Sodom (18:21) and at the same time stayed behind with Abraham (18:22). If the author was trying to describe simultaneous acts of Yahweh in different places, then he used more than one figure, each in its own way representing Yahweh.¹⁹

As a self-manifestation of Yahweh these three or two mal'akhim are essentially identical with the MY.

¹⁷Cf. Augustine's interpretation in Ch. II, pp. 14f.

¹⁸"Yahweh bleibt trotz dieser seiner Erscheinung einer", von Rad, *op. cit.* ad loc.

¹⁹W. H. Kusters, 'De Mal'ach Jahwe', in *ThT*, IX, 1875, pp. 369-415.

Gen.21:15 (E)

This elohistic narrative shows great similarities with the J narrative in Gen.16. Here the MY is called מְלַאךְ אֱלֹהִים and is also identical with the MY, as form of God's self-manifestation to Hagar.²⁰ The ME proclaimed the word of consolation because of the cry of Ishmael (= God hears). He started the conversation by putting a question. We see here also the identification of the ME with 'Elohim, cf. vs.18. On the other hand we see the distinction when the ME spoke of 'Elohim in the third person (vs.17). This might be influenced by the very name "Ishmael".²¹

Yet we have here to do with two sources, J and E, which represent two different traditions and maybe also different times; cf. Gen.22:12,16ff, also mainly E.

These E narratives give a slightly different picture of the ME from the MY passages in the J narratives. One of the remarkable differences is that the ME is no longer visible to human eyes (cf. vs.17; 22:11). This is due to the fact that the ME on the other hand is

²⁰ "Auch hier ist der "Engel Gottes" nichts anderes als eine Erscheinungsform Gottes selbst, durch die das Ich Jahwes die Menschen anredet (vgl. Vs.18b "ich will ihn machen"), von Rad, op. cit. ad loc.

²¹ O. Proksch, op. cit., ad loc.

identified with 'Elohim and as such considered as a transcendent figure. This feature is a refinement peculiar to E.²² For the rest there is no difference between the MY and the ME, as a form of God's self-manifestation.

The reaction of Hagar is not clear. The ME said, "Fear not!", which presumed that there was some fear in Hagar. The element of fear, as a result of a theophany is typical of the E narratives, which seems to have a more developed and transcendent conception of God than the J narratives. But here Hagar's fear was more likely caused by the trouble and the voice of the lad. It is therefore more likely that her fear was connected with the child's suffering than caused by hearing the MY's voice from heaven. In the following there is no indication either of Hagar's fear in this sense.

Even in these E narratives the problem of the ME remains the same.

Gen.22:9-19 (mainly E)

According to some scholars Gen.22:1-14,19 is ascribed to E²³ and Gen.22:15-18 to a redactor R^{JE},

²²Cf. Skinner, op.cit., ad loc; Gunkel, op.cit. ad loc.

²³ von Rad, Proksch, in their respectively cited works; H. Gunkel, Genesis, HKAT, 1901, ad loc.

because of the expression אֲנִי יְהוָה which is not considered pentateuchic.²⁴ This narrative is a literary masterpiece of the elohistic collection. One difficulty in this theory is the use of the term MY in the so-called elohistic vers.11. This might be a redactional accommodation to vs.15.²⁵

Here again we see the MY interfering at the most critical moment. Abraham heard the voice of the MY from heaven (vss.11,15) and when Abraham lifted up his eyes he saw a ram. Abraham knew that this ram was given to him by God's providence; thus he went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt-offering.

F. Stier suggests three possibilities for the explanation of this authoritative divine "I":

1. the word "mal'akh" is an interpolation for the word "Yahweh", so that the words of Yahweh now become Mal'akh's words.
2. it could be caused by ellipsis, the omission, e.g. of: "... in order that you know that [really, what Yahweh said, is true, namely:] I am Yahweh, your God."
3. it could also be the abridged form of a messenger's

²⁴Cf. Proksch, op. cit., ad loc.

²⁵Cf. Skinner, op. cit., ad loc.

speech, which was the customary ancient eastern style. Thus the messenger-angel in Gen.22:11, in bringing the message, could speak as if he were God himself in the direct speech, omitting the words "Thus saith the Lord".²⁶

The first solution is a mere literary hypothesis, based on an arbitrary interpolation by some unknown redactor. This cannot be considered satisfactory. Nor is the second solution any more convincing. The third suggested solution indeed happens with human messengers sent out to carry a particular message. But in such cases the mission is always clearly described.²⁷ Here the mission of the MY by Yahweh is hardly ever mentioned.

And he called the name of the place יהוה יראה , which means "Yahweh will provide or see". The vss.15-18 are probably appended by a Jahwistic redactor. The place and order of this part is rather odd, as vss.1-14, 19 seem to be one elohistic entity. With the usual name-giving and the traditional name of that place mentioned in vs.14 we can expect that the narrative has ended.

²⁶Cf. F. Stier, op. cit., pp.16-18.

²⁷This is the case in the parallels quoted by Stier; cf. Stier, op. cit., p.26.

But in the following verse the MY called again for the second time using the typical word for prophetic inspiration in later times: יהוה דם and the strong "anthropomorphical" divine oath, which is uncommon for the MY in this early patriarchal period. Skinner said that "the occasion seemed to a Jehovistic redactor to demand an ampler reward than the sparing of Isaac".²⁸

Gen.24:7,40 (J)

In this chapter there is no talk of the MY as such. In vs.7 Abraham promises his servant that:

יהוה אלהי...ישלח מלאכו לפניך

Who is this מלאכו? According to the biblical narratives it was always the MY who interfered in his own life and his family's life (vide supra: Gen.16; 18; 19; 21; 22). And now, at the end of his life, it is quite obvious that he associates this מלאכו with the same MY, whom he knows so well in his life. As usual, this MY interfered at the most important moments of his life (cf. vs.3). Thus this solemn promise is accompanied by "a swear by the Lord", based on the Covenant (vss.3,7,9).²⁹

²⁸ Skinner, op. cit., ad loc.

²⁹ Contrast Stier, op. cit., p.60.

The word לְפָנֶיךָ means "before you" or "in front of you". This means here that the task of the MY is not to accompany him at every step on his journey. This was not necessary as the purpose, the direction, and the place of destination had been clearly described by Abraham. The task of the MY was rather to lead him to the appointed woman for Isaac, or here in particular to arrange the meeting of the servant with the appointed woman (vss.14ff). From his prayer (vss.12-15) it seems that he was unaware of the presence of the MY as such, although he knew that he could trust in Yahweh's guidance and blessing. Thus it seems that the MY was mysteriously active "on the other side", i.e. among Rebekah, Laban, and his family. No description is given about the way of His activity among them, but the results are evident.³⁰

Thus ex eventu his servant, in reciting Abraham's words, could say, "The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you, אִתְּךָ, and prosper your way ..." (vs.40). This is slightly different from what has actually been said by Abraham himself in vs.7.

The MY here could be considered as the self-manifestation of Yahweh, in his special guidance towards

³⁰Cf. Kusters, op. cit., p.392; II Kgs.19:34,35.

Abraham and his descendent.

Gen.28:10-17 (JE)

According to the source theory this passage originally was composed of two sources J and E (Gunkel, von Rad, Proksch); vss.10-12,17 is said derived from E; vss.13-16 derived from J.³¹

In this passage the MY is not mentioned, but it is clear that we have to do with a theophany: God himself appeared to Jacob in his dream and spoke to him (vss.13ff). The theophany is pictured as follows:

- a ladder whose top reached to heaven
- angels of 'elohim were ascending and descending on it
- Yahweh himself stood above it or "beside him".³²

In the E narratives a number of מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים , as the self-manifestation of 'Elohim (cf.Gen.35:7), is mentioned. It is remarkable that in the OT the plural noun מַלְאָכֵי is always connected with אֱלֹהִים , but never connected with יְהוָה in this kind of expression. Thus in Gen.32:2 (MT vs.3) the word מַמְנֶה , which means

³¹"Der Traum ist jetzt eine meisterhafte Kombination von ursprünglich zwei nächtlichen Offenbarungen, n.l. der Himmelsleiter (Vs.12) und der einer Yahwehmanifestation (Vs.13ff)", von Rad, op. cit., ad loc.

³²Cf. footnote RSV ad loc.

"hosts", is connected with אֱלֹהִים, and not with צְבָאוֹת. The fact that the one God, 'Elohim, manifests himself in a plurality of angels is not surprising. The name אֱלֹהִים itself is a plural and means literally "gods", e.g. Ex.20:3; but is very often used to denote one single God, Yahweh. In Gen.1:26 a plural verb is used, "Let us make man in our image", says 'Elohim. But this does not mean that the expression originally had a polytheistic meaning in the Hebrew religion, because in almost all other verses אֱלֹהִים is considered as one single entity, and on the other hand even for יהוה a plural verb is sometimes used, e.g. Gen.11:7; Isa.6:8. Concerning the use of this word 'elohim for God, Rowley says,

In the great majority of its occurrences, however, it is rendered God, and refers to the Israelite deity. Of itself, therefore, its use neither demands nor excludes a monotheistic view. It is probable that the term took its rise in a polytheistic milieu, but in the most ancient text of the Bible it is already used of a single God, and is construed with a singular verb. 33)

There is a unity in plurality and a plurality in unity in this 'Elohim idea. Generally speaking it is not uncommon in the Israelite God idea to include the

³³H.H. Rowley, Faith of Israel, 1956, pp.50f.

בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים , the sons of God, who were surrounding His throne, forming the heavenly Council of Yahweh, e.g. in Jer.23:18; Pss.82:1; 89:7; Isa.6; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7 etc.³⁴ This "council of Yahweh" is, however, quite different from the idea of a "pantheon".

Characteristic of this E narrative are the ladder, denoting the distance between heaven and earth, and the way of manifestation in the form of a dream at night, and the expression of "Gate of Heaven".³⁵

Let us look at the J narrative in this passage: vs.13: "And behold, the Lord stood above it and said..." The words "above it" is in Hebrew עָלָיו; it could be translated as "beside him".³⁶ Yahweh manifested himself to Jacob in a dream (cf. vs.16) and proclaimed his promise and his blessings. J did not mention the form of appearance in which Yahweh appeared here. But according to the previous passages and the way of appearance we can assume here that the MY is the form of Yahweh's self-manifestation. Moreover the verb נָסָה for the Lord in vs.13 suggests a certain human appearance of the Lord.

³⁴Cf. H.W. Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh", in JTS, XLV, 1944, pp.151-57.

³⁵Cf. von Rad, op. cit., ad loc.

³⁶Cf. footnote RSV, ad loc.

It seems that a redactor has coupled these two narratives together as one story. 'Elohim and Yahweh then denote the same and the one God of Israel. Thus from this passage we can conclude that the angels mentioned here were the self-manifestation of 'Elohim himself, who spoke to Jacob; and 'Elohim is identified with Yahweh.³⁷

Though the name MY is not mentioned here, probably due to the uniting of the two sources, we may see here the plurality of angels, as a form of God's self-manifestation, and the MY as essentially the same.

It is worth while to look at Gen.31:11-13 in this connection. There Jacob told his experiences to his wives. It was the מלאך הַאֱלֹהִים (vs.11) who said to him in a dream, " ... I am הָאֵל בֵּיתְךָ לַלַּיְלָה , where you anointed a pillow and made a vow to me". (vs.13). It is clear

³⁷ Proksch's interpretation on this locus is that the מלאכי אלהים are completely different beings from the מלאך יחור in Gen.21:17. They are supposed to be mythical beings from different origin and are mentioned in the book of Job as בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים , which were closely connected with the stars. These מלאכי אלהים are dumb and could be considered as synonymous with the Arabian demons (jinns); cf. O. Proksch, *Die Genesis*, 1924, ad loc. There are, however, objections to this hypothesis. The מלאכי אלהים cannot be identified with or derived from the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים in this early period. In the latter angelology in Israel these בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים indeed became more active and played the role of angelic messengers. But they are different from the arabian "jinns", vide Ch.VII, par.I.

that this last verse is referring to Gen.28:13ff. Thus the MhE is, according to this text, identical with the Deity who manifested himself to Jacob. בֵּית-אֱלֹהִים is probably not merely a place name, but the name of a deity worshipped in Canaan and probably identified by the Hebrews with Yahweh. E.G. Kraeling, in his book The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri, 1953, pp.88f, has cited evidences to this drawn from the 5th century Aramaic Papyri as well as from OT passages, such as Jer.48:13; Am.3:14ff; 5:5; Hos.10:3 etc.

Parallel to this we see also the מִלְאָכִי הָאֱלֹהִים in Gen.32:2,3 (E) as the self-manifestation of 'Elohim, symbolizing the presence and guidance of God to Jacob, especially at this time when he was afraid to meet his brother Esau, whom he had deceived.

Gen.31:11-13 (E)

Jacob was explaining to his wives, Rachel and Lea, about the self-manifestation of God he saw in his dream. The Angel here is called מִלְאָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים and declared himself as הָאֱלֹהִים בֵּית-אֱלֹהִים. He is also identified with Yahweh in Gen.28:13 (vide supra). In Gen.28 it is Yahweh who promised, "Behold I am with you and keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land." (vs.15). This promise was realized in Gen.31:3,11-13, but here it is

the MY who is speaking, " ... for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you ... Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth." (vss.12,13). Rachel also saw in him not less than God himself; cf. vs.16b. The appearance-form of the MhE is not mentioned here, probably it is a human form. Thus from these passages (Gen.28; 31) we find the one God of Israel described as MhE (31:11), as 'El Bethel (31:13), as Yahweh (28:13f; 31:3), as 'Elohim (28:17; 31:5), as Yahweh-'Elohim (28:20) and even as the Mal'akhei 'Elohim (28:12).

Gen. 32:2,3 (E)

In this fragment of the Jacob tradition the מִלְאָכֵי מֵתִים "met" (Hebr.: מִלְאָכֵי מֵתִים) Jacob on his way back to Canaan. The Hebr. verb פָּגַע employed here, means "to meet with a special purpose" (e.g. Ex.5:20; 23:4; I Sam. 10:5; Am.5:19; Num.35:19,21); either to encounter with hostility (e.g. Jos.2:16; Ex.5:3; Jgs.8:21, etc.) or to meet with kindness and favour (e.g. Isa.64:5) or to meet with request, to entreat (Jer.7:16; Job 21:15, etc.).³⁸ Here it means to meet with a favourable intention, i.e. to confirm him of God's guidance and presence.

³⁸Cf. BDB, p.803; KB, p.751.

Jacob saw them and exclaimed, "This is God's army!" (Hebr.: מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים). This confirmation of God's guidance and presence was the fulfillment of what had been promised before, cf. Gen. 28:15; 31:13b). Proksch said that the words מִלֶּאכֶי אֱלֹהִים were originally just אֱלֹהִים and מִלֶּאכֶי is a later interpolation.³⁹ If this assumption is true, then according to the redactor, who generally did not like to change the meaning of the words, מִלֶּאכֶי אֱלֹהִים has presumably the same basic meaning as אֱלֹהִים or in other words מִלֶּאכֶי אֱלֹהִים is considered as the self-manifestation of אֱלֹהִים.⁴⁰

Jacob called the name of the place Mahanaim, which according to Skinner rather means "camp of gods", than the dual meaning "two armies".⁴¹ This name is given in connection with the vision of the מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים, because God manifested himself in the plurality of angels encamping there; cf. also II Kgs. 6:15-17; Ps. 34:7.

Gen. 32:23-30 (JE); Hos. 12:3,4.

Most scholars consider this passage originally

³⁹Proksch, op.cit., ad loc.

⁴⁰Vide supra exegesis on Gen. 28:10-17.

⁴¹Skinner, op. cit., ad loc.

consisted of two independent sources from J and E; the story itself seems to be a very ancient one.⁴²

Jacob wrestled with an unknown mysterious "man" until the breaking of the day (vs.24). Who is this "man"? That he was not an ordinary man appears from: vs. 26: Jacob insisted on a blessing from him

vs.28: He changed Jacob's name into Israel, "for you have striven with God ('Elohim) ..."

vs.29: He refused to tell his own name. The reason for this was ~~because~~ he was identified with אֱלֹהִים (vs.28) and also Jacob afterwards identified him as such (vs.30).

vs.30: the namegiving of the place by Jacob and his explanation to it.

Now אֱלֹהִים itself could mean: God or a superhuman being or a divine being. According to this, various interpretations have been suggested for אֱלֹהִים in this verse.

This kind of narrative is now generally accepted as originally an aetiological myth. N. Schmidt considers the unknown wrestler as the river-god Jabbok, with Penuel as his shrine.⁴³ Jacob himself was originally supposed

⁴²Cf. Gunkel, von Rad, op.cit., ad loc.

⁴³According to Schmidt this view is also adhered to by: Fraser, Bennett, Gunkel and Kittel; cf. N. Schmidt, "The Hymen of Penuel", in JBL, 45-46, 1926-27.

N/

to possess superhuman powers. He says,

While the figure of Jacob is gradually stripped of other supernatural elements and becomes purely human, the consciousness that the numen of Penuel is not to be forthwith identified with the supreme deity of a more advanced faith finds expression in the later exegesis which sees in him an angel, a phantom, or an international being like the logos. 44)

Another interpretation which is common among the Jewish interpreters, considers this combatant as "the angel of Esau", who strove with Jacob for the validation of his birthright. This is unlikely, if we compare the attitude of Esau at the meeting (33:4ff). The alleged argument here, that Jacob in 33:10 said to Esau, "... for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God", could justify the assumption that Esau himself was once regarded as the numen appearing at Penuel, cannot be accepted. The preposition כִּי (in כִּרְאֵת) prevents this expression from being taken literally. It expresses Jacob's joy in meeting his brother and it denotes the highest praise towards his brother; cf. I Sam.29:9; II Sam.14:17,20; 19:27. Moreover the idea of a personal guardian angel was unfamiliar in this patriarchal time.

To take this story as a mere allegory, representing

⁴⁴Schmidt, op. cit., pp.269f.

"not a struggle of the body but that in which the soul engages with its antagonists, fighting against the passions and the vices",⁴⁵ cannot be justified either, as the context or other references do not show any indication towards this kind of interpretation.

A modern psychological approach tries to explain this struggle "as a case of incubation, induced by the obstruction of the organs of respiration, producing a vivid dream of a struggle".⁴⁶ There is no indication at all that Jacob's experience was just a dream or a nightmare. On the other hand vs. 31 suggests that Jacob indeed underwent the concrete effect of the struggle. In this connection also we have to reject the view, which says that Jacob's struggle was "a struggle in intense prayer".

X The term אֱלֹהִים in the sense of a demon or a "jinn" is never used in the OT.⁴⁷ Moreover the prophet Hosea identified the "man" of this passage with the מַלְאָךְ, but at the same time he said that Jacob strove with אֱלֹהִים

⁴⁵Philo, Leg. alleg. III, 190, ed. Cohn; mentioned by Schmidt, op. cit., p.264.

⁴⁶W. Roscher, "Ephialtes" in Abh. d. phil.-hist. Classe d.k. sächsischen Ges. d. Wissenschaften, XX, no.2, 1906; mentioned by Schmidt, op. cit., p.263.

⁴⁷Cf. quotation in Rowley, *vide supra*, p.111.

i.e. the Lord Yahweh, יהוה מלך יְהוָה is his name (Hos.12:2-6). Thus מְלֹכִים is applied to the holy God of Israel.⁴⁸

These texts of Hosea undoubtedly refer to Jacob's struggle and are a later adaptation of the older JE narrative, with a few differences, which indicate a more advanced stage: a) the mentioning of מְלֹכִים (vs.4); b) the order of the historical facts in these verses is different; c) in vs.4b it is said, "... and there God spoke with him (עָמָו).⁴⁹ On the other hand we see the following parallel in vss.3 and 4: "and in his manhood he strove with מְלֹכִים. He strove with מְלֹכִים and prevailed, ...". The מְלֹכִים is here identified with מְלֹכֵי הַקָּדוֹשִׁים and as such it can only be understood in the sense of מְלֹכֵי הַקָּדוֹשִׁים or מְלֹכֵי יְהוָה.⁵⁰ This idea fits entirely in the Genesis passage (Ch.32) and illuminates what is still obscure there. Although this story might originally function as an aetiological myth, Hosea seems to see it in a wider horizon and interpreted with some

⁴⁸cf. Exegesis on Gen.28:10-17; 31:11-13, vide supra. cf. also A.R. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p.32.

⁴⁹According to LXX and Pesitto: עָמָו; the MT reads: עָמָו "with us"; this can only be understood in the sense of corporate personality: God spoke to "us", as the descendents of Jacob, through Jacob.

⁵⁰Keil, Ridderbos, Bleeker, cf. van Gelderen and W.H. Gispen, *Het. Boek Hosea*, 1953, ad loc.

"theological" reflection.

Gen.48:15.16 (E)

This blessing of Jacob reminds us of the Aaronic benediction in Num.6:24ff, where the name of the Lord is invoked three times. The meaning in Jacob's blessing here is clear: that God may bless the sons of Joseph.

Three attributes are used here:

vs.15a: The God (הַאֱלֹהִים) before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked.

vs.15b: "The God (הַאֱלֹהִים) who has led me (הִרְעָה) who shepherded, cf. BDB, ad loc.) all my life..."; the Hebr. verb רעה means "to pasture", "to tend", "to lead", and from this verb is derived the noun רֹעֶה, means "shepherd".

vs.16: "The Angel who has redeemed me (הַגֹּאֵל) from all evil ...". The Hebr. verb גאל means "to redeem" and from this verb is derived the noun גֹּאֵל, means "redeemer".⁵¹

These attributes are not only illustrations, but give a description of the living God, who manifested himself and intervened in the history and life of men.

von Rad remarks in this connection:

⁵¹Yahweh is called גֹּאֵל, (cf. Isa.41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4, etc.)

... vielmehr, steht hinter dieser uralten kultischen Stilform eine ganz bestimmte Auffassung von Gott und allem Reden über Gott. Diese Prädikationen wollen die Gottheit identifizieren und ihren Offenbarung nach präzisieren. 52)

Thus we see here a magnificent climax in these attributes of God:⁵³

- a. the first expression denotes the relationship with the past forefathers: it was the same one and the living God, i.e. the Covenant God (אלהים).
- b. it was אלהים who led Jacob personally all his life, like a shepherd his flock!
- c. it was the מלך who redeemed from all evil (מכל-רע).
He is the Redeemer.

It is remarkable that just the climax אלהים is replaced by מלך ⁵⁴, i.e. the God, who had manifested himself in the מלך , the Covenant God of Israel, who kept Israel as a Shepherd. According to Skinner the passages in Jacob's life where an angel or angels intervene (28:11ff; 31:11; 32:2f) all belong to the source E.⁵⁵ That is why אלהים is mentioned here too. Also according

⁵² von Rad, op. cit., ad loc.

⁵³ Contrast Gunkel, who thought of an anti-climax here; cf. Gunkel, op. cit., ad loc.

⁵⁴ Cf. also Hos.12:3b,4a.

⁵⁵ Cf. Skinner, op. cit., ad loc.

to the Hebrew parallelism in literary style these expressions denote one and the same idea. Thus the conclusion is, that this "angel" cannot be an ordinary angel or a guardian angel, but it is the ME or MY, who is actually God himself.

Ex.3:1-6 (JE)

This passage has been compiled from J (vss.1a,2,3,4a,5) and E (vss.1b,4b,6). At the beginning of Moses' call story, the MY appeared again, but not, as it was customary, in a human appearance. He appeared in the wilderness at the mountain of God (Horeb), in (or, as) a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. In connection with this theophany Yahweh is called "him that dwelt in the bush" (Deut.33:16b). This does not necessarily imply a tree cult (cf. Deut.12:3; II Kgs.23:14). The element of fire is here the particular means of appearance, not the bush itself. To attract Moses' attention this fire put itself amidst the bush, burning but not consuming.

Here is a new form of appearance of the MY, not as a visible human being, as was the case in the patriarchal narratives. We notice here that the MY only appears in vs.2. In the following verses Yahweh himself or 'Elohim is the subject, seeing and speaking from the bush.

Once Moses' attention has been attracted and his interest centres upon the personal address, only Yahweh or 'Elohim is mentioned. Great fear filled Moses' heart as he knew that he stood before God. The MY appeared - and Yahweh saw and spoke. The MY and Yahweh are here homogeneously interwoven one with the other, that it is not possible to separate them.

The MY is here a manifestation of Yahweh himself, appearing in the form of a flame of fire; cf. Ps.104:2a; Deut.4:12,15,33,36; 5:24,26; 9:10; 10:4 etc. In this form of manifestation presumably, the MY executes the saving and delivering acts in the Elisha passage in II Kgs. 6:15-18.

Ex.14:19,20 (JE)

The division of sources is apparently as follows:

- vs.19a - E "Then the Angel of God (מַלְאָךְ הַאֱלֹהִים) who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them;
- vs.20a - E "coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel.
- vs.19b - J "and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them."
- vs.20b - J "And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night."

Thus according to E, it was the מַלְאָךְ הַאֱלֹהִים who led the Israelites in the desert. He was the self-

manifestation of God in human appearance, when God revealed himself to men and especially when God interfered in Israel's affairs to express His presence and help.⁵⁶ Apparently E liked to use this expression to avoid crude anthropomorphic way of speaking about God.

According to J (cf. 13:20,21), Yahweh went before Israel in a pillar of cloud and fire. This pillar was also a form of Yahweh's self-manifestation and presence. Now this cloud moved and stood behind Israel, creating darkness between both hosts. But according to 13:20,21 this cloud means for Israel at night a cloud of fire, so that the Israelites could continue their escape, crossing the Red Sea. This miracle reminds us of the ninth plague (Ex.10; 22,23).

A redactor combined these two sources as he knew that J and E actually represented the same truth and idea. Thus the MhE stands in parallelism with the cloud and fire; both represented God and contained in themselves the divine essence and presence. God himself acted through the Mal'akh or the cloud. From the parallelism here the conclusion can be made that the MhE or the

⁵⁶ Cf. M. Noth, Das zweite Buch Mose, ATD 2/4, 1959, pp.163f.

MY was also present in the cloud of fire.⁵⁷ That this phenomenon is not unlikely is proved in Ex.3:2; 34:5; cf. also Ps.99:7; Ex.33:9-12; Num.12:5; Deut.31:15; in Ex.40:38 it is called אֲנִי עָנָן which means "the cloud in which Yahweh himself is present" (if we take it in the genitivus objectivus); cf. also Num.:10:34. At the end of his life, when Moses reviewed God's acts and reminded the people beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, he mentioned twice about "god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live" (Deut.4:33,36). It is very likely that he was referring to the fiery theophany of Yahweh, i.e. the pillar of fire, during the exodus, when Yahweh was supposed to be present in the MY.

Ex.23:20-23 (R^D)⁵⁸

Verse 20 marks the beginning of the last part of the Covenant book. In this verse we see the word אֲנִי (without article). R. Smend denoted, that "die Artikellosigkeit einfach daraus zu verstehen, dass der Mal'akh Yahweh, in dem Yahweh selbst ist, eigentlich

⁵⁷Cf. W.H. Gispen, Het Boek Exodus, I, KV, 1939, ad loc.

⁵⁸Cf. A.H. McNeile, The Book of Exodus, WC, 1931, ad loc.; M.Noth, op. cit., V, ATD, ad loc.

unpersönlich ist".⁵⁹ In some other older translations, however, we see it connected with the possessive pronoun "my" (Sam. Pentateuch, Vulgata, LXX: *τον ἀγγελον μου*). Indeed in vs.23 this angel is called *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה*, by the Lord God. That this *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה* is not an ordinary angel, but a manifestation of God, appears from vs.21: Israel had to pay the same honour and obedience to the Angel as to Yahweh. The Angel had the authority to forgive sins or not to forgive transgressions. The Name of the Lord was in him (*שְׁמִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ*), which means that God himself was present in him. The "name" means "the fulness of my Being".⁶⁰ It manifests the totality of the divine personality and presence. E. Jacob said about the significance of "name":

The name is synonymous with Yahweh: Job 1:21; Deut.28:58; Isa.48:9; Ezek.20:44; Am.2:7. The "shem-Yahweh" is at the one hand Yahweh himself, and on the other hand his substitute in which he shows his reality and by which he is able to accompany the people without abandoning his transcendence (Ex.23:19ff).⁶¹

We see here the specific significance of "name" in the Israelite thinking. A name contains more than

⁵⁹R. Smend, Lehrbuch der Alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte, 1893, pp.43f.

⁶⁰Cf. McNeille, op. cit., p.144.

⁶¹E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, 1958, p.82.

can be obtained from the etymological analysis. There is a mysterious identification between the Name and the Name-bearer. For the Israelite the Name of God indeed stood for the essential being of God, as far as it had been manifested. The Hebrew has no sufficient word for abstract essential being. Thus in the third commandment of the decalogue God spoke, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." Even in Isa. 30:27 we read, "Behold, the Name of the Lord comes from far ..." and in Isa. 48:9, "For my Name's sake I defer my anger ...".

The interpretation of F. Stier concerning שְׁמִי בְּקִרְבִּי in this verse is hard to accept. He says,

semi beqirbô wäre dann im Sinne von "mein Wesen (als Inbegriff meiner ethischen Eigenschaften) ist in ihm" oder "ich bin in ihm" gemeint. Dies nicht im Sinne einer persönlichen Gegenwart Jahwes im Engel, sondern im Sinne einer moralischen Einheit der gleichen Gesinnung. 62)

It is clear from the use of the "name" of Yahweh in the above mentioned verses, that the "name" comprises far more than a wholeness of ethical attributes of the name-bearer. In the thought of the ancient Near East there was a certain coalescence between a person's name and the person himself, and in a way identical with

⁶²F. Stier, op. cit., p.64

him.⁶³

Verse 22: "But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak ..." (AV). In itself it would be possible to think of two different subjects here, but, as Gispén remarks,⁶⁴ the two verbs "to obey" (or "to hearken attentively") and "to do" are so closely connected with and supplementing each other, that it is natural to think of the rich promise that God himself will be present in his Angel.

The same kind of phrase happens in vs.23: "When my angel goes before you, ... and I blot them out, ...". The protecting act of the angel is identified with the act of Yahweh himself.

On the other hand the Angel is clearly distinguished from Yahweh: vs.20, "Behold, I send an (my) angel ...". There is a "sender - sent" relationship, cf. Num.20:16.

Thus we see that the angel here, which is called מַלְאָכִי is the same מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה displaying the peculiar

⁶³Cf. The Egyptian Excretion Texts, ANET, p.328; H. and H.A. Frankfort, "Myth and Reality", in Before Philosophy (ed. H. Frankfort and others), 1959, p.21; for the identification of the Name and the Name-bearer in Egyptian myths, vide ANET, p.7; for the Name as an element of personality and of power, vide ANET, pp.12f.

⁶⁴Cf. W.H. Gispén, Het Boek Exodus, Deel II, KV, ad loc.; B. Baentsch, Exodus, HKAT, 1903, ad loc.

oscillation between the identification with and the distinction from God.

Ex. 32:34 (R^{JTE})

"But now go, lead the people to [+ the place: LXX and Targum] which I have spoken to you, "Behold, my angel shall go before you."

Notice that the word "the place" is omitted in MT and has been inserted in the LXX and the Targum. The phrase "Behold my angel shall go before you", has been regarded as a later insertion of a redactor.⁶⁵

This verse must be taken in connection with the crucial question of Moses in the following Ch. 33:12. This question would be not only superfluous, but contradictory as well, if we do not consider the phrase, "behold, my angel shall go before you", in Ch. 32:34 and the same phrase in 33:2 as a later interpolation (R^{JTE}). It is clear that these passages refer to the promise given in Gen. 22:15-18; 26:2-5; 28:13-15; Ex. 3:8; 23:20-23. In those verses it is evident that מִלְאָכִי (Ex. 23:20; cf. 33:2) is identical with מִלְאָכִי (Ex. 23:23; cf. 32:34) and this latter is identical with מִלְאָכִי יְהוָה (Gen. 22:15-18), which is in turn identified with מִלְאָכִי

⁶⁵ Cf. Noth, op. cit., ad loc.; Baentsch, op. cit., ad loc.

(Gen.26:2-5; 28:13-15). Thus the most likely solution is indeed to consider the phrases in Ex.32:34 and Ex. 33:2, "behold, my angel ... you", as a later interpolation of a redactor, not as a renewed promise added to the previous ones, but as an elucidating apposition to the word "the land of which ... saying." in Ex.33:2 and to the word "place" in Ex.32:34.

Num.22 (mainly J)

From vs.22 onwards we see the MY sometimes identified with Yahweh again. In vs.31 Yahweh is distinguished from the MY: "Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way". On the other hand Balaam paid a divine honour to the MY; he bowed his head and fell on his face.⁶⁶

In vs.34 Balaam humbly confessed his sins and submitted himself to the will of the Mal'akh.

In vs.35 the MY says to him, "... but only the word which I bid you, that shall you speak." In vs.38

⁶⁶This act in itself does not necessarily mean worship towards God; it rather denotes special obeisance or homage to a king or to Yahweh. In the latter case it means indeed an act of worship, (cf. Jos.5:14; 7:6,10; I Sam.25:41; II Sam.9:6; 14:4,22; Ezek.1:28; 9:8; 11:13; 44:4 etc.). From the following verses it is evident that Balaam, though he was in a furious mood (cf. vs.27), submitted himself to his "opponent" and considered him as a divine being. Apparently Balaam knew beforehand who the MY was.

he says to Balak, "... the words that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak."

When Balaam expected God's word, he said, "... perhaps the Lord will come to meet me." (23:3). And indeed in vs.4 God (in vs.16: the Lord) met Balaam. This meeting of Yahweh (or 'Elohim) with Balaam is connected with the previous passages about the theophany in the MY, who "met" him on his way. Thus it is very likely that God here met Balaam through the figure of the MY.

One other peculiar feature of the Mal'akh is that his presence was not necessarily directly visible to human eyes, but the effect of his presence was perceptible. God had to open the eyes of Balaam first before he could see the MY. And then he saw the MY standing like a warrior with a drawn sword in his hand (22:31). The distinction shown in this verse does not necessarily mean that the MY is "eine geschöpfliche Grosse", as is suggested by Stier.⁶⁷

Jos. 5:13-15

The name MY is not mentioned here. But from the similar features we can conclude that in fact we have

⁶⁷Stier, op. cit., p.29.

to do with the same MY. This passage shows some similarities with Ex.3:2,4, viz. Moses standing on the holy ground, because of the theophany; with Num.22:23, viz. the "man" with the drawn sword in his hand; and also with the fact that Joshua fell on his face and worshipped. This "man" called himself שָׂרָא יְהוָה . This name reminds us to the name יְהוָה שָׂרָא . Is there any connection between these two?

Firstly, we have to find out what שָׂרָא means. Does it mean "the host of angels"? Koehler finds that this interpretation is "groundless, for there is little systematic angelology in the Old Testament and what is there is late".⁶⁸ Indeed, the revelation about the angels, as God's messengers, is still very scanty in this early period.⁶⁹ But it cannot be denied that there were such heavenly spirits which were different from men, e.g. the Cherubim. But about these we do not know much either what the early Israelites meant by these beings.

Does it mean "the host of stars"? The stars sometimes were considered as belonging to God's army, e.g. Jgs.5:20. They were also connected by other peoples

⁶⁸L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, p.50.

⁶⁹Cf. BDB, p.839, saying: "the thought of angels and stars as army of God is later."

with "gods". Thus Koehler believes, that this expression can be considered as a revelation to repudiate the heathen belief that the stars were gods; to polemize against the spread of the cult of stars and of spirits, which were thought to animate them.

⁷⁰This interpretation is possible, but it is rather too limited and unlikely in this present connection. It is not the challenge of heathen beliefs that matters here, but the conquest of Jericho. The host of heaven is usually called כָּל צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם (Deut. 4:19; 17:2; II Kgs. 17:16; 21:3,5 etc.) The same objection can be raised against the interpretation of צְבָאוֹת as "mythical nature-powers of Canaan deprived of their potency".⁷¹

The most probable interpretation is that צְבָאוֹת is a plural of intensity, embracing all powers in heaven and on earth.⁷² צְבָא can indicate a particular host of army. Thus צְבָא יְהוָה can be best interpreted in our present context as "the army of Israel", which is the general accepted view. שָׂר here denotes also a military rank: captain or general.⁷³

⁷⁰Cf. Koehler, op. cit., p.50.

⁷¹Maag, v. Schweizerische Theol. Umschau, 1950, pp.27ff, mentioned by Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.150 footn.2.

⁷²Cf. Vriezen, op. cit., p.150.

⁷³Cf. BDB, p.978.

According to Jacob the expression יהוה צבאות is found in historical books in connection with the "Ark of Covenant", e.g. II Sam. 6:2,18; 7:2,8,26-27; I Chron. 17:7. The ark was originally a palladium of war (Num. 10:35). The association of Yahweh Tseba'oth with the armies of Israel is moreover formally stated in I Sam. 17:45: יהוה צבאות אֵלֵהי מַעֲרֻכֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל and מַעֲרֻכֹת always denotes armies arranged for battle.⁷⁴ Indeed we see here the Commander of the Lord's army, who appeared to Joshua at the eve of the "battle" of Jericho, is connected with the ark of the Covenant. As the almighty Lord of the universe, he is Lord of Israel's army too.⁷⁵ He outlined his "strategy" and ordered it to Joshua. Joshua as the leader of Israel, had to obey and addressed Him as "my Lord" and he called himself as "his servant". In His strategy the Ark of the Covenant occupied a central place; it was considered as the symbol of God's presence among Israel. So in this passage the expression "the army of the Lord" can be referred to Israel's army, fighting its way to the promised land, cf. also Jgs.5:4, 23,31.

It is very likely that the conversation in Jos.5:

⁷⁴Jacob, op. cit., p.55.

⁷⁵Cf. Ex. 13:21,22; 23:20-23, etc.

13-15 is continued again in 6:2ff, "And [Hebr.:⁻¹] the Lord said to Joshua ...". This ⁻¹ at the beginning of the sentence usually denotes that the following sentences are still connected with the previous one. The Lord himself is also subject in the following verses. Thus the Commander is identified with Yahweh or we can say that he is Yahweh's visible self-manifestation.⁷⁶ If so, then the Commander of the army of the Lord is actually the same MY, who led Israel rescuing from Egypt and who drove away the Hittites ... (Ex.3:8; 23:20-23).

The warrior-like appearance with the drawn sword (cf. Num.22; 23) of the MY is to be understood in connection with the war situation and Joshua's function at this particular time as a warrior. Here again we see the variation in the appearance of the MY.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Cf. BDB, p.839, the שר זכא יהוה is said to be the theophanic angel.

⁷⁷Hertzberg sees in this passage a local-cult-tradition and a "hieros logos". He says, "Der Ort der Begegnung wäre nunmehr auch ohne das in V.15 Gesagte ein heiliger Ort geworden; dem heilige Orte sind solche, an denen etwas zwischen Gott und Mensch geschehen ist." (Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth, ATD, 1953, pp.35f.)

Thus the שר זכא was considered as a self-manifestation of the godhead himself.

Jgs. 2:1-5

According to Moore vss.1a and 5b are derived from J, and vss.1b-5a have a Deuteronomic stamp.⁷⁸ In the present form this whole passage (vss.1b-5a) is in the form of a speech of the MY. We have to read this passage with the immediate background of the Lord's promise given in Ex.23:20-23, where Yahweh himself is the subject.

The MY appears here in the time of spiritual decline of Israel. This is pictured in vs.1a: that the MY removes from Gilgal to Bochim. The MY addresses all the people of Israel. It is not mentioned in what way and in what form of appearance. In connection with Israel's sin the MY now comes to proclaim a judgement to Israel, cf. vs.3. Compare this judgement with the promise in Ex.23:22.

We again notice that the MY is identified with Yahweh himself. It is interesting in the present redaction of this passage the MY always speaks with the authoritative "I", which is appropriate to God himself. It is important here to notice how the MY connects the motives of his saving acts in the exodus with his faith-

⁷⁸G.F. Moore, The Book of Judges, ICC, 1895, ad loc.

fulness to the Covenant, which is called here "my Covenant"(vs.1). At the end of this survey we shall see that the MY is called there "the Angel of the Covenant" (Mal.3:1). From this passage it is clear that it is the one and the same MY, who brought them up from Egypt, swore the promise to their forefathers and brought them into the promised land. The fact that he calls Yahweh's Covenant as "my Covenant" is a clear indication that the MY identifies himself with Yahweh. The end of this passage also confirms this idea, cf. vs.5.

In spite of that we still see a distinction between them, for as soon as there is talk of an offering, then the MY disappears. This cannot be simply explained, as F. Stier did, as a matter of ellipsis or an abridged form of speech, employed by the author.

Jgs.5:23

The word מלאך may be a later addition.⁷⁹ This verse is, however, too brief to give further information about the MY.

Jgs.6:11-24

The story itself is similar to Jgs.13:2-23, where

⁷⁹Cf. C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, 1918, ad loc.

Yahweh appears in human form and converses freely with men, and it is generally accepted as derived from one source, i.e. the J narratives (Moore, Böhme, Budde)⁸⁰. In some aspects this passage is similar to Gen.18, where Yahweh appears to Abraham at the oak at Mamré (J).

As in the other J narratives the MY appears at the time of great distress and oppression for Israel. Here Yahweh performs the redeeming work for Israel. At first Gideon does not recognize him because of his ordinary appearance. But there is something peculiar in his greeting (vs.12). Gideon is called "mighty man of valor" **גִּבּוֹר הַקָּוִל**, not based on what Gideon has done, but on what God is going to do with Gideon.

In vss.14-18 the MY is not mentioned, but Yahweh himself is speaking and the MY is identified with Yahweh, cf. Ex.3:10-12. In vs.14: **וַיִּפֶן** (der. from **פָּנָה**) has a double meaning. It could mean literally "to turn to" or it could have the metaphorical ethical meaning "to have regard for (to)", e.g. Lev.26:9; I Kgs.8:28, etc.⁸¹. In this lively dialogue between the MY and Gideon, it means both. The sudden oscillation between the MY and

⁸⁰ Cf. G.F. Moore, *op. cit.*, ad loc.

⁸¹ Vide Ch.III, par.4.

Yahweh is not just due to the specific oriental style form or due to stylistic slovenliness of the author, as it has been suggested by F. Stier.⁸² The consistency of this oscillation in the MY passages suggests, that it has been carried out deliberately to express the identity of the MY with Yahweh. There is never an indication of something like "sagen lassen".

In vs.17 we see Gideon's attitude has changed. Full of awe he asks humbly for a sign and offers a מִנְחָה (a present). In vs.20 the MY, however, prescribes the הִנְחָה. The climax appears in vs.21 when God accepts Gideon's offering. It is remarkable that when fire has sprung up from the rock, as a result of the act of the MY, and consumes the flesh and the cakes, the MY himself disappears, cf. Jgs.13:16. By this sign Gideon recognizes the MY and he becomes afraid, vs.22. To see the MY is considered as to see Yahweh himself. That this fear has been basically justified appears from Yahweh's words consoling Gideon (vs.23), and not rebuking him.

Proksch sees in this offering a MY-cult.⁸³ This

⁸²Stier, *op. cit.*, p.34: "In Vs.14 und 16 erzielte wajjo'mer die Bedeutung "sagen lassen". Möglich ist aber auch, dass der Autor, der V.14a Jahwe vor Augen sieht und ihn Huld und Hilfe verheissen hört, unmerklich in die Form eines direkten Dialogs zwischen Jahwe und Gideon hineingerät."

⁸³cf. Proksch in his exegesis on Gen.28:12ff., in his Die Genesis, 1924.

cannot be justified, because this offering is connected with Gideon's request for an נִס (a sign or miracle). When this נִס has been given, the MY disappears. The place becomes a holy place, dedicated to Yahweh himself (vs.24).

Jgs.13

Some suggest this is a variant of Jgs.6. It is true that popular story-tellers had a delight in making variations of the same theme,⁸⁴ but this does not necessarily mean that we have one and the same story. Similar features could be caused because of the fact that we have to do with the same MY here, dealing with the same people. The time is different: Israel here is suffering from the Philistines. The MY here also clearly suggests a burnt-offering to the Lord. The way of disappearance of the MY is here more explicit: he ascended in a flame of fire.

The MY appears as an ordinary human being and is considered as "a man of God", i.e. an inspired man or a prophet who is sent by God. Even Manoah himself honours him as a man, though a remarkable man (vss.15,17).

That the MY is not an ordinary angel appears

⁸⁴Cf. Moore, op. cit., ad loc.

from:

1. he does not want to reveal his name which is "wonderful" (Hebr.: פְּלִאָה). His name, as an expression of his being (essence) is beyond all human comprehension and thus divine. Men can only "wonder" at his name or at Himself (cf. Gen. 32:29), because He is full of wonders (vs. 19). In vs. 18 we read: וְהוּא-פְּלִאָה . To what does this הוּא refer? Stier suggests that it refers to Yahweh's deed to whom is due all reward. Then this verse should be read as, "Denn das (wofür die mir danken willst,) ist ja eine Wundertat Jahwes."⁸⁵ The most natural and obvious interpretation is that it is referring to "name", as they are both mentioned in one sentence and standing closely together. The accent of Manoah's question is not on the reward he is due to give, but on the name, as it is mentioned by the MY, "Why do you ask my name ...". Thus the name of the MY is wonderful and in the next verse Yahweh indeed does a wonder, or according to other codices Yahweh is called פְּלִאָה ("him who works wonders"). Thus from this parallel it is evident that the MY is identified with Yahweh himself.

2. the mysterious disappearance: he ascended in

⁸⁵Stier, op. cit., p. 30.

the flame of the altar (cf. Ex.3:2).

3. the reaction of Manoah in vs.22.

As a manifestation of Yahweh we see again the oscillation between distinction (vs.16"... , then offer it to the Lord") and identification (vss.22,23). It is noteworthy here, that although in this passage the name "Yahweh is used regularly, in vs.22 when Manoah expresses his fear, he uses the word "'Elohim" for God.

I Sam.29:9

In the era of David we do not see the MY as active as in the patriarchal and the judges period. Instead of the MY we see the prophet Samuel, called by Yahweh to proclaim God's Word. In this text the term ME is used by king Achish of the Philistines in a particular sense:

- a. that the ME is טוב (good or blameless) in his eyes, i.e. the Philistines. Thus the ME is apparently considered as a benefactor of the Philistines.
- b. David is compared with a ME.

Does ME here, as is mentioned by the Philistine king mean the same as the MY of the patriarchs? According to the above description it is unlikely. The MY is an adversary, because the Philistines were the oppressors and the national enemy of Israel.

However, this expression is meant as the highest praise and flattering language (cf. Gen. 33:10).

Let us look more carefully at the words $\text{אֱלֹהִים אֲחִישׁוּרִי}$. In some early manuscripts (cod. Vaticanus and LXX) these words are missing. It appears on the other hand in other manuscripts: Origen and Lucian's texts on LXX and the cod. Alexandrine.

Achis had another aim, viz. to find an excuse for refusing his help, in expressing the highest praise for David, as an Israelite who knows very well who the MY- or the ME-proper is. The appellative use of this expression by Achis might find its cause in the fact that he had heard something about this ME from the popular beliefs of the Israelites or from David and his followers, during their stay among the Philistines. If this supposition is true, then we may conclude that the MY (or ME) idea has been absorbed into the popular traditional beliefs, widespread at that time and familiar even to king Achis; and this found its reflection in the final redactor of this book, who described the ME as אֱלֹהִים .⁸⁶

⁸⁶F. Stier suggests, that by this expression David is considered by Achis as an "elohim", possessing super-human powers. (op. cit., p.57). This is, in my opinion, rather doubtful, although Achis trusted him (cf. 27:12). At that time David was a deserter and a refugee and moreover suspected by the other commanders of the Philistines (vs.4.)

II Sam. 14:17,20; 19:27

Here the ME is used in the pictorial language of the Israelite people themselves. David is addressed as an Angel of God (MhE) by the woman of Tekoa and X Mephiboseth, the son of Saul.

She compares David to the MhE, able to discern good and evil (II Sam.14:17). The MhE possesses great wisdom and sense of justice, which are important aspects of the Hebrew view of kingship.⁸⁷ This is declared more explicitly in vs.20, where the wisdom of David is compared with the wisdom of the ME, who knows all things that are on earth. The ME is considered not only wise but also omniscient, as far as earthly things are concerned.

Again Mephiboseth, the son of Saul, compares David with the MhE (II Sam. 19:27). The MY is considered wise, righteous, merciful and having all authority to do as he likes.

There was, therefore, a popular idea concerning the ME. The ME, as a form of God's self-manifestation is distinguished from God himself: he knows all things on earth. Thus his name could be applied to a human

⁸⁷Cf. A.R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conception of Kingship", in Myth, Ritual, and Kingship, ed. S.H.Hooke, 1958, p.206.

being as a term of highest praise. But if we consider the character of the ME, as it is described here, then it is clear that he possesses divine characteristics, that are only proper to God himself. This description of the Mal'akh shows us the transcendent idea of God (E). David is not 'Elohim, as ancient people like to use this ultimate praise and epithet for kings,⁸⁸ but as an Angel of 'Elohim. Nor is he identified with the ME. He is just like ME.

II Sam. 24:16,17; I Chron.21

In II Sam. we meet the so-called מַלְאָכֵי הַמָּוֶת , the Angel of destruction. That this angel is the same as the MY appears from vs.16, referring to "the angel who was working destruction" saying, "And the MY was by the threshing floor of Araunah." Here is a new development again in the MY conception. We see beside the MY a prophet, Gad, vs.11: "... the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer ...". And we see also a new feature in this development, i.e. that Yahweh himself spoke to the Mal'akh, as if to another created being: vs.16b "..., the Lord repented of the evil, and said to the angel who was working destruction among

⁸⁸Vide Ch.VII, par.Ia.

the people". Another interesting point is, that the Mal'akh did not speak. He just acted, executing the punishment upon Israel. Thus the Word of Yahweh is actually not in the Mal'akh, but in the prophet Gad himself.

The MY here is distinguished from Yahweh, but is still the form of the divine self-manifestation of Yahweh, apparently in a lesser degree, compared with the MY in patriarchal times. The MY here represents God himself and is the bearer of God's chastising hand.⁸⁹

This is evident from the following points:

- a. David spoke to Yahweh (אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה) when he saw אֱמָלָךְ
- b. David prayed to Him, "Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house." (vs.17).
- c. The decision (or the choice) of David in vs.14: "... let us fall בְּיַד יְהוָה ..." appears to be the same as to be chastised by the outstretched hand of the Angel.

The MY is visible, vs.17, "... he saw the angel who was smiting ...". In vs.18 the word of God comes to Gad, commanding David to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. This seems to be closely connected with the fact that is

⁸⁹Cf. W.H. Kusters, op. cit., p.383.

expressly mentioned in vs.16, that the MY was standing there, and as such it is a place of theophany!

A later recension of this passage is found in I Chron.21, dating from about 300 BC.⁹⁰ It contains some significant additions, e.g. in vs.12, "and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel" (cf. II Sam.24:13); in vs.15 "the angel" is specially mentioned and is sent to Jerusalem as the executioner of the punishment, being called מַלְאָךְ הַמְשִׁחִית . If we compare this recension with the earlier one in II Sam.24, then we observe this difference: that the late post-exilic recension lays more stress on the distinction between Yahweh and the MY. The MY is more and more considered as a messenger of God, as an angel sent by God with a sword in the hand (vs.16), hovering between heaven and earth. Seeing this David and the elders fell upon their faces. It is interesting to notice the oscillation between God ('Elohim) and the MY in vs.17 and 18. In vs.17 David prays to 'Elohim, " ... O, Lord my God (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי), be against me and against my father's house, but ...". Yet in vs.16 it was the appearance of the destroying MY which prompted the

⁹⁰Cf. R. Kittel, Die Bücher der Chronik, HKAT, 1902, ad loc.; K.Galling, Die Bücher der Chronik, Ezra, Nehemia, ATD, 1954, ad loc.

prayer, "Then the angel of the Lord commanded ..."

In II Sam.24 we see that the word came from God to the prophet Gad (vs.11). But in this chapter of the Chronicles we see that the word of God came from the MY to Gad. Gad proclaimed these words of the MY to David "in the name of the Lord (בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה), vs.19. On the one hand the later development in the Chronicles substitutes for "Yahweh" the "MY" - the result of a more transcendental idea of God and as such distinguishing the MY from Yahweh. On the other hand, in spite of this distinction, the MY still retains to a certain extent his identity with Yahweh, which is derived from the older narrative in II Sam.24.

The following trends in the later recension are worth noting:

- a. the superhuman appearance of the MY, causing fear, awe, and adoration (cf. vs.20).
- b. there is still distinction and identification between Yahweh and the MY, though in a lesser degree; this must have been caused by dependence on the older narratives.
- c. the MY is coming more and more to be considered as an agent by God, a messenger sent by God.
- d. there is a greater distance between the MY and men,

i.e. God - MY - prophet - David (cf. Zech.1:9-17, the intermediary function of "the Angel who talked with me".).

I Kgs.13:18

The important and peculiar thing to be noticed here is that Yahweh spoke to the prophet "by the Word of the Lord" (בְּקִרְבֵּי יְהוָה) that came to the angel. The Word seems here to be conceived as a power that came from Yahweh, and acted by itself. Prof. Thenius said, that, "das Wort selbst als eine von dem Herrn ausgegangene für sich bestehende Macht gedacht ist."⁹¹ It was as such an independent power, that came directly to the prophet or connected with מַלְאָכִים as the bearer of the Word (cf. 19:9-11).

Which Mal'akh is mentioned here in the lie of the old prophet? It is taken to be the MY, not an ordinary angel, because the idea of an ordinary created angel as bearer of the Word was still quite unfamiliar. This appears also from the reaction of the prophet of Judah, who instantly believed and followed him. Apparently he took the "angel" as the familiar MY. Moreover, if we consider this as a lie to persuade others to obey, it

⁹¹Cf. Kusters, op. cit., p.385.

is then supposed to be equivalent in meaning to what is said by the prophet from Judah, "it was said to me
 בְּרַבֵּר יְהוָה " (vs.17). But on the other hand, because of the lie the old prophet did not like to employ the appropriate name מְלֵאכֵי יְהוָה.⁹²

I Kgs.19:5,7; II Kgs.1:3,4,15,16

In I Kgs.19 Elijah was in despair. He left his task, fled to the desert and wished no longer to live. Then while he slept under a broom tree, the MY appeared, touched him, and wakened him. Elijah himself did not see the Angel; he only heard his voice saying, "Arise and eat!" What Elijah saw was just a cake and a jar of water. This happened twice. It seems that the intention of the MY was not just to provide him with food, that would strengthen Elijah for his journey to Horeb, but also to prepare him for the Word of God that would be given to him at Horeb.

Not much is to be said about the MY. The words he spoke to Elijah do not seem to be the very "Word of the Lord." Afterwards when he reached a cave at Horeb

⁹²Stade and Schwally suggest that the post-exilic redactor of this passage deleted the word מְלֵאכֵי because of the character of this lie; Cf. B. Stade and F. Schwally, The Book of Kings, critical edition of the Hebrew Text, 1904, ad loc.

and the Word of the Lord came to him, there is no mention of the MY. Yahweh was then present in a small voice (vs.12).

This story reminds us of the Hagar story in Gen. 21:17ff - the moment of great need, the audible voice of the MY. But here the Word of Yahweh seems to be detached from the MY.

The MY here is a manifestation of Yahweh, the providential might, power and care of God rather than the very Word of Yahweh.⁹³

In II Kgs. I Elijah as "the man of God", אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (cf. vs.9, 11ff; also I Kgs. 18:24, 36-40) is called by the MY, who commanded him what to do. Elijah obeyed this command faithfully and proclaimed the word that was said to him by the MY.

The "Thus saith the Lord ..." (כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה), cf. vs.4, is echoed in vs.16 where it covers the whole message, including the words spoken by the MY in vs.3, ("... Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?") and not only as an introduction to the words of judgement. As this whole message actually comes from the MY we can infer that the MY is identified with the Lord

⁹³cf. Kusters, op. cit., p.385.

himself, but at the same time also distinguished from Him as a form of His appearance. The words of the MY are the Word of the Lord.

In complying with the humble prayer of the captain of the third army, Elijah as "the man of God" acted according to the words of the MY, "Go down with him ..." (vs.15). With this faithful behaviour he proved himself to be a real "man of God" (cf. vs.10 "If I am a man of God ..."), not following his own desire, but the command of God, of whom the MY was the self-manifestation.

Pss.34:7; 35:5,6

The MY could be considered as an invisible commander of the heavenly host, cf. Jos.5:13-15. He appeared often as a "man with a drawn sword in his hand", cf. Jos.5:13; Num.22:23,31; I Chron.21:16. No enemy could stand before the MY. The MY "encamps" (Hebr.: הֶחַיִּט, dwelling, encamping; מַחֲנֵה, camp or host). This could mean, as A.R. Johnson says, "a collective unit or corporate personality; and the reference is not to what one may perhaps call a mere individual, or even two or three, but a host."⁹⁴, cf. Gen.32:2,3; II Kgs.6:15-18.

⁹⁴A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, 1942, p.35.

Thus the MY could mean an individual or a corporate unit. This causes a certain oscillation perceivable in the MY: between the plural and the singular forms. It is perhaps in this sense that we can understand II Kgs.19:35, i.e. the delivering act of the MY by striking the Assyrians with 185000 dead. As such the MY could be called "Organ der wirksamen Hilfe Jahwes, die dem Bittenden und Gottesfürchtigen zuteil wird."⁹⁵ But more than that he is the self-manifestation of the Lord who "saved him out of all his troubles" (vs.6b). The theme of this psalm is praise to the Lord. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" (vs.3). The great and merciful Yahweh is the only Subject in this whole psalm.

Ps.35 is a prayer to Yahweh, that Yahweh would "contend with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me!" (vs.1). In other words it is a plea for Yahweh to act against the Psalmist's enemies. In the Psalmist's living imagination, however, these are not merely pleading words, but became virtual lively acts of Yahweh, fighting against the enemies and pursue them to save the Psalmist. Thus in vss.5,6 the

⁹⁵Cf. H-Joachim Kraus, Biblischer Kommentar, XV/4, 1958, ad loc.

MY is pictured as the manifestation of Yahweh.

Ps.34 is, according to recent commentators, late post-exilic or dating from the beginning of the Persian period, because of its acrostic form and the similarity in style to the Wisdom Literature. The superscription also confuses Achis of Gath (I Sam. 21:10-15) with Abimelech of Gerar (Gen.20:21; 26).⁹⁶ Ps.35 is also considered as post-exilic.⁹⁷

Isa.63:9

It is interesting to notice that the reading of this text in the LXX is rather different than in our MT.

LXX vs.8: ... και εγενετο αυτοις εις σωτηριων
 " " 9 εκ πασης θλιψεως. ου πρεσβυς ουδε αγγελος
 αλλ' αυτος κυριος εσωσεν αυτους δια το ...

Some scholars (Oort, Budde, Duhm) preferred this reading to restore metrical regularity,⁹⁸ i.e. קָמַלְנוּ בְּךָ יְיָ

⁹⁶Cf. W. Stewart McCullough, The Book of Psalms, IB, vol.IV, 1955, ad loc., p.177; C.A. Briggs, The Book of Psalms, ICC, vol.I, 1952, ad loc., p.295; W.E. Barnes, The Psalms, WC, vol.I, 1931, ad loc., p.165; R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, 1953, p.627.

⁹⁷Cf. McCullough, op. cit., p.182; Barnes, op. cit., p.170, mentions Duhm and R. Kittel suggesting the Maccabean times as the probable date; Pfeiffer, loc. cit., suggests the 4th century BC.

⁹⁸Cf. T.K. Cheyne, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, critical edition of the Hebrew Text, 1899, ad loc; J. Muilenburg on Isaiah in IB, vol.V, pp.731f.

instead of **לֹא זָר וּמַלְאָךְ**.⁹⁹ Thus according to the LXX it is not an angel but Yahweh himself who saved them. According to the MY it is the **מַלְאָךְ פְּנֵיו** (= the angel of his face) who saved them. In both cases, however, the basic idea seems to be the same.

Our main interest in our present study is the new expression **מַלְאָךְ פְּנֵיו**. The prophet is praising the steadfast love of the Lord to the house of Israel, His people. And in recalling the goodness of the Lord he obviously remembers the mighty acts of the Lord at the Exodus.

How shall we translate this **מַלְאָךְ פְּנֵיו**? It is best to consider this as a genitivus objectivus and means "the Angel who is his face". Knight says about this name, "He is Yahweh's face, and they who look upon him look upon Yahweh, and in him all that Yahweh is, is present."¹⁰⁰ Thus this expression **מַלְאָךְ פְּנֵיו** indeed denotes Yahweh himself. In this special connection we remember Gen.32:30; Ex.23:20,21,23; Ex.33:14; Ps.44:3; Deut.4:37,38. Where it is obvious that by **מַלְאָךְ פְּנֵיו** is meant the well-known MY, we see again the two sides of the MY:

⁹⁹This latter reading also found in Itala and versio syriaca, cf. HB ad loc.

¹⁰⁰G.A.F. Knight, From Moses to Paul, London, 1948, p.71.

- a. distinguished from God, as far as he is called God's panim, and is sent by Yahweh to go before Israel.
- b. identified with Yahweh, as far as he is God's panim, and has God's name in him.

Again Knight says,

Now while there is here a paradoxical juxtaposition of the two conceptions, this verse goes on to unite the paradox within itself:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted
And the Angel of his presence saved them;
in His love and in His pity He [i.e. the Lord] redeemed them." (vs.9).¹⁰¹

This is also consistent with the general theological outlook of Deutero-Isaiah, which lays the full stress on the mighty saving activity of Yahweh himself.

Throughout his prophecies we read the refrain: for I am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your redeemer, the Saviour, etc.; cf. Isa. 41:13, 14, 16, 20; 42:6, 8; 43:3, 11, 14; 44:6, 24; 45:15, etc. This identity might be partly caused by its dependence on older narratives, cf. Ex. 33:14; Deut. 4:37, 38.

Hag. 1:13

This book is of a post-exilic date (520 BC). Horst considers יְהוָה יְהוָה as a later interpolation.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Fr. Horst, Die zwölf kleinen Propheten, Nahum bis Malachi, HBAT, 1938 ad loc; cf. also footn. in HB, ad loc.

It is indeed likely because of the rare use of this title applied to the prophet. It is interesting to notice that after the Exile the term מְלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה has acquired a human, as well as a divine connotation, while Mal.2:7 provides us with a good example of this broader use, for the priest is called expressly מְלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת.¹⁰³ Haggai is called the MY, because he was sent by God to speak to the people with the Lord's message, "I am with you, says the Lord (נְאֻם - יְהוָה), vs.13. This is given to a prophet because the נְאֻם - יְהוָה (lit.: oracle of Yahweh) is on the lips of the prophet. In II Chron.36:15,16 and Isa.44:26 we also see the prophets called the מְלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה or מְלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה. This marks a significant change in the use of this term מְלֹאֵךְ יְהוָה in this post-exilic period.

Zech.1:9-17

The first night vision of Zechariah is complicated and confusing; the various figures being difficult to distinguish one from the other:

-- a man, riding upon a red horse, standing among the myrtle trees

¹⁰³ Cf. H.G. Mitchell, Haggai and Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah, ICC, 1912, ad loc.

- behind him are red, sorrel, and white horses, presumably with their riders
- the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה, who is standing among the myrtle trees
- there is a talk of the Lord Yahweh answering gracious words.

The phrase "riding upon a red horse" (vs.8) is regarded as an addition.¹⁰⁴ There seems indeed to be a contradiction between "riding" and "standing" in that same verse. Moreover in vs.10 the man is described as "standing" among the myrtle trees. Is he the same person as the MY, who is also standing among the myrtle trees (vs.11)? Objections have been raised against that identification:

1. the descriptive phrase, that follows, would be superfluous as a means of identifying the Angel of the Lord (vs.11)
2. this "man" is presumably the leader of the group consisting of red, sorrel, and white horses, which stand behind (אַחֲרָיו) him.¹⁰⁵
3. the mere fact that they are called with different

¹⁰⁴Cf. Horst, op. cit., ad loc; Mitchell, op. cit., ad loc.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Horst, op. cit., ad loc.; J. Ridderbos, De Kleine Profeten, Zacharia, KV, 1952, p.49.

names: the "man, standing among the myrtle trees" and "the MY, who was standing among the myrtle trees."

Other factors, however, argue more cogently for identifying both figures (cf. vs. 8, 10, 11):

- a. the man standing among the myrtle trees seems to be the principal figure in this vision. He is mentioned first in the vision and fully described. His position on the foreground suggests that he must be an important figure in this vision. This is indeed the case if we see him in vs. 11 identified with the MY, receiving the reports from the other horsemen and making intercession for Jerusalem. The parallel statement in vs. 11 concerning the MY, "who was standing among the myrtle trees" confirms this identity rather than denies it; cf. first objection above.
- b. Against the second objection, mentioned above, the word לְאַחֵרָיו could also have a temporal meaning: "after him". In this sense Zechariah saw a lively scene in the vision. He first saw this man riding on a red horse and stopped among the myrtle trees and after him appeared the other horses and riders.¹⁰⁶
- c. That the man among the myrtle trees himself did not

¹⁰⁶Cf. Stier, op. cit., p. 75.

belong to these patrolling group of riders, is evident from vs.10. He explained, "These are they whom the Lord has sent ...". He was the receiver of the reports given by the group.

Thus the MY seems to be identical with "the man standing among the myrtle trees". The "angel interpreter" who spoke to the prophet is not identical with the MY. He is as Davidson said "the hypostatized prophetic spirit".¹⁰⁷

In vs.12 we see the function of the MY as an intercessor for the people of Israel. He represents God as well as the people. He acts as the defender of the people, cf. Zech.3:1-3. In connection with this Mitchell declares, that Zechariah seems to have adopted a conception of the MY which prepared the way for the later doctrine according to which each people had its guardian-angel.¹⁰⁸

Another problem arises from vs.13: is the Lord identical with the MY? And why is the answer given to "the angel who talked with me"? Stonard's view is that the Lord and the MY is one and the same speaker, "...

¹⁰⁷Cf. "Angel", in HDB, I, 1898, p.96.

¹⁰⁸Mitchell, op. cit., ad loc.

since no other person but the angel intercessor is described to be present, they [i.e. these comfortable words] must have proceeded from Him. But he is no other than Jehovah himself".¹⁰⁹ This conclusion is rather too simple. It is unlikely that the MY prayed to himself and answered the prayer by himself, even if he had the double aspect: identified with and distinguished from Yahweh. In this prayer it is clear that he is distinguished from Yahweh himself, praying to him in the second person. A satisfactory explanation is found by Mitchell, in comparing this vision with the eighth vision, where Yahweh seems to be present but unseen, i.e. in the palace before which the chariots are mustered, cf. Zech. 6:5.¹¹⁰ Thus in this passage the Lord himself is present among the myrtle trees, invisible but presumably audible by His comforting words to the angel. Why is the answer of the Lord not directed to the MY, but to the angel? We see here that the function of the MY is not proclaiming the very Word of God, but to intercede on behalf of the people of Israel; so it is obvious that the answer of God was directed to the people and given to the angel interpreter, who would forward it to the prophet and the prophet to the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., footn. p.125.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

people.¹¹¹

The MY here indeed acts as a representative of the Lord in accepting the reports of the riders. He is the "grand vizir" and as such is distinguished from Yahweh.¹¹² He is the angel intercessor for Israel, protecting and defending Israel. The relationship between the MY and men becomes more transcendental. From the heaven he sends out the patrol and hears their reports about the earth. Nevertheless he is still representing Yahweh in a unique way, as we shall see in the next passage.

Zech. 3:1-7

In this fourth vision we again see many figures: the high priest Joshua, Satan standing at his right hand, the MY before whom they stand, "those" standing before the MY (vs.4), the Lord himself addressing Satan.(vs.2).

The high priest Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, representing the people of Israel in their sinfulness. These filthy garments, the sign and the symbol of people's unworthiness, were taken away and

¹¹¹Cf. Ridderbos, op. cit., ad loc.

¹¹²Cf. Stier, op. cit., et passim.

they clothed him in robes of state befitting his office as the religious head and representative of a chosen people.¹¹³ A different interpretation has been given by Welch. He starts from the presupposition that the authority of Joshua and his fellow-priests from the exile was not instantly acknowledged in Jerusalem, but was met with serious objections, as it is pictured in the vision by the filthy garments and the accusation of Satan. The fact, that Joshua is especially called here as the "high priest", denotes that his office is now at stake and the vision is given to restore his office and the priesthood in the new temple in Jerusalem.¹¹⁴

Satan was standing at his right hand side to accuse him. "Satan" simply means an "adversary" or "accuser", whose task here was to recall and to sum up Israel's iniquities. The idea of "Satan" as we know in the NT, as the Tempter to all evil, as the one who is always trying to thwart God's purposes, was still unfamiliar in this period. As an illustration of the development of this idea we can compare II Sam.24:1,2, where Yahweh incited David to number the people.

¹¹³Mitchell, op. cit., ad loc.

¹¹⁴A.C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism, 1935, pp.180-3.

But in I Chron.21:1, which is a later quotation of this verse, the word "Satan" has been employed instead of Yahweh. "Satan" later on became an appellative.

Both were standing before the MY. Thus Satan's accusation against Joshua was presented to the MY. This means that Satan recognized the authority of the MY as the Judge. The content of his accusation is not mentioned here.

The MY, however, rebuked Satan and rejected all his accusations. Again the MY acted as the protector or defender of the high priest and the priesthood, and in a wider sense also of Israel as God's people.

The MY is distinguished from the Lord, but still representing Him, clothed with full authority. In the content of the rebuke the MY spoke of Yahweh in the third person: "The Lord rebuke you ... The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem ...". Moreover, concerning this vs.2, the Syriac version has the word MY instead of Yahweh: "And the MY said to Satan ...". With these evidences it is very likely that in vs.2 it was the MY (on behalf of the Lord) who spoke to Satan or it was the Lord who spoke through the MY to Satan.

In vss.4 and 5 the MY ordered "those" who were standing before Him to remove the filthy garments from Joshua. Who were these "those"? They were the servants

of the MY, who executed the orders of the MY (vs.5). As there are no other descriptions about these "those", we can presume that they were no other than the "mal'akhim" (angels) who were serving and obeying the MY (cf.2:36). The MY himself issued the orders which were executed by them. The MY was conceived to be sublime in glory, supervising the work of the other angels.

Zech.12:8

The second part of this book, i.e. Chs.9-14 is apparently not written by the prophet Zechariah himself, but by another hand and originates from a different time. Some text-critics consider the phrase "like the Angel of the Lord" as a later addition.¹¹⁵ It is as such considered as a comment on 'elohim and distinguishes him from Yahweh himself.

Again we see the promise of redemption for Israel. "On that day" the Lord will redeem the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will protect them and defeat all enemies of Judah (vs.9). Vs.8 is a description of the redemption

¹¹⁵ Cf. Fr. Horst, Das zwölf kleine Propheten, Zechariah, HBAT, 1938, ad loc.; E. Sellin, Das Zwölf Prophetenbuch, KzAT, 1930, p.573; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, p.122.

and the situation of Jerusalem "at that day".

Metaphorical language is used in this description.

The fact that Yahweh would redeem and protect Jerusalem did not mean that the people of Jerusalem could just be inactive. There was a time when this indeed had happened (cf. II Kgs. 6:8-23) and in the year 701 BC during the liberation of Jerusalem from Assyria (cf. II Kgs. 19:35,36). At this present situation the inhabitants themselves had to join in the fight. The Lord would strengthen them for battle and give them courage (vs.5). They all would become heroes, even the feeblest among them would be like David, that is to say, as courageous as David. And what about the house or the descendants of David himself? "And the house of David shall be like 'elohim." According to the LXX: "and the house of David shall be like the house of God (*οίκος Θεου*)"; this shows the steadfastness of the house of David. Formerly David had been several times compared with the MY (cf. II Sam. 14:17; 19:27). This denotes the highest praise in popular pictorial language.

Now later editors can safely add "like the MY" without causing any contradiction. Indeed in former days the MY, as the self-manifestation of God "encamped" round about Israel (cf. Ps. 34:7) to protect and deliver

His people, striking the enemies with blindness (cf. Gen.19; II Kgs.6:15-18 and Zech.12:4). He would as such be a "Shield round about the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (vs.8). He would be to Jerusalem "a wall of fire round about her" (Zech.2:5). But the MY here is distinguished from Yahweh himself. It is noteworthy that the house of David shall not be like "Yahweh", but like 'Elohim, immediately followed by the attenuation "like the MY", probably a quotation from traditional metaphorical usage.

Mal.2:7

This anonymous book was written in a time of decline in the spiritual life of Israel, especially in the life of the priests. The temple seems to be rebuilt already, but the holy zeal for the temple had been extinguished. A post-temple-restoration date, about 460 BC, has been adhered to by most of the recent commentators. The author seems to know nothing of Nehemiah's reform and the Priestly Code. The description of the priests as "sons of Levi" (Mal.3:3 cf.2:4,8) agrees with the Deuteronomic Code (Deut.21:5) rather than with the Priestly Code, where they are called "sons of Zadok" or "sons of Aaron". Also the demands for the payment of the tithes (Mal.3:10 cf. Num.18:21-24

- P, and Deut.14:22-29; 12:6,11,17).¹¹⁶ Ridderbos, considering the fact that the author condemns marriages with foreign women (Mal.2:11 cf. Neh.13:23ff) is of opinion that the time of Malachi was in the inter-period between the first and the second stay of Nehemiah in Jerusalem, i.e. between 432 - 420 BC.¹¹⁷

Welch, on the other hand, adopts a pre-temple-restoration date, based on Wellhausen's view, that it was not the Priestly Code, but Josiah who relegated the levites to a lower position than that of the regular priests, while in this book they are still allowed to administer the law and to bring sacrifices to the altar.¹¹⁸ This argument, however, is not convincing, as the offerings and the Lord's table presuppose a regular worship in the new temple, "and the priests have been performing ritual ceremonies for a number of years", cf. Mal.1:10; 3:1,10.¹¹⁹

The religious life seems to be as barren as before:

¹¹⁶Cf. R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, London, repr. 1953, p.614; G.W. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, 1959, pp.169f.

¹¹⁷J. Ridderbos, De Kleine Profeten, III, KV, 1952, pp.192f.

¹¹⁸Welch, op. cit., p.114.

¹¹⁹Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.614.

they brought unworthy offerings (Mal.1:10); they desecrated the table of the Lord (1:12) and the priests also "have turned aside from the way" and "corrupted the covenant of Levi (Mal.2:8). In Mal.2:1-9 God rebukes the corrupt priests, reminding them of what has been once done as the proper and honourable function of the priests (vss.5-7).

"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge (לַשְׂפָתַי), vs.7. לַשְׂפָתַי is here rather the knowledge of God, wisdom, and the fear of God. "And men should seek instruction from his mouth", for to him the teaching of God's torah was entrusted. "For he is the מְלַאֲכָיִם הַקְּדוֹתִים, the angel (messenger) of the Lord of hosts." He is as such the official spokesman of the Lord. And to him is applied the title MY, to denote the sublimity of this office and its responsibility. This title MY had been applied before to a human being, namely a prophet, as we see in Hag.1:13.

It seems that in this post-exilic period the ancient conception of the MY has been dropped partially. It was no longer considered as the unique theophany or the form of God's appearance. It has been rather materialized and incorporated in the figure of an angelic or human being.

This verse describes the proper function and

status of a priest in the most glorious way, in order to create a sharper contrast with the mentality of the priesthood at that time. Thus if the priest is called the MY here, it is because of the torah and its teaching that is entrusted to him and as such he is the official spokesman of God to the people.

Mal. 3:1

We have to read this verse against the background of the previous verse in Mal. 2:17. The faithful people, i.e. those living loyal to the Law were not satisfied with God's reign. They wearied the Lord with their complaints, by saying, "Every one who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them", or asking, "where is the God of justice?" (2:17).

As an answer to these complaints of the disillusioned people, God gave the promise via the unknown prophet, that He soon would come for judgment. The prophet, who was the mouthpiece of God, spoke in the first person of God, as well as in third person. This phenomenon is not uncommon with the prophets, cf. Hos. 12:9,10; Isa. 22:15-19, etc. This is what A.R. Johnson calls "extension of personality".¹²⁰ Let us now see our

¹²⁰ A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, sec. ed. 1961, p.37.

present text:

"Behold I am sending [Hebr.: אֲשַׁלֵּחַ , kal part.]
my messenger [Hebr.: מַלְאָכִי] to prepare the
way before me."

Here is undoubtedly used the idea of a herald, as a fore-runner, who prepares the way before the arrival of the king, cf. Isa.40:3; 62:10. The word mal'akh is used and as we know this word can be used for a priest (Mal.2:7) or for a prophet (Hag.1:13). The important and difficult problem is: who is meant here by מַלְאָכִי ? Let us firstly remember, that the task of this מַלְאָכִי here is "to prepare the way", which means activity of religious-moral character, including the call to repentance (Mal.4:6). This was indeed an urgent task at the time of the author, who "paints a sordid picture of the economic and spiritual misery of the Jewish community of his day, and in hoping for the miraculous intervention of the deity which is to follow."¹²¹

The name Malachi (1:1) is given later on to the prophet and to this book, based on the interpretation of the editor of this verse and thus making a proper name of this מַלְאָכִי . The Targum Jonathan and

¹²¹Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.614.

the tradition (which is accepted by Jerome) interpret this as "my messenger, whose name is called Ezra, the Scribe".¹²² There is, however, no evidence to ascribe this authorship to Ezra. On the other hand recent interpreters suggest a later date for Ezra's coming to Jerusalem than Nehemiah's, i.e. ca. 397 BC.¹²³

In any case the traditional redactor may be correct in identifying מְלֻחָי with this anonymous author.¹²⁴ With the judgement on the corrupt priesthood (cf. 1:6 - 2:9) and the corrections concerning marriage and tithes (2:10-16; 3:6-12) the author was "the precursor of Nehemiah's reforms and the Priestly Code."¹²⁵

The coming of the Lord to his temple means a new

¹²²Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.612.

¹²³Cf. H.H. Rowley, "The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah", in Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume, I, 1948, pp.117-49, repr. in The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament, London, 1952, pp.129-59. This view was first argued by A. van Hoonacker, Néhémie et Esdras, une nouvelle hypothèse sur la chronologie de l'époque de la restauration, Le Muséon, IX, 1890, pp.151-84, 317-51, 389-401; cf. J. Pedersen, Israel III-IV, 1940, p.607; W.F. Albright, The Biblical Archeologist, IX, 1946, p.13. J. Bright also places Ezra's arrival after Nehemiah's, a little earlier than the above-mentioned date, i.e. ca. 428 BC, cf. History of Israel, London, 1960, p.263.

¹²⁴Cf. Curt Kuhl, The Prophets of Israel, Edinburgh, 1960, p.169.

¹²⁵Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.615.

spiritual revival in the ritual worship in the temple. This will be the cure for the present abuses, cf. 3:2-4. In this sense the scribe Ezra could be considered as a מְלַאכֵי as well. He stirred the congregation to repentance (Ezr.10:1-5) and called together a national assembly (Ezr.10:6-8) and dissolved mixed marriages (Ezr.10:9-17), read the Law of Moses before the congregation (Neh.7:73 - 8:12).

The task of this מְלַאכֵי is also seen a few centuries later fulfilled by John the Baptist, who came and went before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." (Lk.1:16,17). Indeed, this מְלַאכֵי is further on more explained and identified with Elijah in Mal.4:5,6.¹²⁶ This מְלַאכֵי becomes an appellative and denotes those who are sent by God as His messenger to "prepare the way". Though these latter verses might be a later addition, this is merely a coincidence.

This מְלַאכֵי cannot be identified with the מְלַאכֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ, the Angel of the Covenant either, because the

¹²⁶ Cf. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p.613: "The editor believed that prophecy came to an end with Malachi and understood the divine messenger of 3:1 to be Elijah ..."

coming of this Angel is here made simultaneous with that of the Lord, who can hardly be other than Yahweh himself.¹²⁷ Moreover the Angel of the Covenant has the same adverbial description as the Lord, i.e. "the Lord whom you seek" and "the angel of the covenant in whom you delight". Thus he is not the fore-runner, but in him the Lord himself appeared. He is as such the same as the Angel of the Lord in the early writings. It is rather a parallelism in Hebrew literature style.¹²⁸

The Lord would suddenly come to his temple: to execute the judgement and to have a "permanent" abode with his people, as a sign of reconciliation. Which covenant is meant here? It could be the levitic covenant "of life and peace" (2:5a). But more than that: it is the whole work of redemption which is centred upon the whole steadfast covenant, of which the levitic covenant is an important part. The close connection of his coming with the restoration of the levitic covenant (cf. 3:3) seems to indicate the importance of the priesthood at that time. The name

¹²⁷ Cf. J.M.P. Smith, op. cit., ad loc.; J. Ridderbos, op. cit., ad loc.

¹²⁸ Cf. Ridderbos, op. cit., p.216; vide exegesis on Jgs.2:1-5.

מִלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית, instead of MY, seems to be connected with the particular character of Yahweh as the God of the Covenant.

The fact that for this purpose the term MY is not used, shows us that the MY no longer possessed its original full meaning. This is the important change in the MY conception after the Exile!

CHAPTER V

THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH CONCEPTION IN THE PRE-EXILIC PERIOD

From our survey we see that the MY appears or is at least mentioned throughout the OT: in the historical, poetical, and prophetic books, but not in the priestly writings.

Especially in the patriarchal period, as recorded in the Pentateuch, irrespective of sources and dates, we see the lively and concrete appearance of the MY attired with full authority. Sometimes it appeared invisibly, but audibly (Gen.21; 22). At another occasion it appeared inaudibly, but visibly (Gen.32:2,3). Several times it appeared audibly as well as visibly (Gen.16; 18; 19; 32:23-30; Num.22) or sometimes it appeared in a dream at night (Gen.28; 31:11-13).

Similar appearances still occurred in the time of Joshua (Jos.5:13-15) and the Judges (Jgs. Chs.VI, XIII) though not as frequently as in the former period. But quite a remarkable change is notable with the appearance of the prophets, that is to say the former prophets at the time of the kingship in Israel. The

MY there acts beside the prophet, cf. II Sam.24:11-19; I Kgs.13:18; 19:1-8; II Kgs.1:3-16; 6:15-18; 19:35.

The MY appears again in the post-exilic period, especially at the end of the OT period with Second-Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And then we no longer see the MY as a lonely figure, but in the company of other angels.

There is a "gap" round about the Exile, when Israel was shocked and disintegrated. We see in the vision of Ezekiel (Ezek.1) that the kabodh, glory, of Yahweh has left Jerusalem. In this period of God's judgement upon Jerusalem we do not read of any appearance of the MY, which is significant since the MY in former times appeared just in time of crisis and distress. Yet this Exilic period was a very important period for Israel in all matters and it affected the theological and religious thoughts of Israel in many ways, as we will see in the following chapter VI par.I. We must take this unique period of the Exile into serious consideration. We therefore divide the OT period for our purpose into two main eras, i.e. the Pre-exilic and the Post-exilic period. The Pre-exilic period may be divided again into two periods: the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Judges' period and the rise of prophetism during the kingship of Israel. This will be further described

in par.VIII, where we deal with the development of the MY idea in this pre-exilic period. Most of the principal questions will be dealt in this period, as the MY was undoubtedly more active and more clearly described in this period than in the later one. But this does not mean that we can understand and solve this problem just from this early period. Nor can we just apply the pre-exilic conception into the post-exilic one. The problem becomes more complicated than it is generally or traditionally supposed to be.

I. THE NATURE OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH

Can we describe the nature of the MY? This is indeed one of the questions that has caused much debate throughout the centuries. Concerning the MY, who appeared occasionally on the "platform of revelation" and disappeared again mysteriously into obscurity, we have only scanty knowledge. We are not satisfied merely to know what it has done. Who was it and what place did it occupy in the whole history of redemption? Those who presuppose that the MY is an ordinary created angel tend to answer this question by describing the nature of angels in general.

In our particular case the few data we have are

not always consistent, but we see rather, as Heinrich Gross said, "einer schillernden Mehrdeutigkeit" that requires more scrupulous attention.¹

From our exegetical survey of the passages in this pre-exilic period we conclude that the MY cannot be put on a par with what we call "angels" or rather created beings. The nature of the MY exceeds them all by far. In positive terms we can say that the MY was the anthropomorphic form of theophany. In the MY Yahweh himself was present; Yahweh acted and spoke through him in a realistic way. To see or to recognize the MY was for the ancient patriarchs and Israelites to see Yahweh himself, who appeared to men. Hence the response to the MY is one of fear and awe in men.

In this early period the idea of "angels" was hardly known. Angelology is a post-exilic phenomenon. There was no doctrinal need for angels in pre-exilic times, since, God's activity among men was direct, lively and strong. The idea of angels as "Zwischenwesen" was excluded. Moreover the fear of the polytheism of surrounding peoples created a strong barrier against any introduction of angels in Israelite religious

¹H. Gross, "Der Engel im alten Testament", in ALW, Bd.VI/1, 1959, p.30.

thinking.²

The existence of other such created spiritual beings was not denied. They were presumably created in the very beginning (cf. Job 38:7; Ps.148:1-6). Yet no particular significance or task was rendered to them in the relationship of God and men. They were not called מַלְאָכִים, but אֲנֹכִי וְאֲנֹכִי (I Kgs.22:19-22). They were as such heavenly beings, surrounding and attending God, forming the "members of the divine guild"³ or the heavenly Council of Yahweh. They were in a specially close relationship with God; hence the name אֲנֹכִי-אֲנֹכִי, which denotes that they belong to the immediate sphere of 'elohim, i.e. divine sphere. Yet they were never identified with God or worshipped by men. On the other hand these spiritual beings merely served to emphasize the glory of God. They were not called מַלְאָכִים, since they were not specially employed as "messengers" to men.

E. Jacob is right if he says that "the function of angels is expressed by the term mal'ak, messenger."⁴

²Cf. Gross, *ibid.*, p.40; Cf. von Rad, "מַלְאָכִים im AT", in *TWzNT*, vol.I, 1957, p.77: "Die immer schroffere Transzendentalisierung Jahwes begünstigte das Interesse an konkreten Mittelwesen."

³Cf. G.B. Gray, "Angels", in *Ebi*.

⁴E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, 1958, p.68.

But it is unlikely that the MY, as it appears in Gen.18:2ff; 19:1ff; Jos.5:13; Jgs.13:3ff; 6:11ff, is considered one of the **בְּנֵי-אֱלֹהִים** "in function". There are two objections against this hypothesis:

1. the MY is never described as belonging to one of the **בְּנֵי-אֱלֹהִים**
2. the attitude of the MY indicates clearly that he is more than an ordinary messenger.

In a few places the OT reveals the existence of other groups of angelic beings called the Cherubim and the Seraphim. Could the MY be one of these beings?

The root of **כְּרֻבִים** is dubious⁵ and its derivation from Assyro-babylonian religion is also uncertain. The Cherubim existed already in the ancient Israelite belief. We see them recorded as early as in Gen.3:24 (J), where they are placed at the east of the garden of Eden with a flaming sword which turned every way, guarding the way to the tree of life and barring Adam's way to the tree of life. Thus the Cherubim, as guardians of God's holiness, prevented every communication between the sinful man, who had been driven out, and the holy God. The Cherubim appear in other passages sometimes in this guarding capacity and sometimes as the carriers of sacred

⁵Cf. BDB, p.500.

objects associated with the holiness of God:

- a. as the living chariot of Yahweh in His self-manifestation; in this case they are possibly identified with the storm-wind (Ps.18:11; II Sam.22:11).
- b. as the throne of Yahweh, attached to the ark of the Covenant (I Sam.4:4; II Am.6:2; I Chron.13:6; II Kgs.19:15; Isa.37:16; Ps.80:1; 99:1).
- c. as guardians of God's holiness and glory, they are pictured as golden images, put on the כַּרְיִימוֹת of the Ark (Ex.25:18-22; 37:7-9; Num.7:89 - P), interwoven into the texture of the inner curtains of the tabernacle (Ex.26:1,31; 36:8,35 - P; II Chron.3:14); as images of olive-wood plated with gold, standing in the כַּרְיִימוֹת and facing the door (I Kgs.6:23-28; 8:6,7; II Chron.3:10-13).

These Cherubim have been considered as mythological figures⁶ or as "the embarrassing and alien last indistinguishable receding echoes of an ancient tradition".⁷ Though the idea of a foreign origin cannot be excluded, the obscurity of that origin and the fact that the Cherubim are found in the earliest OT sources should make us cautious. They are described even more

⁶Cf. H.W. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, repr. 1959, p.105.

⁷L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, p.159.

elaborately by the latter prophet Ezekiel (Ezek.9:33; 10; 11:22; 41:18,20,25, etc.); they are still mentioned by the author of the Priestly writings and the Chronicles (vide supra), and later on even by the anonymous writer of the letter to the Hebrews in the NT (Hebr.9:5). E. Jacob describes them as "imperfect sketches of a theology of the communication of God with man".⁸ It is, however, not very clear what he precisely means by this expression. In any case we can conclude that the MY cannot be classified and identified with them.

In Isa.6:2-4 we read about the $\text{D}^{\text{I}}\text{ר}^{\text{I}}\text{ש}$. This is the only place in the OT recording this kind of angelic beings. The word itself has been possibly derived from the root $\text{ר}^{\text{I}}\text{ש}$ which means "to burn" and in Isa.14:29 $\text{ר}^{\text{I}}\text{ש}$ means "fiery serpent" (cf. also Deut.8:15; Num.21:6). The Seraphim have six wings: one pair of wings cover its face, one pair cover its feet and the third pair are used for flying. The description given us here does not give any clear picture of their form. Although there is talk of "face", "feet", and "hand", the whole appearance and form seems far from anthropomorphic in the strict sense of the word. Their function is as "body-guards"

⁸Cf. Jacob, op. cit., p.69.

of God and they are ever ready to execute His Command with burning zeal. Even in carrying the message the Seraphim who touched Isaiah's mouth does not speak with the authoritative "I", but in a more impersonal and objective way, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." (vs.7). It is therefore clear that the MY cannot be classified as one of these seraphim either.

As a form of theophany Mal'akh most often occurs in the singular, in the phrase of Mal'akh Yahweh or sometimes Mal'akh 'Elohim (ha'elohim). It seems that in this sense Mal'akh cannot be separated from Yahweh, otherwise it does not exist at all! In some verses we read this word in plural, e.g. in Gen.28:12 where Jacob in a dream saw the theophany in the מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים ascending and descending. Jacob saw these מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים again in Gen.32:2. From our exegetical survey we see that these mal'akhim cannot be conceived of as other created angelic beings distinguished from the MY. The plurality of angels is the self-manifestation of Yahweh and is essentially the same as the MY.⁹ It is noteworthy that the MY never appears in the company of the mal'akhim at the same moment. The מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים and the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה ,

⁹Cf. exegesis on Gen.28:10-17.

as forms of theophany exclude each other, because they essentially denote one and the same thing. The different sources use different terms.

Those who consider the MY as a created angel functioning as a special messenger, mostly start from the presupposition that "mal'akhim is a particular class of angels commissioned by God as messengers in the earliest tradition.¹⁰ Thus they conclude that the MY naturally must be one of them, maybe more outstanding than the others, and reject any idea of theophany at all.¹¹

There are others who, in their effort to defend the unity of the Scriptures, do not make any difference between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic conception and the development of the angelology in Israel. In trying to achieve a homogeneous conception of the MY, they use simultaneously the post-exilic texts as well as the earliest writings to describe the nature and character of the MY. This inevitably must lead to confusion, as the MY in the OT has a "schillernden Mehrdeutigkeit". Nor can we justify that particular kind of interpretation which just reads back the NT into the

¹⁰ e.g. Jacob, op. cit., p.68.

¹¹ For a more detailed survey of this view, vide Ch.II.

OT and reads into the MY the Greek translation

ἄγγελος κυρίου

It is remarkable how our biblical texts testify to and describe the MY. The MY is all-wise, knowing, and discerning good and evil (II Sam. 14:17); he is omniscient and wise, knowing all things that are on the earth (II Sam 14:20); he is sovereign and full of authority (II Sam. 19:27). Divine honour and self-identification with Yahweh are ascribed again and again to him (Gen. 16:10, 11; 18:10, 13, 14, 20, 36; 22:12, 15, 16; Jgs. 2:1ff; 13:20ff; Jos. 5:14). He has Yahweh's Name in him (Ex. 23:23). He is called God's "panim", which went before Israel (Ex. 33; cf. Isa. 63:9).

From these divine attributes we can safely say that the MY cannot be an ordinary angel such as we find in the post-exilic angelology. No angel ascribes to himself such attributes. The MY is the anthropomorphic form of God's self-manifestation to Israel. It represents God on earth, acting and speaking as God himself, in His presence, providence, but also punishment (anger). In him God occasionally reveals himself to a greater or lesser extent. In the MY we can affirm the contrary of what has been said by E. Jacob concerning the Cherubim as "imperfect sketches of a theology of the communication of God with man".

Yet the MY cannot be simply and consistently identified with Yahweh. As a form of theophany he is distinguished from God and can therefore speak of Him in the third person. This ambiguous aspect of the MY testifies that the MY conception, even in this early period, was not just an adherence to a naïve primitive belief, far less a mere survival of polytheistic beliefs. It was rather a "theological" reflection of the editors or compilers of the traditional narratives. In the MY the ancient Israelites felt the directness of God's presence, acts, and speeches, yet without detracting from God's majesty and obscurity.

W. Eichrodt remarks in this matter:

Das ist die Unterscheidung zwischen Gott als den absoluten, unveränderlichen Urgrund und zwischen Gott als dem in Zeit und Raum sich persönlich Offenbarenden, oder, um diese leicht missdeutbaren philosophischen Begriffe zu vermeiden, der alte Israelit, soweit er zum Nachdenken über Gottes Wesen heranreiste, empfand bereits die Schwierigkeit, in der Erscheinungswelt sich offenbarenden Gott zu unterscheiden, und suchte sie durch den Begriff des Mal'ak jahve zu lösen. 12)

¹²W. Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testament, Bd.II, 1935, pp.6ff.

II. THE DIVINE ESSENCE IN THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH

If we speak of the MY as a form of God's self-manifestation, an absolute identification between God himself, who is a spirit and never could be seen by human eyes, and the MY, who adopts a certain form of appearance and therefore made visible to human senses, should never be made. The distinctions that always accompany the identity, prevent us from making such an absolute identity. It is better to speak of an essential identity.

Thus if man saw the MY in this particular period of the revelation, he could say that he saw Yahweh and therefore was filled with fear and awe, cf. Hagar. But on the other hand sometimes he merely saw a "man" or a "man of God", as was the case, e.g. with Abraham, Lot, Manoah's wife, etc., as an anthropomorphic form of God's self-manifestation. This is the crucial paradox in the MY problem.

To come back on the essential identity we could say that in the visible MY there is a divine essence, that is invisible and abstract in itself. It is this divine essence that distinguishes him completely from all other created beings and provides him with the

divine attributes and authority. What is this divine essence in the MY?

Kosters suggested that this divine essence consisted of the "panim", and sometimes of the "kabhodh", or sometimes of the "shem".¹³ It is in fact not easy to give a clear formulation about this abstract divine essence. Indeed those are the divine attributes of the MY. The MY acted and appeared as if he were Yahweh himself: with the power to forgive or not to forgive, causing great fear among men. Before his "panim" all the enemies of Israel would flee away.

But it is actually more than that: the MY saved the people, promised the birth of Isaac, Samson; he reminded and admonished Israel, he brought great comfort, he fulfilled what he had promised, he punished Israel because of their sin; he confirmed the Covenant, he protected the prophets and provided them with the Word of God.¹⁴ If we take all these various and extensive functions of the MY into consideration, it could better be said that the divine essence in the MY is the personality of the living and personal God, who acts with His people. The personality of the personal God of Israel

¹³W.H. Kosters, "De Mal'ach Jahwe", in ThT, IX, 1875, p.388.

¹⁴Gf. further par.V in this ch.

manifested himself in the MY. That is why God's panim, kabodh, and shem were in him. It was the personal, living God who manifested himself and entered in a covenant-relationship with His people.¹⁵

The MY is not just the personification of the prophetic spirit, as is suggested by some scholars. Vriezen says that "the MY is distinct from the Spirit of Yahweh because the mal'akh is rather the personal representation which proclaims, whereas the Spirit is the power proceeding from Yahweh or acting independently, which takes possession of a man and moves him to action (I Kgs.22:21f)".¹⁶

III. THE IDENTITY AND THE DISTINCTION

BETWEEN THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH AND YAHWEH

What is the relationship between this divine essence and the visible form of appearance? Here lies the paradox of this problem, i.e. the paradox of identity and distinction. Various interpretations have been suggested. Generally speaking they can be grouped into

¹⁵For the close connection between "shem" and personality, vide: H.W. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, repr.1959, p.106 footn.4: "The connection of the "name" as a partial manifestation of the personality is frequent in primitive thought".

¹⁶Vriezen, op. cit., pp.248.

three main types:¹⁷

1. the identity theory, which represents the earliest type of interpretation, sees in the MY the incarnation of the Logos and as such is considered the pre-existence of Jesus Christ in the OT.

2. the representation theory, which has been adhered to by many scholars in recent times, considers the MY as an ordinary created angel, one of many. He is a special angel among them used by God as His special messenger with a special task and can therefore act or speak in the name of his sender.

3. the interpolation theory, which has been suggested by some more critical scholars, sees in the term MY an interpolation by a later redactor in ancient documents which are presumed originally to mention just the name of Yahweh. This interpolation has been unfortunately imperfectly carried out and this paradox of the identity and the distinction is supposed to be the result of this uneven practice of interpolation.

It is evident that the identity theory puts all stress upon the identity, while the representation theory on the contrary puts it on the distinction. The inter-

¹⁷For a more detailed description of these types of interpretations, see Ch.II.

polation theory is not convincing and does not clarify the problem very much.¹⁸ It is true, that in this oscillation between the identity and the distinction von Rad discovers a certain system, namely that the word "Yahweh" is used when there is an objective statement from the author about God apart from the apperception of men; but when God's appearance is connected with men's apperception, then the author chose the word "MY", e.g. in Gen.21:17ff: God heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her ...".¹⁹

There might be indeed some such interpolations in the ancient traditional myths handed down across the centuries based on more advanced "theological" reflection. Our task is to find out the motives and reasons for this theological reflection against the background of Hebrew ways of thinking.

We have to take the paradox as it is, because only in this paradox is the ultimate truth about the MY expressed. This is not just the literary slovenliness of the redactors; their reverence towards the tradition and Scriptures would prevent that. Neither was it an

¹⁸Cf. Vide supra Ch.II par.III².

¹⁹Cf. von Rad, "יְהוָה im AT", in TWzNT, Bd.I, pp.75ff.

arbitrary choice of words, nor just a matter of the ancient oriental style of writing of the author, as has been suggested by F. Stier.²⁰ For the Hebrew mind this paradox did not mean any contradiction, as it sometimes seems to our modern mind.

One of the characteristic features in this paradox is the oscillation between the first and the third person employed in the speeches of the MY. In Gen.16:10 the MY speaks with the authoritative "I" that is only appropriate to God, "I will so greatly multiply your descendants that you cannot be numbered for multitude", but at the end of the following verse he speaks of the Lord in the third person, "... because the Lord has given heed to your affliction.". This kind of oscillation in the speech is not uncommon in itself in the OT. Sometimes it happens with the prophets, when they proclaim God's word.²¹ But it is noteworthy, that this kind of fluctuation occurs only occasionally and never gives the impression that the prophet was identifying himself with God.

It is obvious from the exegetical survey of the

²⁰Cf. F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testament, 1934, p.21.

²¹Cf. Exegesis on Gen.16:7-14, vide supra p.94 exegesis on Mal.3:1, vide supra p.171.

passages, that the MY cannot be identified with the prophets; that the MY is far more sublime than any human or even angelic being. Nevertheless in this particular point there seem to be some similarities, which can make some contribution to the deeper understanding of the MY..

According to A.R. Johnson, when this oscillation happened with the prophets, the prophet was speaking "in the Person" of Yahweh and as such the personality of the prophet was, as it were, absorbed in that of the Godhead; the prophet then became temporarily, at least, an important "extension of Yahweh's Personality".²²

This opens a new perspective in the understanding of this problem. Along these lines it is worth while to try to get a better understanding of the paradox of the identity and the distinction between the MY and Yahweh himself, the oscillation between the first and the third Person rendered to Yahweh in the MY's speeches, the inter-relationship between the divine Essence and the MY and the external form of appearance.

The MY is the self-manifestation of Yahweh and is as such insubstantial, but on the other hand the MY

²²Cf. A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, repr. 1961, p.37.

is possessed of a divine substance which is the Personality of Yahweh himself. This Personality of Yahweh has been extended to the MY to such an extent that the MY can be fully absorbed in it. Therefore, the MY can identify himself with Yahweh, can fully act like Yahweh and represent Him to a far greater degree than the ordinary prophet. That is why the sight of the MY can cause the fear of death.

The external form, that embodies this Divine Personality must be distinguished from Yahweh himself, in order to make possible the concrete relationship and communication of Yahweh with men. The external forms are therefore something of a "terrestrial" order.

The basic idea of this thinking was not a peculiarity in the ancient Near East.²³

Now from the passages it is evident that there is a living and dynamic relationship between the divine essence and the form of appearance. We see this very well illustrated in the story of Manoah and his wife in their meeting with the MY (Jgs.13). At the beginning the MY just looked like "a man of God" (vs.6). Their wonder and surprise increased and they offered him an offering. Their wonder turned into dread when they saw

²³For a survey of similarities, vide Ch.VII, par.1.

the MY ascending in the flame of the altar and they fell on their faces to the ground (vs.20), while their hearts were for a moment filled with dread fear of death. This lively and dynamic relationship mentioned just now can be described as a "polaritic oscillation" between the divine essence and the external form of appearance. It is an oscillation or fluctuation between two "poles", i.e. the divine personality of Yahweh and the appearance-form as such apparently belonging to the terrestrial order. This polaritic oscillation idea seems to a certain extent to influence the presence of God as it was symbolized in the Ark and the Temple. As such it fitted into the vivid Hebrew conception of God in Person making himself known to his people.

In this polaritic oscillation there is, however, no immutable relationship between Yahweh himself and his external form of appearance, so that it was possible for Yahweh himself to act through the MY in destroying the people of Israel, representing God's punishing hand, and on the other hand command the Angel of destruction after repentance saying, "It is enough; now stay your hand." (II Sam. 24:16).

Speaking about corporate personality A.R. Johnson deals also with the idea of polarity. He says,

It is a matter of polarity; and as we are dealing now with the conception of God rather than of man, we have to say in this context that there is a manward, as well as Godward application of corporate personality. 24)

Thus in the MY there is a man-ward application, which results in the distinction, and a god-ward application that results in the identity.

There is no pure identity excluding distinction, no pure distinction excluding identity, but polaritic identity and polaritic distinction.

IV. THE FORMS OF APPEARANCE OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH

It is interesting to pay closer attention to the external forms of appearance to which the divine personality has been extended. There is a variety of forms. The most usual and obvious one is the human form of the MY. But even in this human form we discern some variety:

- as an ordinary man, indistinguishable at the beginning, only his works and words revealed him as the MY.
- as a warrior, with a sword in his hand (Jos.5:13-15; Num.22).
- as three men or "mal'akhim" destroying Sodom and

²⁴Cf. A.R. Johnson, op. cit., p.38.

Gomorrhah (Gen.19) and visiting Abraham (Gen.18).
 - as a number of mal'akhim (Gen.28; 32).

In this latter instance there are not only variations in the forms but also in number. To our modern western mind it is very hard to realize that the MY, as God's self-manifestation could appear in a plurality of figures. Yet it is not so strange to the Hebrew way of thinking. We saw that the Hebrews could easily tolerate and accept the oscillation between the first person and the third person in the speeches of the prophets. The oscillation here between the singular and the plural is also a common trend in the Israelite thinking. H.W. Robinson called this the Hebrew conception of "corporate personality."²⁵ In this conception the individual is never considered as one single isolated being, but always considered as a part of an organic whole. A.R. Johnson calls this 'the one and the many'²⁶ and said further that in the oscillation between Yahweh and the two or three "angels" there is an oscillation between the singular and the plural, so that it is not clear whether the singular is a singular

²⁵Cf. H.W. Robinson, "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality" in Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments, ed. J. Hempel, BZAW, LXVI (1936), pp.57ff.

²⁶Cf. A.R. Johnson, op. cit., et passim.

of individualization or that of a collective unit.²⁷

The MY appears:

- as an unknown wrestler against Jacob (Gen.32:24-32).

Jacob said that he had seen God "face to face" and called the name of the place "Peniel". So Jacob had seen God's "panim", which was the divine essence in this "unknown man", who was nobody else than the MY himself.

- as a man of God, with the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible (Jgs.13).

- as the Angel of destruction (Mal'akh) mashhith) with the outstretched hand (II Sam.24).

Yet the human form was not the only form in which the MY appeared. He also appeared in a flame of fire, in the burning bush (Ex.3:2). Moses did not see any human figure in the bush. The MY led and protected Israel in the desert; there is no talk of any visible form of the MY, but the MY was in close connection with the pillar of cloud and of fire (cf. Ex.14:19ff). It is important too to notice how the MY disappeared and ascended in the flame of the altar, while Manoah and his wife were looking on (cf. Jgs.13:20,21). And it is

²⁷Cf. A.R. Johnson, op. cit., p.34.

not unlikely that the chariots and horses of fire that protected Elisha and took up Elijah were variations of the external form of appearance of the MY. In Deut.4:24 God is described as a devouring fire.

From this summary it seems that the divine essence in the MY was constant, but on the other hand the external form of appearance was flexible and adjusted to the situations and the task to be fulfilled. It is quite obvious that God is able to assume any form He likes to manifest himself to men and to make himself visible or audible to human senses.

This variety of forms is in my opinion due to three things:

1. the flexible and dynamic polaritic oscillation relationship between the divine essence and the external forms of appearance (vide supra).

2. the occasional character of the theophany through the MY, which is to be distinguished from the comparatively more "permanent" manifestations.²⁸ The

²⁸Kosters remarked that the divine essence, which consisted of the "panim", "kabhodh", or "shem" was also attached to the Ark and the Temple, that were considered as Yahweh's abode or dwelling-place among Israel. But the difference between the Temple and the Ark on the one hand and the MY on the other hand was that in the Temple and the Ark were the relatively "permanent" dwelling-place of the divine essence, while the MY was a "contemporary sending"; cf. Kosters, op. cit., pp.388f.

divine essence took a certain form in the MY occasionally and after fulfilling the task it disappeared again and had no more existence in itself as such. This occasional-character of the MY-appearances has been described by G.A.F. Knight in pictorial manner,

The flame is identical with the fire, yet the flame is not the fire in itself. In doing the "will" of the fire, the flame is compelled to separate itself from the source, and continues to perform its task in this state of separation. Yet when its task is done, the flame ceases to exist as an entity in its own right. While it was in action as a flame, however, there was a species of family relationship between it and the other flames, and between it and the parent fire. 29)

3. the living, direct, and personal relationship between Yahweh and His people.

The rich variety of forms was necessary to prevent any worship of one particular form of appearance, e.g. the MY worship or cult. The ultimate importance for Israel was not the external forms of appearance, but the Word of God, the message that was spoken or brought through the theophanies. In revelation Israel was not overconcerned with the physical or any other form of God. In many cases of the theophanies there is no description at all of the form in which God appeared.³⁰

It is therefore too speculative to see in one

²⁹Of. G.A.F. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, 1959, p.74.

³⁰vide supra, Ch.III, par.5.

particular form, e.g. the form of fire, the origin of the MY-belief, namely that Yahweh was originally a "thunder-god" of ancient Israel. This hypothesis has been advocated by the religio-historico school in the past century.³¹

However, in the many varieties of forms of the MY, the human form is undoubtedly predominant and the most obvious one for Israel. The explanation for this fact is, not that God himself is conceived as having a human form³², but firstly, because the MY had the divine essence, which was conceived as the extension of God's personality, and secondly, it was the most natural and obvious way to express the "personal" relationship between Yahweh and men.

V. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FORMS OF APPEARANCE

Many different functions are ascribed to the MY:
 - to bring the promise of birth and the blessing (Gen.16; 18; Jgs.13).

³¹Cf. Kusters, op. cit., et passim; H.W. Robinson, op. cit., p.105.

³²The dogmatic conclusion about this in connection with Gen.1:26, seems to me rather artificial; cf. James Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism", in VT, suppl. VII, pp.31-38.

- to perform judgement and punishment (Gen.19; II Sam. 24)
- to provide Abraham with the burnt-offering (Gen.22)
- to assure Jacob of God's presence and guidance (Gen. 28)
- to call Moses and Gideon (Ex.3; Jgs.6)
- to lead Israel out of Egypt, guide and protect them in the desert (Ex.3; 14:19; 23:23ff.; Jgs.2:1ff.)
- to convert Balaam to bless Israel (Num.22:23)
- to express God's care and providence for Elijah (I Kgs.19:5ff.)
- to slay the Assyrians and to deliver Jerusalem (II Kgs.19:35ff.)

These various functions of the MY express the living relationship between God and His people; they show how concerned Yahweh was with the life of Israel. Concerning these functions we can say in general that the functions and the messages of the MY mean a "blessing" for Israel. von Rad defines the MY as "die Person gewordene Hilfe Gottes für Israel", but on the other hand he acknowledges that in one place the MY had to punish Israel (II Sam.24:17).³³ Indeed we should not forget this punishing function of the MY, even for

³³cf. von Rad, loc. cit.,

Israel, cf. Ex.32:34b; Jgs.2:2b,3. The Lord as a devouring fire (Deut.4:24; 9:3) has been manifested in the MY too.

There is indeed a certain correlation between the pluriformity of the appearances and the various corresponding functions; in some passages this relationship comes out clearer than in other ones. A few passages may show this relationship.

In Gen.18 and 19 the MY appears as three men and afterwards as two men or mal'akhim. This is according to Kusters to express the omnipresence of Yahweh.³⁴ The Lord talked with Abraham, but at the same time the Lord said that He was going to Sodom and "so the men turned from there, and went towards Sodom; but Abraham stood before the Lord" (Gen.18:21,22).

In Gen.28 the appearance of the angels, מַלְאָכָי, in the dream of Jacob assured Jacob of God's presence and guidance. Jacob was at that time afraid to meet his brother Esau.

In Gen. 32:23-30 the MY appears to Jacob as an unknown wrestler. At this turning point in Jacob's life the MY struggled with Jacob. His own strength turned out to be insufficient, so he needed God's

³⁴cf. Kusters, op. cit., p.373.

blessing and grace. That is why the struggle resulted in two signs for Jacob: 1. the changing of the name, 2. the twisted thigh of Jacob. The meaning of this struggle therefore extended to the life of the whole nation of Israel; they had to struggle with God, yet could always be sure of God's blessing and grace. Jacob was here a corporate personality, cf. Hosea 12:4b, "there God spoke with us".

In Ex.3 the MY appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, burning but not consuming. It is peculiar indeed that the MY adopted this kind of appearance form. This strange phenomenon was used by God to attract Moses' attention in that rugged place, and to call Moses to his important and superhuman task.

In Ex.14 the MY was present in the pillar of cloud and fire, so that it should be visible to the whole people. It guided Israel in the desert as a light in the darkness and at the same time protected Israel against the persecuting troops of the Pharaoh.

In Num.22 and 23 and in Jos.5 the MY appeared as a man with a sword, showing that Yahweh was the mighty God. Balaam had to submit himself to him and had to cancel his plans to curse Israel; he must be a blessing prophet for Israel. To Joshua the MY showed himself as the Commander of the heavenly host. He would fight for

Israel in conquering Jericho. Yahweh called Joshua up to this fight. He was the mighty One and the thick walls of Jericho could not prevent Israel from entering it. It is natural that on this particular occasion the MY appeared as a Warrior too. More unpleasant for Israel was the appearing of the MY as an angel with the sword in hand, the angel of destruction, which represented the punishing hand of Yahweh (II Sam.24).

There is thus an interrelationship between the forms of appearance and the functions of the MY. Any fixed and definite rule in this relationship, however, is not to be given.

VI. THE REACTION OF MEN TOWARDS THE APPEARANCES OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH

In this anthropomorphic theophany with its polaritic oscillation between the divine essence and the form of appearance, between the singular and the plural, with its pluriformity and variety in the functions, we cannot expect one and the same kind of reaction from men towards the MY. The reaction of men is clearly connected with the polaritic oscillation between the divine essence, which is spiritual and the form of appearance which is in most cases human, physical or natural.

Although not all reactions are described clearly,

we are able to distinguish the different kinds of reactions.

The first kind of reaction that is conspicuous is the fearless reaction of men in meeting the MY, e.g. in Gen.16; 18; 19; Jgs.6; 13. The MY as an anthropomorphic theophany is indeed supposed to be visible and audible to men. For that reason He sometimes adopted such a natural human appearance that He was hardly recognizable and therefore could converse freely with men. The MY was as such the visible or audible bearer of the divine essence, that was in itself invisible. In him Yahweh himself was present, communicating with men. This was the "raison d'être" of the MY. Thus it is quite reasonable that men could see him and converse freely and fearlessly with him. In the polaritic oscillation this is the so-called man-ward application or oscillation. The divine essence, which in itself is awesome, is hidden behind the human form of appearance. As such the MY was treated like a human being and he himself acted like a human being too. He could be touched, he could eat (Gen.18:8) and wrestle (Gen.32:23-30). As long as this man-ward oscillation remained, men could meet the MY fearlessly, because he was unaware or not fully aware of who the MY was. It is noteworthy

that these stories were derived from the so-called J narratives, which are generally accepted as representing the earliest sources.

The second kind of reaction is that which is accompanied with fear. There are comparatively more passages that record this kind of reaction and most of them peculiarly belong to the so-called E narratives or are ascribed to a later redactor who compiled both narratives (JE). Hagar was indeed afraid for the child's life and from the words of the MY it is evident that Hagar's fear was connected with the trouble that she was facing and with the voice of the lad (Gen.21:17). Although this passage belongs to E there is no sufficient evidence of Hagar's fear caused by the voice of the MY. Clearer evidence of such fear is provided by Gen.28:17, where Jacob was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place!" Moses also was terrified by the burning bush and "hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (Ex.3:6). Gideon feared death when he realized, that he had seen the Angel of the Lord, (Jgs.6:22,23 - JE). Manoah cried in fear, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God!" (Jgs.13:22 - JE).

In the polaritic oscillation relationship this is the so-called God-ward oscillation. The divine essence becomes more "transparent" through the external

form of appearance. This could take place either gradually or quite suddenly via the speeches or the acts of the MY, that testify the divine essence.

The third kind of reaction is that of adoration and worship. When the God-ward oscillation was dominant, then men realized that they had to do with Yahweh himself. This resulted in adoration of Yahweh, but not of the MY as a form of theophany. Usually we read, that a new name was given to the particular place where Yahweh had manifested himself and the place became a holy place, where an altar was built and offerings were given. This was the origin of the several cult-places in Israel. This third kind of reaction is evident from a few verses: Gen.16:14 Beer la hai-roi; Gen.22:14, the name of that place is called The Lord will provide; Gen.28:19 the name Bethel; Gen.32:30 the name Peniel; Num.22:31b, the worship of Balaam; Jos.5:14b, the worship of Joshua; Jgs.2:5, the name Bochim; Jgs.6:24, the altar is called The Lord is peace; Jgs.13:20, Manoah and his wife looked on and they fell on their faces to the ground. In such ways did men respond to the self-manifestation of God in the MY.

VII. THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH IN THE METAPHORICAL
LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE

It is interesting to notice that in the period of the Kingdom of Israel and with the rise of prophetism, the appearances of the MY became fewer and fewer. The function of the MY has been partly replaced by the prophet. The man-ward application in the polaritic oscillation relationship became more and more dominant. When in this period the appearances of the MY became fewer and less important for the people, the memory of the MY still lived vividly in the imagination of the people. The MY appeared occasionally to the prophets. The people, who probably never met the MY, considered him as a figure from the past, of whom they had heard. The importance of the traditional belief in the MY has been expressed by von Rad, "Zu ihrer näheren Bestimmung ist es dienlich, nicht von den theologisierenden Stellen, sondern von seiner volkstümlichen Bezeugung auszugehen."³⁵

This traditional belief among the people found its expression in their metaphorical language. Even the Philistine Achis knew something about the MY, perhaps via David and his followers who took refuge in

³⁵ Cf. von Rad, loc. cit.

the land of the Philistines. We do not know, however, to what extent Achis had the right idea of the MY. In a flattering language spoken to David he compared David to the ME (I Sam.29:9). In any case this testifies how wide-spread the popular and traditional belief was. Among the people of Israel themselves this MY-picture is used twice. The wise woman of Tekoa and Mephiboseth compared David to the MY, expressing their high estimation of and reverence for David (II Sam.14:17; 19:27).

In the context of the whole development of God's revelation in the OT, this use of the MY picture in the metaphorical language of the people denotes a significant change, that is not without influence for the following periods.

VIII. THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH CONCEPTION IN THIS PERIOD

From the dynamic nature of the MY, the changeable forms of appearance, the variety in functions, the different human reactions on the appearance of the MY, the popular use of the MY picture in their metaphorical language and the rise of prophetism in the period of the Kingdom, we see that the MY conception shows some development in this pre-exilic period, which is of a

great importance for the further development of the revelation and the religious thoughts of Israel.

This development in the MY conception has been closely related to the development towards an increasingly transcendent God-idea in the OT, whether the MY was considered as self-manifestation of Yahweh or as a messenger-angel of Yahweh. This has not only been promulgated by the religious-historical school and the theory of the sources division, but also from within the OT itself there are some indications in this direction, even in the early period before the Exile.

Heinrich Gross in his article³⁶ noted - and in this case he also referred to von Rad³⁷ - the significant difference between the two prepositions used with Enoch and Abraham in expressing their relationship to God. In Gen.5:22,24 it is recorded, that "Enoch walked with [אֱלֹהִים] God", also in Gen.6:9 it is written that Noah walked with (אֱלֹהִים) God. These denote the very close relationship between God and men. This preposition is no longer used for Abraham in Gen.17:1, because in that verse God said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk

³⁶Cf. H. Gross, "Der Engel im alten Testament", in ALW, Bd.VI/1, 1959, p.30.

³⁷von Rad, Das Erste Buch Mose, ATD 2/3 [1949/52] 56; 168.

before [לְפָנַי] me ..."³⁸ This difference in preposition suggests the idea of an increasing remoteness of God from men and it was in this situation that God manifested himself through the MY. It is worth noting that these verses belong to the same E narratives.

This line of comparison may be drawn further. In the time of king Jehoshaphat (875 - 851) the prophet Micaiah, the son of Imlah, described his vision of God as follows, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left." (I Kgs.22:19).³⁹ God was not only remote, but also full of majesty, surrounded by all the host of heaven. But if we compare this vision with Isaiah's vision (740 BC) in Isa.6:1-5 then we see the difference again: the Lord sat upon a throne, high and lifted up, surrounded by the seraphim, guardians of God's holiness, crying one to the other the "trishagion". Besides that, we notice the awesome reaction of Isaiah,

³⁸Cf. also Gen.24:40; 48:15.

³⁹The first edition of this book was about 600 BC, but the sources themselves were very old, i.e. histories of the kings of Israel or Juda, as is often mentioned by the author or redactor of the book himself (e.g. I Kgs. 16:5,14,27; 22:39,45; II Kgs.1:18; 8:23; 10:34 etc.). It is probable that important public acts of the kings were recorded from the time of Solomon; cf. R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, repr. 1953, p.395.

"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" (vs.5).

In describing the development of the MY conception in this pre-exilic period it is useful to divide this period into two parts:⁴⁰ a) the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Judges period, b) the period of the kingdom with the rise of prophetism.

a) We saw the polaritic oscillation in the MY conception, which caused the double significance: the identity and the distinction, the celestial and the terrestrial order. The first appearances of the MY showed the concrete visible anthropomorphic self-manifestation: Yahweh appeared to men in the visible form of the MY. Albright remarks,

It is very clear that standard Israelite thinking in early pre-exilic times insisted on the ideal anthropomorphic character of Yahweh, who was a personal God and not an impersonal manifestation of deity. 41)

⁴⁰ Skinner remarked about this development of the MY-idea, "That the idea underwent a remarkable development within the OT religion must, of course, be recognized." Cf. Skinner, Genesis, ICC, 1930, pp.286f.

⁴¹ W.F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, Anchor Books, 1957, p.298.

Men could see, speak and converse quietly with him without any fear. Human eyes did not recognize him because of the simple and ordinary human form. God was as it were in a direct "physical" contact with men, although the idea of the remoteness of the Deus absconditus was not absent here. This kind of appearance occurred mostly in those passages, which are usually ascribed to the J narratives.

Then the oscillation moved rather God-ward. Though the MY still appeared in human form, his appearance caused great fear and awe. To see the MY was to see Yahweh himself and men were very much surprised if they still remained alive after seeing him. Adoration and worship to Yahweh were usually the results. Such conceptions belong mainly to the so-called E narratives or to a revised source JE compiled by a redactor R^{JE}.

There was also a change in the way of appearance. In the J narratives the MY mostly appeared visibly and audibly in human form. In the other narratives, however, the MY became more transcendental, usually invisible, yet audible, e.g. Gen.22:11. He preferred to appear at night and avoided the daylight (Gen.32:26). Sometimes he appeared in dreams and visions (Gen.28:12-17; 31:11; 32:2). To see the MY one's eye must be opened first by God (Num.22:31 - R^{JE}). The two latter ways of appearance

became typical too in the following time of the kingdom (cf. I Kgs.19:1-8 and probably in II Kgs.6:15,18).

These changes in the way of appearance, however, did not actually detract from the directness of the anthropomorphic appearances. James Barr remarks, "It could be argued that in the contrary the dream increases the directness and gives a stronger vision."⁴² In the more transcendental God idea the remoteness and the nearness or directness did not exclude each other, and this is typical of the religious outlook of the OT.

From this viewpoint we notice a certain change in the physical behaviour of the MY, esp. concerning his attitude towards food. In Gen.18; 19, the "three men" ate, drank, and relaxed; the "two angels" also acted just like ordinary men, who were tired and needed some accommodation for the night. In Jgs.13:16 the MY refused definitely to accept some food, but recommended an offering to Yahweh.

b) The period of the kingdom with the rise of prophetism. Two things affected the development of the MY conception in this period: the increasingly transcendental God idea and the rise of prophetism. The prophets received visions about God in his majesty and holiness, vide supra: I Kgs.22:19; Isa.6:1-5. God was

⁴²Barr, op. cit., p.33.

conceived as the universal God and the whole earth is filled with His glory (Isa.6:3). The theophanies through the MY, however, become fewer and looser in directness and intensity. The idea of remoteness becomes more dominating. In the Mosaic period Moses fell on his face before Yahweh, who manifested himself through the MY in the burning bush. At Sinai, in a cleft of the rock, Moses was allowed to see God's back. But in I Kgs.19:11 it is written, that the Lord passed by and Elijah recognized in a small voice the presence of God; he did not see anything and heard only a voice that came to him, while he was standing in a cave at Horeb with his face wrapped in his mantle.

A second factor is the rise of prophetism, which indeed marks a new stage in Israel's history and in the divine revelation.⁴³

When the anthropomorphic self-manifestations of

⁴³For recent discussions about the early prophetism and its importance, consult, e.g. J. Pedersen, "The Role played by the Inspired Persons among the Israelites and the Arabs", in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H.H. Rowley, 1950, pp.127-42; H.H. Rowley, "Nature of Prophecy", in HTR, XXXVIII, no.1, 1945; W.F. Albright, op. cit., pp.299-309; J. Philip Hyatt, Prophetic Religion, Nashville, 1947; C. Kuhl, The Prophets of Israel, Edinburgh, 1960, pp.11-58; G. von Rad, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd.II, Die Theologie der prophetischen Überlieferungen Israels, I Hauptteil, München, 1960; Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, Oxford, 1958, p.32; G. Osborn, Torah in the Old Testament, Lund, 1945.

God became fewer, the prophets were called by God to be the bearer of His Word (I Sam.15:10; I Kgs.12:22; 16:1, 7; 17:2,8 etc.) and His Spirit (Num.24:2; I Sam.10:6 etc.), which now became the two important means of God's revelation to His people. The reception of the Word or the Spirit cannot be rationalized, and the Scriptures never give a clear description. It is obvious that they had a unique spiritual relationship with God and underwent some mysterious experiences, of which the details cannot be described.⁴⁴

This change had been anticipated even in the Mosaic period. We noticed there that the MY appeared at the solemn moment of Moses' calling in a flame of fire. Later on the MY was closely connected with the natural phenomena like cloud, fire, and light, etc., going before Israel in the desert. There was strangely no record of an anthropomorphic theophany of Yahweh through the MY, as in the patriarchal period. The form of appearances seemed not so important as the person of Moses who was called to be the prophet and the servant of God, bearer of His word. The MY led Israel and Moses, but in what form it was not clear; he was in any case identified with God's panim, cf. Ex.34:14; Isa.63:9; Deut.4:37,38).

⁴⁴ Cf. Kuhl, op. cit., p.19.

In the story of Balaam it was the MY again who converted him to become a prophet blessing Israel. It was the MY's words, identified as Yahweh's words, that the prophet should speak!

In the Elijah stories (I Kgs.19:4-17; II Kgs.1:3-4; 15-16) the MY appeared to Elijah when he was in great despair. The function of the MY was to strengthen him physically and to prepare him for the Word of the Lord that would be given to him at Horeb. From the exegesis we concluded that the MY was still on the one hand identified with Yahweh, but on the other hand distinguished from Yahweh by Elijah. It is remarkable how obedient Elijah, as the "man of God", was towards the MY.

From the Elisha stories it can be presumed that it was the MY who protected and delivered him from the Syrians (II Kgs.6:15-19). The prophet took over some of the functions, which were formerly ascribed to the MY, e.g. the birth-announcement, II Kgs.4:16 cf. Gen.16:10-12; 18:10-14.

In II Kgs.19:35 the MY executed what had been prophesied by the prophet Isaiah and delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians, by slaying a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians. There seems again a close connection between the word of God and the MY.

Generally speaking we find in this particular period that:

a) the MY is still considered as the self-manifestation of Yahweh, although with a lesser intensity. As such we still perceive the ambiguity of identification and distinction.

b) with the rise of prophetism the appearances of the MY become fewer. Furthermore the MY looks more "human" and seems to give the impression of an intermediary being. The extension of the divine personality becomes less intensive and the oscillation more fixed in a man-ward direction.

c) the functions of the MY differ from those in the previous period. Towards the prophets the MY has now rather a ministering and preparing function. The prophet is the proclaimer of God's word to the people. The co-operating relationship between them both is as follows:

- the MY has to execute what has been proclaimed by the prophets and as such doing God's work on earth, e.g. II Kgs.1:16f; 19:35ff.
- the MY appears at the calling of the prophets, e.g. Moses, Balaam.
- the MY provides and prepares the prophets with the

Word of God, e.g. Balaam, Elijah, Elisha.

- the MY appears again to the prophets in critical moments of danger or despair, e.g. Balaam, Elijah in the desert, Elisha against the Assyrians.
- the prophets always submit themselves to the words of the MY, considering them as the Word of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH CONCEPTION IN THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD

If we consider the development in the MY conception before the Exile, especially the changes in connection with the rise of early prophetism and the metaphorical language of the people, and also the presumed existence of other heavenly beings belonging to God's guild, then further development could be foreseen. Before the Exile it has been observed that the appearances of the MY became gradually fewer in number as well as in intensity. Instead, the prophets gradually played a more important role and developed the theology of Israel.

There were several factors, historical and theological, that caused this change in the MY conception. Some of these factors can be mentioned here:

- the event of the Exile and the deliverance from it, was undoubtedly one of the greatest historical events in Israel's history.
- the more intensive contact with other religions
- the rise of the angelology in Israel.

All this required the existence and acts of a "Mittelwesen".

We have noted the gradual development from the concrete anthropomorphic theophanies in the oldest narratives to the MY who was only audible calling from heaven. The distance between the MY and men became "physically" greater and at the end of the pre-exilic period the MY mostly lingered in the memory or tradition of the people. Traces of the older beliefs and conceptions still survived in the period of "transition" around the Exile. In post-exilic period the name MY was still mentioned occasionally, but it no longer expressed the old sense of theophany. It is usually found in metaphorical language (cf. Pss.34 and 35), or in reference to older stories and in this matter is dependent on older documents, e.g. Isa.63:9; 37:36; I Chron.21; II Chron.32:21f.

The more transcendent conception of Yahweh was characteristic of Israelite religious thinking in this period. In this further stage of revelation, other means of revelation were further developed, such as the Spirit, the Word, the prophets, the priests with the tōrah, which were now more employed than ever

before.¹ The MY necessarily got a new place, meaning, and significance and in some points even underwent some transformation, adjusted to the new stage of revelation.

I. THE RETURN AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH

God, who was always acting with His people, revealed Himself through the history of Israel. Through all political events and experiences Israel received a richer revelation and therefore also a clearer idea about God. There was a certain progress and development in God's revelation in the OT: from the realistic anthropomorphism to prophetism and prophetic movement, then through the temple-cult with the priests and Tōrah to the rigid legalism in the late hellenistic Judaism. In the whole course of the revelation, this

¹The word תּוֹרָה here is taken in the general sense of "law", which was considered as essentially to be taught to the individual or to the people. It is derived from the verb תָּרָא which means "to direct, to teach or to instruct" (cf. BDB, p.435), so that tōrah specially means the authoritative direction or teaching given by the priest concerning ritual and cultic matters and it includes also the ethical instructions. In post-exilic time this name is especially characteristic of the instruction given by the priests; cf. N.W. Porteous, "The Basis of the Ethical Teaching of the Prophets", in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H.H. Rowley, 1950, p.148.

development, however, did not follow a smooth straight linear progress.² It was a constant pushing through and a falling back through historical crises; it was a defending and attacking, borrowing and transforming in Israel's struggle against changing surroundings. God showed his mighty acts and will, revealed His true character through it and Israel was reminded again and again of its calling as a people of God.

The fall of Jerusalem and the consequent Exile was such a historical crisis. The population was dispersed and split into groups, each of which was henceforth to live under different surroundings and conditions. Some of them adapted themselves to the new surroundings or fell back into the old inherited sin of idolatry.

Among the Babylonian exiles, however, there seemed to be revived interest in the prophecies and the Law. They began to realize the truth of the prophecies

²This development in the MY-idea and God-idea should not necessarily be conceived in an evolutionistic way. We perceive a great decline in Israel's spiritual life in the times of the Judges compared with the older Mosaic period. The religious life during both Israelite kingdoms was not better than in the previous Davidic times. After the Exile there was a new development and revival, but this led to a certain distortion of the true Yahwism, i.e. the exaltation of the Temple cult, resulting in a legalistic attitude in Judaism. But the fact, that in the whole course of Israel's history there was a certain development in the God-idea, and closely connected with it also in the MY-idea, cannot be denied.

spoken by Jeremiah and his predecessors. They had lost all, except God's promises according to the prophecies and God's laws, which they were eager to preserve.³

A group of priests started to define and to write down the laws, which they considered as their surviving national heritage and now treated with reverence and care. They saw in them a guidance and a protector against the heathen surroundings and influences. This has led to the re-editing of the Deuteronomic records after the Exile in priestly circles, the so-called P codes. Vriezen remarks, referring to the re-editing of this Deuteronomic records, that

important elements of the ancient priestly laws were added, often reworded in a new spirit, after having been purified so as to bring them into accordance with the standards of ancient prophetic criticism. 4)

This people in the exile, consisting of the prominent kernel of the Israelite people, gave to their religious life a new shape and vitality and their religious outlook left a permanent mark in the following development. This was mainly due to the work of Ezekiel, the prophet in the Exile, who was on the one hand a prophet

³Cf. A. Lods, The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, 1937, pp.173-80.

⁴Vriezen, Th. G., An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.49.

proclaiming the Word of God of an apocalyptical and eschatological character, but on the other hand a priest promulgating the priestly law, giving a new life to the ceremonial laws. This gave to the religious life a new rigidity it had never known before. How important this movement was, we see later on after the return from the Exile. Yet for the time being these two religious trends, prophetism and sacerdotalism, which later on became two different and opposing groups, went hand in hand.

The largest mass seemed to stay in Palestine, occupying "the waste places in the land of Israel" (Ezek.33:24). They partly remained faithful to the temple of Jerusalem and its worship in spite of the burning and the destruction of the Temple by Nebuzaradan in 586 BC. There is some evidence that they did continue their worship on the site of the Temple: Jer.41:4,5; Lam.1:4; Zech.7:2,3. However, there were those who "eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols" (Ezek.18:6; 33:25).

Thus from these groups of people during the exilic period we see different reactions and religious outlooks. The national catastrophe of 586 BC has thus affected the religious life of the whole population. It was a time of great changes, and deep distress and disgrace, but

on the other hand the start and the upbuilding of a new development in the revelation. Some important effects can be summed up here:

a) the acceptance of prophecies and the Law in adaptation to the new situation.

b) the strong tendency to codify the priestly and ritual laws (tōrah). This was the seed of the supremacy of the written Tōrah in the coming ritualism and legalism in the future new Judaism. In connection with this tendency there are two consequences:

1. the emergence of the intellectual element (laity)
2. the social structure became more and more a "temple-congregation" rather than a "state".⁵

In post-exilic times we are not deprived of the MY. It appeared again in a more lively setting in post-exilic theology. The more spiritual and transcendent Yahweh became, the greater the necessity for intermediaries to bring God's word to men and to realize God's work on earth. This was a result of the theological reflection of Israel on the revelation through all their historical events and experiences. The remoteness of

⁵Cf. also Otto Plöger, "Priester und Prophet", in ZAW, LXI, 1951, pp.190-92, "Nation und Kultgemeinde deckten sich miteinander, insofern in beiden der gleiche Kreis von Menschen sichtbar wurde, unter verschiedenen Aspekten betrachtet."

Yahweh did not eliminate His personal concern for Israel and the world. In this sense Yahweh was always spiritually near.

In this development there are three important developments as far as the MY is concerned:

1. the hypostatizing of the prophetic spirit, the Ruach, that communicates the Word to men, and especially to the prophets.⁶

2. the rise of angelology; the angelic beings formerly the host of heaven or b'enē 'elohim, belonging to the heavenly court, are now considered as more active, not only surrounding the glory of God, but also charged by God as His messengers (mal'akhim) in the communication with men. The MY is now considered as being one and chief of them; and as such the MY also communicates the Word to the prophets.

3. the revelation of the Word becomes concentrated in the codification of the Tōrah. The relation between God and men, established by the Word and the Ruach, is no more considered as "blitzartig", but as a permanent

⁶Cf. Vriezen, op. cit., p.248:"...; just as the ruach, the Spirit, is not only something that emanates from God and represents Him but also something that may be considered as existing independently beside God."

one. God does not act just occasionally in a particular situation or moment, but God likes to teach, advise, and to speak to the people continually via the Tōrah, in the hands of the priests.

The influence of this development on the MY conception is seen in the relationship of the MY with the prophet, angels, priest, and Tōrah.

II. THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH AND THE PROPHET

In the late pre-exilic period we noticed that the prophet was the bearer of God's word. "The word of the Lord" as such was already considered as an independent power. This is clear in I Kgs.13:1,2,9,17,18,20 etc.

This kind of expression is typical too in this post-exilic period, but there is one difference. In this period "the word of the Lord", which forms an essential part in the inspirational activities of the prophets is closely related to the activity of the Spirit of God (רוח). In the book of Chronicles, which is post-exilic, we read this inspirational activity of the Spirit, which made men prophesy (II Chron.20:14), deliver a sermon (II Chron.15:1), or sing an inspired song (I Chron.12:18). This also happens with exilic and post-exilic Isaianic material (Isa.42:1; 61:1)

and in the prophecies of Joel (Joel 2:28); in Neh.9:30, "Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst worn them by thy Spirit through thy prophets; ...". How much the Spirit has been hypostatized and how important this activity of the Spirit was for the prophet, we see in the book of Ezekiel. Again and again it is said there, that "the Spirit entered into me ... and I heard him speaking to me." (Ezek.2:2; 3:24), that "the Spirit lifted me up and took me away" (Ezek.3:12; 11:1,24), that "the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, ..." (Ezek.11:5). But on the other hand we read as frequently in the same book about "the word of the Lord came to me ..." So it is significant in this period that often the "men of the Spirit" were at the same time the "bearer of the Word". This was not the case in the previous period. Koehler pointed out in this matter, "For the early prophets the gift of the Spirit of God and the prophetic inspiration have no connection one with the other."⁷ It is true that in the early kingdom of Israel the Spirit of God caused Saul and all his messengers to prophesy, but it was rather wild ecstasy than prophetic inspiration. Mowinckel also urged, that the great pre-exilic prophets did not

⁷L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 1957, pp.111-19.

claim to be possessed by the Spirit of God, but to have the word of God. He believes that with Ezekiel the Spirit became the medium of revelation.⁸ In this matter, however, we should be more careful and not draw an absolute distinction. It is doubtful whether any of the great prophets would have directly repudiated the Spirit as the medium.⁹

Thus the Spirit and the Word of God "came" directly to the prophet and dwelled temporarily in the prophet. In this case the prophet can be called the נְבִיאַיִם (Hag.1:13; II Chron.36:15,16) or נְבִיאַיִם (Mal.3:1). The prophet then proclaimed God's words and sometimes spoke like Yahweh himself. But this does not mean any identification between God and man, or any deification of men. The boundary between God and men has never been blurred. Even if the prophet spoke in God's name in the first person, it does not mean in any way that he identified himself with God. He is in any case subordinated to Yahweh, a servant of Yahweh.¹⁰ He is the true messenger, the message-bearer of Yahweh; and as such the true prophet is the "Messenger" (= *mal'akh*) of Yahweh "par excellence". This is anticipated in the

⁸S. Mowinckel, "The Spirit and the Word in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets", in *JBL*, 1934, pp.199-227.

⁹Cf. H.H. Rowley, "Nature of Prophecy in Recent Study", in *HTR*, vol.XXXVIII, no.1, 1945, p.19.

¹⁰Cf. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, p.237.

pre-exilic revelation by the fact that the prophet was a member of His intimate Council, cf. Am.3:7; Isa.6:1-8; Jer.23:18,22.¹¹ Thus in his function he is more than Yahweh's "representative"; for the time being he is Yahweh - "in Person", thus said A.R. Johnson.¹²

If the Spirit of the Lord came upon the prophet, then the prophet spoke the Word of God. In this connection there is no mention of the MY, as was the case in the pre-exilic time, where the MY had a ministering and preparing function towards the prophet. The prophet himself can now be considered as and called the MY, not in the sense of God's self-manifestation, but as God's messenger and servant, as a member of His heavenly Council. With the post-exilic MY they also had in common the traditional function of the prophet in making intercession for the people (Zech.1:12; cf. Am.7; Jer.7:16; 11:14; 14:11 etc.). Unlike the ancient MY, they had as ordinary human beings, their own personality, will, and responsibility. This is indeed a new meaning and interpretation of the word MY. The revived appreciation for the prophecies in this period

¹¹Cf. H.W. Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh", in JTS, XLV (1944), p.156.

¹²A.R. Johnson, op. cit., pp.36f.

has led to this new attitude towards the prophets and the MY.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANGELS AND THE RISE OF ANGELOLOGY IN ISRAEL

The above mentioned new meaning and interpretation of the prophet as the MY, however, cannot be held consistently, especially when the angels became more significant and were assigned an active part in the revelation. This was partly caused by the teaching and proclamation of the prophets themselves. In Ch.V par.8 a line of comparison of the theophanic visions has been drawn, illustrating the development in the increasingly transcendental God idea in the pre-exilic period. It was due to the teaching of the prophets that Yahweh became the fully transcendent, holy, and almighty God, the God of gods reigning over the whole universe.

Thus we can compare the vision of God of the pre-exilic prophet Isaiah and that of the late post-exilic (apocalyptic) prophet Daniel.¹³ In Isa.6:1-5 Isaiah saw in his vision the transcendent universal God,

¹³Cf. G. Gross, "Der Engel im alten Testament", in ALW, Bd.VI/1, 1959, p.41.

sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, but, and this is the significant difference, his train filled the temple. In spite of Yahweh's sublimity the tie with the temple and therefore with the earth was still preserved. On the other hand Daniel gave a similar description of the theophany in his vision, but it was even more sublime (Dan.7:9,10). The raiment of the "one that was ancient of days" was white as snow, but it no longer touched the earth. It is remarkable too, compared with the vision of Isaiah, how Daniel described the innumerable angels ministering to Him: thousand thousands served him, cf. Enoch 40:1; 60:1; 71:8. Yahweh became the only God; but the distance between the heavenly dwelling-place of God, surrounded and served by the innumerable angels and the people on earth, became immense. In this transcendent monotheistic religious atmosphere the need of angelic intermediaries grew stronger than ever before and could now be met without any fear of misunderstanding.¹⁴

¹⁴R.H. Charles mentions three causes for the great development in Israel's angelology in this post-exilic time:

1. Advancing ideas of the Divine transcendence, and a growing feeling against anthropomorphic conceptions of God.
2. "A tendency to personify abstract conceptions such as the "spirit" of a nation, and a further tendency to locate these personified forces in the supersensible world, from whence they ruled the destinies of men" (Davidson).
3. The stimulus of contact with Persian thought. The seven archangels, e.g. are connected with the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas.

Cf. R.H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol.II, 1913, p.531.

In this new atmosphere the MY again underwent substantial transformation. Previously the "ruach" Yahweh and the Word of Yahweh came directly to the prophet and dwelled in him temporarily, and as such he could be called the MY. Now instead there was an intermediary angel, a particular angel "par excellence", who communicated the Ruach and the Word of Yahweh to the prophet.¹⁵ This particular angel was then considered as the MY. The MY as such was again distinguished from the prophet and again he partly took over the task of the pre-exilic MY towards the prophet, e.g. in II Kgs.1. The prophet himself, however, sometimes could not receive the Word directly from the MY. He needed also another angel, distinguished from the MY, to show and to interpret the meaning of the vision and the prophecies, cf. Zech.1-7. This is clear from the first and fourth vision. In the first vision (Zech.1:7-18) the MY becomes an angel, acting as a "grand vizir" in heaven,¹⁶

¹⁵It is interesting in this connection to see the development in Ezekiel and in Zechariah. Ezekiel prophesied just before Zechariah and in some respects the fore-runner of Zechariah. With Ezekiel (±597-571 BC) it was always the Ruach as the spokesman or interpreter to Ezekiel. With Zechariah (519/18 BC) it was often the angel interpreter, who spoke to him.

¹⁶Cf. P. v. Imschoot, Theologie de l'ancien Testament, Tome I, 1954, pp.120-23; F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel, 1934, pp.134f.

sent by God and as such a messenger he can act and speak also as the Sender himself. This is clear in the fourth vision (Zech.3:1-10). In this latter vision it was shown to Zechariah by his "angelus interpres" that:

- the MY, as messenger, showed his authority towards Satan. He clearly distinguished himself from Yahweh, but in vs.4 he again spoke with the authoritative "I" on behalf of Yahweh.
- the MY was superior to the other angels, who executed his commands.
- the MY proclaimed to Joshua the Word of Yahweh, commencing with the typical "Thus says the Lord of hosts ..."

This vision too must be shown to Zechariah, otherwise he could not see and understand it. Thus we see here the following order of communication: Yahweh - MY - angelus interpres - prophet. This is typical in this interim when prophetism began to fade away, gradually pushed to the background by the priesthood and their legalism. The MY became once again an independent being outside the prophet, but now as the angel par excellence, the "grand vizir" in the heavenly court.

But when the angelology has been fully developed, the MY is no longer mentioned. This angelology, which came into being in the OT not before Daniel, was partly

influenced by contact with other religions.

It is not the place here to investigate the origin of angelology in Israel, nor to describe its further development in the post-canonical time. But a few words may be mentioned here about the influences which led to this angelology.

It has been generally acknowledged that angelology in Israel was influenced by Babylonian and Persian religion (Buch. Gray, W. Bousset and others). It is, however, very hard to say to what extent Parsism influenced this angelology. In any case, there were indigenous factors as well as foreign factors in this development. The origin and development could even be traced from Israel itself, e.g. the existence of heavenly beings as members of God's guild mentioned in pre-exilic times, likewise an increasing transcendent God who required some intermediaries. These all made Israel's religion ripe to receive angelology into its theology. It is true, that in their contact with other religions they borrowed some theological thoughts and words. A Talmudic word says, that the names of the angels came

from Babylon.¹⁷ But this does not say much about their origin. The names of the angels mentioned in the canonical books of the OT have good Hebraic meanings, e.g. Michael means "who is like God?"; Gabriel means "hero of God"; even in the apocryphal Tobit 3:17 Raphael means "God heals". Their names testify something about God, according to their whole figure and function as servants of God.

There were indeed some parallels with the Persian belief in angels. The chief princes in Dan.10:13 (two of them are called Gabriel and Michael) should correspond with Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas or Amshaspands ("immortal holy ones").¹⁸ And Kohut said that Michael should correspond with the Amesha Spenta Vohumano and Gabriel with Craosho.¹⁹ But evidence of direct influence

¹⁷Cf. G.F. Moore, Judaism in the first centuries of the Christian era the age of the Tannaim, vol.I, 1927, p.402, footn.7; W. Bousset, Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter, ed. H. Gressmann, 1926, p.327: "... , wie denn die jüdischen Engelnamen ein ungelöstes religionsgeschichtliches Problem bilden, wenn freilich auch die jüdische Ueberlieferung wohl nicht ohne Grund behauptet, dass die Namen der Engel aus Babel (d.h. aus den jüdischen Kreisen Babyloniens) stammen. Bereschith R. Kap.48."

¹⁸Buch. Gray, "Angel", in EBI, vol.I, 1899, ad loc.

¹⁹Kohut, Die jüdische Angelologie und Daemonologie in ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Parsismus, S.20-23; mentioned by Koster's in his article "Het ontstaan en de ontwikkeling der angelologie onder Israel", in ThT, X (1876), p.135.

seems to be wanting. On the other hand from the seeds that were inherent in early OT times it is to be expected that a developed angelology would come into being. The contact with Parsism and other religions probably induced the more rapid development of this angelology, but it is not the only and real source of this development.

Both, the MY-appearance and the angelology, were parts of God's revelation to His people. They witness to different stages of revelation: from the immediate anthropomorphic self-manifestation to the more intermediary transcendental revelation through the Spirit, Word, prophet, priests, and Tōrah. It is interesting to see how the rise of angelology reduced the appearances of the MY until he disappeared in the advanced stage of angelology in the book of Daniel. We may trace the growing significance of the angels in the books of the prophets: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel, representing the pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic and late post-exilic or apocalyptic period.

The angels in Isaiah. The important text for us is Isa.6, where Isaiah's vision is described. It was the Seraphim who appeared here in the vision of Isaiah's calling as a prophet. One of the seraphim flew to him, touched his mouth with a burning coal from the altar

and explained the meaning of this act, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." (Isa.6:7). But the divine words of the calling came not from the seraph, but was heard from the Lord himself. We remember, that in ancient times this kind of calling was performed through the MY, as God's self-manifestation, cf. Ex.3; Jgs.6; Gen.32; Num.22; 23). Now instead of the MY, the Lord himself and the seraphim are mentioned. Thus in this vision we see that some functions which were formerly due to the MY, i.e. proclaiming and manifesting God's glory, proclaiming God's word, calling the prophet, are now partly performed by one of these seraphim.

The angels in Ezekiel. In Ch.I Ezekiel tried to describe his vision of theophany. He saw four "living creatures" amidst the flashing fire: they had a form like men, but each had four faces and wings. The whole chapter gives us an extremely elaborate and confusing description of these creatures. They were in service of the Lord who sat upon a throne, steering the course of world history, and they carried upon their wings the throne of the glory of God. These creatures were later on identified as "cherubim" in Ch.10:15, 20-22.

When the Lord executed the punishment for Jerusalem (Ezek.9), He sent six "men" as executioners, each

carrying his destroying weapon in his hand. And with them was "a man clothed in linen" (vs.2), who was their leader, with a writing case in his hand to put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who would be saved.

There are some who interpret this "man in linen clothes" as the MY. Though the function was quite similar with that of the Mal'akh Mashhith in II Sam.24:16,17, there is no strong reason here to identify him with the former MY. Apart from this, it is clear here that these "men" were angelic messengers of God and clearly distinguished from God.

We see another kind of angel that is of great importance to the prophet and later on to Zechariah and Daniel. This angel is the "angelus interpres", who guided, showed, and explained the meanings to the prophet. This angel interpreter is described as a "man", whose appearance was like bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand and standing in the gateway (Ezek.40:3). That this angel cannot be identified as the former MY or the Lord himself is clear from Ezek.43:6f.

Thus many functions of MY are now ascribed to the cherubim as carriers of God's glory, to an angel described as "a man clothed in linen" in destroying Jerusalem, to an angel interpreter explaining and showing

the visions of the prophet. The anthropomorphic theophany through the MY, now becomes an extremely complicated and confusing vision.

The angels in Zechariah. With Zechariah a change is notable concerning the theophany. With Ezekiel there was still talk of a theophany, though complicated and vague; sometimes the Word of the Lord came directly to him, "And the Lord said to me ..." (Ezek.44:4ff). Zechariah on the other hand does not mention any theophany. What he saw in the visions was at most the MY, functioning as the "grand vizir" of God in heaven. For the last time in the OT the MY appeared again in a vision, but now distinguished from Yahweh himself. There seems to be no direct contact between the MY and the prophet. The Word of God came through the angelus interpres to the prophet. Though in the two visions in which the MY appeared, the MY was the defender and intercessor for Israel and the restorer of the priesthood, to the prophet himself he played a comparatively less important role than the angel interpreter.

Other varieties of angels are seen in the visions as "four smiths", casting down the horns of the nations (Zech.1:20f); as "horsemen", patrolling the earth (Zech.1:10; 6:1-8); as "a man with a measuring line in his hand" to measure the breadth and the length of

Jerusalem (2:1,2); other angels who carried a message from the angel interpreter (2:3,4), or standing before the MY (3:4). The field of the angels became more extensive, the functions more varied, but the distance between God and men greater.

The angels in Daniel. It is in this book that angelology, strictly speaking, comes into being. In this advanced stage of development, we no longer see the figure of the MY among the angels, although some functions of the angels mentioned here look quite similar to those of the former MY. Traces of the old MY-belief as such are still seen.

An anonymous angel, described as "his angel" (מַלְאָכָא), Dan.3:28. i.e. the angel of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and whose "appearance is like a son of the gods" (לְבָר-אֱלֹהִין , Dan.3:25), delivered Daniel and his friends from the burning fiery furnace.²⁰ In another

²⁰The term "sons of the gods" here denotes an angel, a celestial being, a divinity, as is confirmed in vs.28; cf. recent commentaries on Daniel ad loc., e.g.: A. Bentzen, Daniel, HBAT, Tübingen, 1952, p.37. E.W. Heaton, The Book of Daniel, TBC, London, 1956, p.144. A. Jeffery, The Book of Daniel, in IB, vol.VI, New York, 1956, p.403. J.A. Montgomery remarks that the term "angel" was appropriate to common W. Sem. diction as expressing an appearance-form of Deity; so this angel is properly a לְבָר-אֱלֹהִין, and is similar to the primitive "Angel of YHWH", cf. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, ICC, 1927, pp.214f.

There is, however, no reason to identify this particular angel with the former MY. In theological

case God sent his angel to shut the lion's mouth and deliver them (Dan.6:22). Such a delivering function towards the prophet or the people was formerly ascribed to the MY (cf. II Kgs.6:15-18; 19:35).

In Ch.IV king Nebuchadnezzar recounted his dream which had been interpreted by Daniel. He saw in that dream "a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven." (4:13). This was also an angel, as angels are often called "the holy ones" in the OT (cf. Deut.33:2; Job 5:1; 15:15; Ps.89:7; Zech.14:5). We read here the word "watcher" (aram. עִיר, connected with the Hebrew verb עָרַב, that means to awake or to wake) for the first time, and describes the angel who never sleeps or slumbers. They were ever ready to execute the decrees of the most High. These "watchers" formed a heavenly council.²¹ "The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones ..." (vs.17). The origin of this "watchers-belief" was according to Bousset, the ancient Babylonian belief in star-gods: the glittering stars in the firmament were supposedly animated beings and equivalent to the host of the angels of God, cf.

sense it can be considered as symbolizing the presence of God with his children in their suffering for righteousness' sake, cf. Heaton, loc. cit.

²¹Heaton, op. cit., pp.130, 150.

Isa.40:26. As such they carried out the decree of the Most High (Dan.4:24).²² Later on in Jewish literature the origin of this belief was soon forgotten and the holy watchers were just considered as the most eminent angels, but still subordinated to God, cf. I En.12:2,3; 20:1 (consisting of seven archangels); "those who not sleep", 39:12; 40:2; 61:12; 71:7 (the Seraphim, Cherubim, Ophanim.)²³ Instead of a pantheon of gods there is a council of the holy ones, who were ministering to and surrounding the throne of God (cf. the b'ēnē 'elohim as members of the Council of Yahweh in Ps.89:7; Job 1:6; I Kgs.22:19. 20-23).

In Ch.X Daniel saw in a vision "a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of a multitude." (vss.5,6). This was an anonymous angel sent by God because of Daniel's words, vss.11,12, to explain the meaning of the vision

²²This heathen belief of star worship was not unfamiliar to Israel in Moses' time (Deut.17:3), but it was always considered as a great sin and strictly forbidden by God. The root idea of these "watchers" is, however, not un-Biblical, cf. Montgomery, op. cit., p.232.

²³Cf. Bousset, W., Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter, Tübingen, 1926, pp.322-23; A. Bentzen, op. cit., p.43.

concerning the things to come. When Daniel saw this angel, a great trembling fell upon him and on the men with him; he fell on his face in a deep sleep with his face to the ground (vs.9). This reaction of Daniel reminds us of the reaction of men in olden days towards the MY and of Paul's reaction in Acts 9:3f; 22:7. Yet this "man" was not a self-manifestation of God, because he was clearly distinguished from God (vs.11). On his way to Daniel he struggled with the prince of the Kingdom of Persia for twenty-one days and it was due to the help of "Michael, one of the chief princes", that he could continue his way. This angel became for Daniel the angel of revelation and interpretation concerning the things to come. Twice Gabriel appeared in the NT, bringing the good news to Zechariah (Lk.1:19) and to the virgin Mary (Lk.1:26f.). In Ch.VIII Gabriel was called to explain a similar vision to Daniel. Daniel's reaction there was similar. In Dan.9:21f. Gabriel came in a swift flight to Daniel, while he was praying and presenting his supplication before the Lord. His coming was also an answer to Daniel's prayer and intended to give Daniel wisdom and understanding. In Dan.12:5-13, this angel is described as "the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream", giving information about the time of the end. From these references and similar functions

it is likely that the anonymous angel in Ch.X is Gabriel himself.²⁴

Another important result of this development was the individualizing of the angels, by giving some personal names, i.e. Gabriel and Michael. Never before has the development shown such clearer parallels with and influences from other religions. Michael belongs to the "chief princes", and is called "your prince", i.e. Daniel's prince (Dan.10:21); but in Dan.12:1 Michael is called "the great prince who has charge of your people", i.e. Israel's prince. There seems to be among the angels different groups and classes. The most distinguished one is called the "chief princes" or the principal angels and later on called the archangels. In this book the number of these chief princes is not mentioned, but in other apocalyptic books, in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, we find seven archangels: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel, and Remiel, (I En.20:1-8). In Tob.12:15 Raphael is mentioned as one of the seven holy angels who presented the prayers of the saints and entered into the presence of the glory of the Holy One.

²⁴Jeffery suggests that this angelic being is far more superior than Gabriel and Michael, and carefully distinguished by the author from them. The early Christian commentators saw in this figure the Messiah Jesus; cf. Jeffery, op. cit., p.502.

In this connection Moore remarks, that these principal angels are called "angels of the presence" (מלאכי הפנים),²⁵ i.e. those who, like the chief ministers of a king, have immediate access to his presence, cf. I En.40:2; T.Lev.3:5,7; 18:5; T.Jud.25:2; Jub.1:27,29; 2:1,2,18; 15:27. These seven are the seven meant in Rev.8:2; as princes among the angels they are called also arch-angels (I Thess.4:16; Jude 9, Michael.)²⁶ In I En.40:9 are mentioned four of these angels of the presence by name: Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel (= angel of the presence). In the Qumran text the Priest is compared to the angel of the Presence, due to their duties in the Sanctuary, 1QSB,4,24.²⁷ Thus in this later development the angels of the presence have a different meaning than "the angel of the presence", mentioned in Isa.63:9.

Another development is the belief in guardian angels for the nations. Michael was called the great

²⁵This name is derived from Isa.63:9.

²⁶Cf. G.F. Moore, Judaism in the first centuries of the Christian era the age of the Tannaim, vol.I, 1927,p.410.

²⁷Cf. Fr. Nötscher, "Geist und Geister in den Text von Qumran", in MB, rédigés en l'honneur de A. Robert, p. 312. Cf. also Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1958, p.285, mentioning that the Scroll of Benedictions IV, 25f. and one of the Thanksgiving Psalms (VI, 3) have the expression "angels of the presence".

prince who has charge of Israel (Dan.10:21; 12:1; I En. 20:5).and there were also "the prince of the Kingdom of Persia" and "the prince of the Kingdom of Greece". The LXX traces the belief back to the Song of Moses, reading in Deut.32:8: "...εσῆσεν ὄρια ἐθνῶν κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ", the bounds of the peoples were fixed according to the number of the angels. The MT, however, reads:

יָצַב גְּבֻלַּת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Thus according to the latter reading it was fixed according to the number of the sons of Israel, i.e. Moses was speaking about nations (גוֹרִם) as the בְּנֵי אֲרָם and about the peoples (עַמִּים) as the בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל , i.e. Israel, the people of God. It was the bounds of these עַמִּים which was fixed according to the number of the sons of Israel. On the other hand serving other gods, worshipping the sun, moon or any host of heaven was considered as a sin and forbidden by God (Deut.17:3). It seems, that in this book and in the later apocalyptic circles the idea of guardian angels of the nations became popular due to the stronger influences of other religions. It has been transformed and incorporated in the angelology of Israel. Yet Israel remained subject to God alone and not to angels. In Jub.15:32 we read, "But over Israel He did not appoint any angel or spirit, for He alone is their ruler, and He will preserve and require them at the hand

of His angels ...".

It is remarkable that in this period of advanced angelology in Israel, the traditional figure of the MY of the OT is no longer mentioned. F. Stier rightly remarks that in the religious thoughts of the last three centuries BC and in the time of Christ the MY of the OT no longer existed. He concludes, that in the late Jewish literature the name MY is used as a relative appellative noun, in this case applied to named angels: Nathaniel, Phadahel, Cerviel, Michael, or used as an absolute appellative noun, denoting a particular unnamed angel or any other angel.²⁸ In any case the meaning is entirely different from that in the early OT times, although the same term is used.

IV. THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH AND THE PRIEST

The central features in the post-exilic restoration were the Temple and its cult and the re-establishment of the priesthood. The function of the prophets has now been, to a considerable extent, taken over by the priests and the levites, cf. II Chron.20:14ff.; 24:20ff. The Spirit of the Lord came upon them and they began to prophesy. The leaders of the Temple

²⁸Cf. Stier, op. cit., pp.42-48.

X singers were also called "the seer", e.g. Asaph (II Chron. 29:30), Heman (I Chron.25:5), Jeduthun (II Chron.35:15). And in I Chron.25:1 it is said, that David and the chiefs of the service set apart the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. Zechariah prophesied that the Lord would remove all the prophets from the land and the office of the prophets would not exist any more (Zech. 13:2-6). Joel also prophesied, that the Lord would pour out His spirit on all flesh, so that "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." (Joel 2:28,29; cf. Isa.61:6).

O. Plöger remarks, "Hier kann begreiflicherweise von einem Nebeneinander von Priester und Prophet im Sinne der vorexilischen Zeit ernsthaft nicht mehr die Rede sein."²⁹ Similarly Porteous points out,

X A comparison of II K.23:2 with its parallel II Chr.34:30 shows that the Chronicler deliberately altering the word "prophets" in his source into "Levites". The inference which is drawn is that in the post-exilic Temple-cult the functions of the pre-exilic cult prophets were taken over by the Temple choirs which were legitimized by being regarded as consisting of Levites. 30)

²⁹O. Plöger, "Priester und Prophet", in ZAW, LXI, 1951, pp.190-92.

³⁰N.W. Porteous, "Prophet and Priest in Israel", in ET, LXII, 1950-51, p.7; cf. also J. Pedersen, "The Role played by inspired persons among the Israelites and the Arabs", in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H.H. Rowley, 1950, p.141.

As a result of this development, a new sacramental theology came into being.³¹ The Temple, which had played an important rôle in the past, once again got a new and even greater significance after its restoration. The whole religious life was now centred round the Temple cult and the priesthood and was based on the Tōrah. The whole people assembled as one congregation around the Temple. The Temple was the only national tie left to unite them as a nation and the cult maintained the communion with God, sanctified the congregation and was considered as an intermediary through which salvation could be obtained.³² The central figure in the Temple was the High Priest and the influence of the priest aristocracy reached its climax. No wonder, that in the last canonical book of the OT, i.e. the book of Malachi, the priest is called a MY Tseba'oth (Mal.2:7); in Zech.3:7 the MY promised to Joshua, that he would give him access among those who were standing there, i.e. the angels; in Eccl.5:6 the priest is called a "mal'akh" (= messenger or angel). The priest here, as the MY became more the less the intermediary between God and men. To him the Tōrah was entrusted for teaching

³¹Cf. Vriezen, op. cit., p.35.

³²Ibid.

and educating the people. He received the offerings from the hands of the people and sacrificed them in the name of the people and in the name of God he blessed the people. He assured the people, through the sacrifices, of God's satisfaction. As an intermediary he represented the people to God and on the other hand represented God to the people. They lived in the holy temple and they alone were the official ministers in the cult- and religious life. In them the contact between God and the people, between heaven and earth, was guaranteed. The MY has now been absorbed into the person of the Priest.³³

Another typical example is the Priestly codex,

³³This remarkably important position of the priest is still seen among the sect of the Qumran community (about the first century BC). The founder of the sect, called the Teacher of Righteousness, had the authority for interpreting the Law and the prophecies. This authority was based on the new revelation given to him, which exceeded what the prophets themselves were able to see. He is called "the priest into whose heart God put wisdom to explain all the words of his servants the prophets, through whom God declared all the things that are coming upon his people and his congregation." (The Habakuk Commentary I:5; cf. Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, London, 1956, pp.247,365). The task of the priest in his "holy dwelling" is "serving in the royal temple and casting the lot with the angels of the Presence, and the common counsel ... for an everlasting time and to all the periods of eternity, for true are all his judgements." (Scroll of Benedictions; cf. M. Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, London, 1958, p.397).

which does not mention the angels or the MY. The Priestly writings are mainly concerned with the description of God's work in the successive periods of revelation and God's own words which had been proclaimed and crystallized in the laws. The Tōrah, as God's own words spoken to the pious of olden times, was considered as the most reliable and must be preserved for ever in the tradition.

V. THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH AND THE TŌRAH

Another factor of great importance for the termination of the MY conception in the OT is the further development of the Temple cult in late hellenistic time. In dealing with this particular subject it is necessary to look for a while to the books beyond the canon of the OT in the intertestamental period.

In the previous subsection we noted that the identification of the priest with the MY was due to the extremely high estimation of the priesthood, and the religious view of Israel which was centred on the Temple. The Temple cult, however, tended to foster an external piety which could not satisfy the deepest longings of the pious people. Such people became critical and began to make a distinction between the person of the priest and the Tōrah itself.

One of the reasons of this change was the piety of the lay people themselves. The codification of the Tōrah became an object of religious study for the intellectual people among them, namely the Scribes. They interpreted and taught the meanings of the laws to the people. Also in the branch of the unwritten law they soon became authoritative and had a leading part in the development of it.³⁴ In this way their influence upon the other lay people was very great, especially when the practices of the Temple cult and the priesthood became more and more secularized. They extended their criticism and studies to the ritual practices and did not hesitate to reform them according to the letter of the law and to their own exegesis of it.³⁵ No wonder, that many of the Scribes and the pious Jews (the so-called Hasidim) reacted against the misconduct of the priesthood. An extreme reaction was found among the sect of the Essenes, who renounced the entire temple cult, and yet still enjoyed popular esteem.³⁶

³⁴Cf. Moore, op. cit., p.66.

³⁵Cf. Moore, op. cit., pp.42f.

³⁶A similar attitude seems to have been adopted by the Qumran community, which is considered as more closely related to the Essenes than to any other group known to us (cf. M. Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, 1956, p.298). The Manual of Discipline Ch.III does not mention anything

With this criticism of the cult and priesthood there grew religious individualism, the strong belief that each person could achieve his own salvation by observing and living according to the laws. The Tōrah became more and more a book of the people, and was no more considered a prerogative of the Temple and the priesthood. This canonized Holy Scriptures became the centre of the religious life in Judaism, used for corporate reading in the Synagogues or used for individual meditation, so that the Psalmist could say, "... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." (Ps.1:2).

A new legalistic religion came into being: Judaism. The Tōrah, containing the written laws of Moses and the later cult- and ceremonial laws, was considered as the new intermediary and was fully accepted as the

about the temple or the sacrifice. On the other hand they considered themselves as "a holy house for Israel, a foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron ... a most holy dwelling for Aaron with eternal knowledge for a covenant of justice and to offer a pleasing fragrance, and a house of perfection and truth in Israel to establish a covenant for eternal statutes." (M.Burrows, op.cit., p.381f.). The Damascus Document Ch.I condemns the priesthood of the temple, for not observing the law (M.Burrows, op. cit., p.349). The Habakuk Commentary on Ch.2:5,6 denounces "the wicked priest", who forsook God and betrayed the statutes because of wealth (M. Burrows, op. cit., p.368), and "the last priests of Jerusalem" who assembled wealth and booty from the spoil of the peoples (on 2:7,8; M. Burrows, op.cit., p.369). In the Damascus Document the sect is called a "house of division", because they withdrew from Jerusalem when Israel defiled the Sanctuary. (M.Burrows, op. cit., p.237f.).

ultimate norm for life, and received eternal existence:
Sirach 17:11, " ... and allotted to them the law of life."

" " 24:9 , " From eternity, in the beginning, he
created me [i.e. Wisdom, which is here
identified with the Law, cf. vs.23], and
for eternity I shall not cease to exist."

Baruch 4:1 , "She is the book of the commandments of
God, and the law that endures for ever.
All who hold her fast will live, and those
who forsake her will die."

IV Ezra 9:37, "the Law, however, perishes not, but abides
its glory."³⁷

The Tōrah was exalted and glorified to such an extent,
that it gradually became a divine hypostasis. In this

³⁷In the Qumran community the Law also occupied a central place. The main task of the members of the community was to spend most of the time in studying the Law. They formed groups of ten, of which at least one man must study or interpret the law. This must be carried out continuously, day and night, throughout the year. The Manual of Discipline III, cf. M. Burrows, op. cit., pp.235, 378. The purpose of the community was to prepare the way of the Lord, as it is written in Isa.40:3. This verse is interpreted as "the study of the law, as he commanded through Moses, to do according to all that has been revealed by his Holy Spirit." (The Manual of Discipline; M. Burrows, op. cit., p.382). In the Habakuk Commentary the followers of the teacher of righteousness are also called "doers of the law" (Commentary on Hab.2:17; M. Burrows, op. cit., p.370).

rigid legalism there was no place for the old MY and the angels also lost their actual importance.

Yet there were different attitudes towards the Tōrah among the temple priests and the Scribes, although both accepted the superiority of the Tōrah. The difference was mainly concerning the interpretation of the Tōrah and the attitude towards the Tradition.³⁸ The pious laity with the Scribes as their teacher accepted beside Tōrah also Tradition. It was via this line of pious laity with the Scribes and the apocalyptic, that the angelology was preserved and further developed. In this group the angels played an important part as we can read it in the Apocalypses of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha.³⁹

³⁸By "tradition" is meant here certain legal regulations which are not written in the Law of Moses, which has been handed down by a continuous succession of fathers, for which there was no direct Biblical authority. These additions to the "official" Law easily led to misinterpretation, as we see later on in the NT, e.g. Mt.5: 21ff.; cf. Moore, op. cit., pp.58, 66f.

³⁹In this case the DSS show a spiritual kinship with the apocalyptic literature. Angels are mentioned here to denote evil as well as good spirits, e.g.: "the angel of destruction" and "the angel of enmity", mentioned in the Damascus Document, Ch.II, XX, M. Burrows, op. cit., pp.350, 363; "the angel of darkness", who has dominion over the sons of error, and "the angel of truth", who helps the sons of light, The Manual of Discipline, Ch.II, M. Burrows, op. cit., p.374. The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness, Ch.IX:14-16, mentions about "the holy angels with the army

Another line in this legalistic Judaism was that of the temple priests or the so-called priest aristocracy with their rigid and exclusive attitude towards the written Tōrah. They rejected everything that was not written in the Tōrah, and considered the ceremonial laws as the heart of the Tōrah. God was considered as acting through the Tōrah, which was practised in the temple ceremonies by the priests. No wonder that the angels had no place in their religious system.

The Sadducean priestly aristocracy rejected the resurrection, the angels, and spirits (Acts 23:8). This attitude seems rather contradictory, as they accept the authority of the Pentateuch, which includes the MY and the "angels of God". It is difficult to find out what precisely their attitude was towards the MY in the Pentateuch, as there are no direct sources available from their hands. Their disbelief in angels and spirits cannot be explicitly confirmed elsewhere, but it is in any case in accordance with their "Diesseitigkeitsreligion."⁴⁰ According to Flavius Josephus they

of the righteous", and uses the names of the four arch-angels: Raphael, Michael, Sariel, and Gabriel (M.Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1958, p.284). The Thanksgiving Psalms mention "the army of the holy ones", "the congregation of the sons of heaven" and "the eternal assembly", Ch.VI (III 19-36), M.Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, 1956, p.404.

⁴⁰Cf. H.S. Strack and P.Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash, II, München, p.76.

rejected everything but the written Law.⁴¹

It is unlikely that they rationalized the appearance of the MY or MhE in the Pentateuch as human messengers or as personified natural forces. The confusion of men and angelic beings is unlikely with the Sadducees, who adopted a literal interpretation of the Scriptures.⁴² Neither is it probable that they considered them as non-existing mythological figures. This is difficult to conform with the authority they conferred upon the Pentateuch. The most likely interpretation for their attitude is, that they saw in the appearances of the MY a theophany of Yahweh himself. There is, however, no direct evidence for this belief.⁴³

Along this line it seems very likely, that what the Sadducees precisely rejected was the developed angelology and demonology of the time, like the belief in resurrection, which they considered as a late

⁴¹Cf. Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, I, 4, Ch.16; mentioned by Moore, op. cit., p.67.

⁴²Cf. Moore, op. cit., p.68.

⁴³Cf. W.M. Furneaux, The Acts of the Apostles, Oxford, 1912, p.362, saying, "The Sadducees regarded the angels mentioned in the Pentateuch, which they accepted, not as separate existences, but as manifestations of the Deity."

accretion to the original Jewish faith. Thus they expressed the orthodox and ancient view of the Hebrew tradition concerning the MY.⁴⁴

⁴⁴cf. F.F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 1951, p.412; T.W. Manson, "Sadducee and Pharisee", in BJRL, XXII (1938) p.154 footn. saying, "What they rejected was the developed doctrine of the two kingdoms with their hierarchies of good and evil spirits."

CHAPTER VII

THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH IN THE LIGHT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The MY was not a completely "strange" phenomenon in the ancient Semitic religious world; it fitted indeed into that ancient religious atmosphere. Thanks to studies in comparative religion we can see many similarities between the various religious conceptions and the usages in the ancient Semitic world. It is therefore necessary to look at the background of the ancient traditional beliefs and myths concerning the various ways of divine communication of the godhead with human or other divine beings. Palestine has always been in close contact with the ancient Near Eastern world, whose religious life had reached a considerable maturity long before the OT history began. In order that we may not exaggerate the heathen influences on Israel's religion, we do well, however, to remember what Stanley Cook said about this matter,

It is often difficult to decide whether the parallels we find in Egypt and South-west Asia are necessarily due to borrowing. 1)

¹ S.A. Cook, The Old Testament, a Reinterpretation, 1936, p.91. Cf. S.H. Hooke's statement, that beside the

x A little further he remarked,

... characteristic of Israel is the fact that she underwent some drastic internal changes, and that the religious significance of her history was felt and expressed in a way that severs her from her greater neighbours, although they, too, recognize that the gods made history. 2)

I. SIMILAR FEATURES IN NEAR EASTERN RELIGIONS

A. Divine Manifestations and Representations

Certain special and distinguished individuals and sacred objects were often considered as the embodiments or representations of the godhead or of a divine power. Constantly the godhead tended to be confused with his representative, symbol, or embodiment, which in turn became objects of worship and adoration. People saw in this fluidity between the divine and the human being or material objects no contradiction. But in

existence of essential similarities between the chief culture areas of the ancient Near East, differences cannot be denied or ignored; "Myth and Ritual: Past and Present.", in Myth, Ritual and Kingship (ed. S.H. Hooke), 1958, p.7. Cf. S.G.F. Brandon's criticism on the Myth and Ritual thesis, saying that it "tended to disregard the equally or even more significant differences which existed in the Weltanschauung of the cultures concerned; "The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered", in S.H. Hooke (ed.), op. cit., pp.266f.

²Cooke, op. cit., p.92; cf. Th.O. Vriezen, Hoofdpijnen der Theologie van het Oude Testament, 1954, pp.21-25. Cf. also H. Birkeland, The Evil-doers in the Book of Psalms, p.20, saying that the borrowings, adopted by Hebrew religion, may appear as disintegrations; quoted by S.H. Hooke, op. cit., p.9.

spite of it, ancient religious man could still make a certain distinction between the invisible sacred power or godhead as such and its manifestations or representatives.³ In ritual the sacred objects were spoken of and treated as the god himself; it was not merely a symbol, but his concrete embodiment.⁴

In ancient Egyptian Hymns and Prayers we read about Amon's appearance in his statue. Amon was considered as the sole god and the omnipresent All-Lord. His statue was in the Hermonthis, heralding his appearances. In that shrine Amon might occasionally choose his abode on earth and have a place of manifestation in an image. This statue was not considered as the god himself, but it was indispensable for his appearance. The statue was not necessarily of human form; it could be in the form of a specially selected ram or gander. These different forms of appearances served different purposes, just as human beings might prefer different homes and different garments.⁵ On the other hand, however, Amon

³Cf. S.A. Cook's note in W.R. Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 1927, p.565.

⁴Cf. Smith, op. cit., p.87.

⁵Cf. John A. Wilson, "The Function of the State", in Before Philosophy, ed. H. Frankfort, repr. 1959, p.73; cf. "Amon as the Sole God", 200th stanza, in ANET, p.368.

is described there as the mysterious and transcendent God. The Nile was called "hidden in his form of appearance" as it had no regular cult or temple in which he might appear in an image.⁶

In ancient Egyptian myths there are many modes of manifestations of the God whose name was not revealed to other beings.

I am abounding in names and abounding in forms. My forms exist as every god; I am called Atum and Horus-of-Praise.—I am Khepri in the morning, Rē at noon, and Atum who is in the evening. 7)

The ancient Egyptians recognized three spheres in which the divine power manifested itself: in the sun, associated with the creation; in cattle, associated with procreation; in the earth, associated with resurrection.⁸

Khonsu-in-Thebes-Nefer-hotep was the name of the chief manifestation of Khonsu and his name as a member of the Theban triad of Amon, Mut, and Khonsu.⁹

Thoth represented Rē and was called "Thot the

⁶Cf. "Hymn to the Nile", ANET, p.368.

⁷Cf. "The God and his unknown name of Power", in ANET, p.13.

⁸Cf. Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, 1948, pp.145f.

⁹Cf. "The Legend of the Possessed Princess", in ANET, pp.29-31.

place-taker of Rē". He acted in Rē's place as his vizier, so that the light might shine in the Underworld and the Island of Baba. The Sun-god Rē assigned responsibility for the moon to the god Thoth.¹⁰

The idea of manifestation and animation is expressed in the conception of the Egyptian "Ba": the Benu bird is called the Ba of Rē; Orion, or the Apis bull can be called the Ba of Osiris; and a lion-shaped amulet may be called the Ba of Shu. The Ba could mean the manifestation or the emanation of a deity, or it could represent the apparition of the dead; in this latter case it is translated as "ghost" or "spirit".¹¹ Another similar and rather confusing conception is the "Ka". John A. Wilson describes this Ka as a sort of the guardian alter-ego, a detached part of the personality which plans and acts for the rest of the person. In this way the Egyptian king was considered as the Ka of the nation. It can also be applied to a godhead and then it means someone's god: "Rhē-is-my-ka", or

¹⁰ Cf. "The Assignment of Functions to Thoth", in ANET, pp. 87f.

¹¹ Cf. Frankfort, op. cit., pp. 63-65.

"Ptah-is-my-ka".¹²

In Babylonian myths the figure of Marduk is the representation of his father Ea then considered as the chief god; while in Phoenician myths Astarte or Tanit was the mediator between Baal and the worshipper.¹³

Another striking similarity in the ancient Near Eastern world is the idea of the divine kingship. It has been generally accepted that the Kingship was a religious institution throughout the various cultures of the ancient Near East.¹⁴ The intimate relationship between the King and the God was that of representation, fusion, or identification. In ancient Egypt, down to about 1300 BC, the Pharaoh was not only deified, but was considered as the god incarnate for the purpose of the Egyptian state. He was called the Son of Rē; this was not just a title, but denoted the real physical condition. His father was the Sun-god Rē, who now entrusted the land to his son, the king. Frankfort describes the divinity of the Pharaoh as follows,

¹²J.A. Wilson, "The Nature of the Universe", in Before Philosophy, ed. H. Frankfort, pp.63, 95, 107.

¹³Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd.II, Leipzig, 1935, p.8.

¹⁴Cf. Brandon, op. cit., in S.H. Hooke (ed.), op. cit., p.290; cf. I. Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, Uppsala, 1943.

As far as physical existence was concerned, Pharaoh had been begotten by Amon-Rē upon the queen mother. As regards his divine potency, he was Horus, the son of Hathor. As the legitimate successor to the throne (a notion with cosmic implications), he was Horus the son of Osiris and Isis, the grandson of Geb, the earth. 15)

On the other hand Pharaoh was identified with a series of other deities, who expressed the duties and the attributes of the king. Thus he is also called "He is Sia", the god of perception; "He is Khnum", the god who brings mankind into being on his potter's wheel; "He is Bastet", the goddess who protects; and "He is Sekhmet", the goddess who punishes. 16

Stanley Cook remarks, that "it is probable that the Divine Kingship throughout Egypt and South-West Asia involved a similar coexistence of most intimate relationship by the side of an essential difference",¹⁷ This statement is doubtful, as far as ancient Egypt is concerned, because between the Pharaoh and god there was

¹⁵H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, 1948, p.299. cf. J.A. Wilson, "The Function of the State", in Before Philosophy, ed. H. Frankfort, p.73; cf. H.W. Fairman, "The Kingship Rituals of Egypt" in S.H. Hooke (ed.), op. cit., pp.75f.

¹⁶Cf. Wilson, op. cit., p.74.

¹⁷Cf. W.R. Smith, op. cit., p.545.

essentially no difference. He shared the same divinity, a god incarnate.¹⁸ S. Cook's remark is more applicable as regards the Mesopotamian idea of divine Kingship. There seems to be a certain difference between both ideas in Egypt and Mesopotamia, although the king received the same divine honour. Frankfort points out this difference, namely that the Mesopotamian king was deified during the ritual, while the Egyptian Pharaoh was considered as god, divine of origin.¹⁹ He further said, that the appearance of the king as a god is most clearly described in a hymn which glorifies Ishtar as the evening star. Her bridegroom bears an epithet of Tammuz, yet he is actually a human being, the King Idin-Dagan of Isin. The goddess claimed a service which was rendered by the king, i.e. as a bridegroom. At least during the ritual the king as such was deified. This idea is clear too in a text called "The Deification of Lipit-Ishtar", where king Lipit-Ishtar, as a prelude to a sacred marriage to Ishtar, was fused and identified with Urash, a fertility god.²⁰

¹⁸J.A. Wilson calls this "ultimate consubstantiality" and monophysitism between god and men; op. cit., pp.74f.

¹⁹H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, 1948, p.299.

²⁰H. Frankfort, op. cit., pp.295, 297f.

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 The King-god idea in Phoenicia was closely connected with the idea of the Tyrian Heracles Baal Shamen-Melchart. J. Morgenstern declares that the Tyrian Heracles (8th cent. BC), to whom, according to Herodotus, were dedicated two distinct temples at Tyre, actually indicated one and the same deity, which in one phase of divine being was Baal Shamen, the old and immortal Heracles, while in the other phase he was Melchart, the youthful and rejuvenated mortal Heracles. Yet these two deities in the Tyrian myths of the sun-god actually constituted together one single deity in two reciprocal phases of being. Thus the Tyrian Heracles Melchart was the self-manifestation of Baal-Shamen in his youthful and radiant appearance in one phase of the divine being.²¹

B. Fiery Appearance of a Godhead

Fiery phenomena as the self-manifestation of a godhead were not unknown in the ancient Semitic religions. Robertson Smith shows that at the annual feasts at Aphaca the goddess appeared and manifested herself in the form of a fiery meteor, which descended from the

²¹Cf. J. Morgenstern, "The King-god among the western Semites and the meaning of Epiphanes", in VI, X, no.2, April 1960, pp.138-97; cf. Fr. C. Movers, Die Phönizier, 1841, pp.389-90.

mountain-top and plunged into the water. Similar fiery phenomena were believed to be seen among the branches of the sacred olive tree between the Ambrosian rocks at Tyre, without scorching its leaves. According to Africanus and Eustatius this same fiery phenomena was seen at the terebinth of Mamré.²²

In the Baal-mythology of Ras Shamra-texts violent thunder and lightning is the peculiar manifestation of the presence of Baal.²³

In the later Parsism too the powerful Fire, Ormazd, is considered as the basic unity of Ormuzd, the Deus Revelatus, and Zervane Akarene, the Deus Absconditus.²⁴

C. The Appearance of Jinns.

Beside the many gods, the ancient Semites knew the existence of "jinns". The gods had their dwelling-places in the sanctuaries; they were worshipped and approached by men at regular times and had their own individuality. The "jinns" on the other hand, were distinguished from the gods. They were corporeal beings, harmful, and satanic and had therefore no worshippers.

²²Cf. W.R. Smith, op. cit., p.193.

²³Cf. J. Gray, Legacy of Canaan, Suppl.VI, 1957, p.38.

²⁴Cf. E.W. Hengstenberg, Christologie des Alten Testaments, ersten Theiles, erste Abth., 1829, p.238.

They did not dwell in a sanctuary, but appeared now and then in a mysterious way; they adopted various forms of appearance, mostly as an animal (snake); they had no real individuality and dwelled in desolate and savage places; they liked to avenge themselves and sent madness or other mysterious tormenting diseases.²⁵

D. Divine Messengers and Heavenly Vizier

In the ancient Semitic myths the divine messengers played a considerably important rôle. They were vested with the Sender's authority and treated with divine honour as if they were the Sender himself. They were in fact more than messengers; they were representatives or sometimes considered as partial manifestation of the godhead. However, in almost all cases they were clearly distinguished from the Sender.

In Egyptian myths Hat-Hor is the messenger sent by Rē. She was as such the manifestation of Rē's Eye sent to slay mankind in the desert. She appeared as a goddess. But afterwards she was prevented by Rē from slaying mankind by being made drunk.²⁶

Khonsu's messenger was called "Khonsu-the-Carrier-out-of-Plans"; he was a great god himself who expelled

²⁵ Cf. W.R. Smith, op. cit., pp.119f.

²⁶ Cf. "Deliverance of Mankind from Destruction", ANET, p.11.

disease-demons. He was apparently a subordinate form of Khonsu or a minor manifestation of Khonsu, who was sent to carry out plans for special demands. As such he was worshipped and had a temple east of the great Amon enclosure at Karnack, not far from the temple of Khonsu-in-Thebes-Nefer-hotep, the chief manifestation of Khonsu.²⁷

In Akkadian myths and epics Namtar is the messenger and vizier of Ereshkigal, the sister of the gods. As such he was received with great honour by the gods in the lofty heaven. Nergal, one of the gods, who did not pay proper honour to him, was summoned by Ereshkigal to be killed. Namtar was also sent to restore and revive Ishtar in the nether world. He was called Namtar, the vizier of the nether world; while Papsukkal was the vizier of the great gods in heaven.²⁸ In the Adapa-epic the messenger of Anu, who was sent to fetch Adapa, spoke to Adapa, as if he was Anu himself,

The messenger of Anu arrived there:
 "Adapa, him who the south wind's
 Wing has broken, bring him before me!" 29)

²⁷Cf. "The Legend of the Possessed Princess", dating from 4th/3rd cent. BC., but with an ancient setting of the 13th cent. BC., ANET, pp.29-31.

²⁸Cf. "Nergal and Ereshkigal", ANET, pp.103, 106f.

²⁹Cf. "Adapa", ANET, p.102.

In the Ugaritic Baal-myths the messengers of Yam to El, demanding the surrender of Baal, received divine homage from the gods and were addressed by El as if they were Yam himself, "Baal is thy servant, O Yam ...". Yet they distinguished themselves from their Sender in conveying the message, saying, "The message of Yam, your lord ...".³⁰ The same happens with Baal's messengers, Gapn and Ugar, when they announced Baal's message to his sister Anath, saying, "The message of the victor Baal, the word of the valiant victor [is this]: "War upon earth is opposed to my will."³¹ They were also addressed by Divine Mot as if they were Baal himself.³² The messengers of King Pabel sent to Keret also introduced their message with the stereotype introduction: "Message of King Pabel ...", or "Message of Keret the Noble ...".³³ In Hittite sources this introduction was

³⁰Cf. "Poems about Baal and Anath", c.III AB B-A, vss.10-40ff., ANET, p.130; Baal III*B, ll. 1-45, in G.A. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 1956, pp.79ff.; cf. J. Gray, Legacy of Canaan, 1957, p.22.

³¹Cf. Baal, IV:7, in Driver, op. cit., p.87; cf. also the way they convey Baal's message to Divine Mot in the nether world, and conveying Mot's answer to Baal, "Poems about Baal and Anath", II AB (VIII), ANET, p.135.

³²Cf. Baal, I* col 1, ll. 1-9, Driver, op. cit., p.103.

³³Cf. J. Gray, The KRT text in the literature of Ras Shamra, 1955, L. 267r, 303r.; "The Legend of King Keret"(III) vss.120ff, 246ff, 265-300f, ANET, pp.144f.

also used by the messengers of King Mursilis, who were sent to say prayers for the king, saying, "Mursilis, the king, thy servant, and the queen, thy handmaid, have sent me [with the request]: Go! entreat Telepinus ..." ³⁴

No less important was the rôle played by the heavenly vizier. An inscription of king Rim-sin (c. 1985-1925 BC) mentioned that the god Nun-subur-ra, called the chief-minister and controlling the oracle in heaven and on earth and hearing the prayers, was considered as the mighty intermediary between the divine king and the subjects. Nebo, the god of Borsippa was also considered as the Mediator in the offerings to the gods. This kind of heavenly vizier was as such considered as a member of the heavenly pantheon. ³⁵

E. Holy Places and Temple

The holy places were connected with the belief that the gods haunted certain spots, as a place of manifestation. The deity manifested himself either visibly or by some mighty deed. Once a deity manifested himself in such a way at a certain place, it was assumed

³⁴"Plague Prayers of Mursilis", ANET, pp.394ff.; "Daily Prayer of the King", ANET, pp.396ff.

³⁵Cf. F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testament, 1934, pp.134-36.

and expected that he would do so again. This particular place became a fit place of worship. Sanctuaries and altars could be erected only when the deity had given clear evidence of his presence. To the ancient people this was not just a theory, but a matter of fact, which was handed down by tradition and accepted with undoubted faith. In the early narratives of the OT a theophany very often resulted in the building of an altar and in giving a sacrifice to the Lord. Robertson Smith states that this fact is illustrative of Semitic religion in general and not just the distinctive feature of the spiritual religion of the OT. As a proof of this remark, he refers to the worship of Bethel, Shechem, Beersheba, and other patriarchal holy places which were mingled with Canaanite elements and regarded as idolatrous by the prophets.³⁶

In Canaanite myths the necessity of having a temple for a deity is quite remarkable. El ordered Kathir-and-Khasis to build a temple for his son Yam (Yaw). This was necessary, because without having an abode (temple) Yam cannot exercise his function as a king. Permission from El is necessary for building it.³⁷

³⁶Cf. W.R. Smith, op. cit., pp.115f.

³⁷Cf. Baal, col.III, ll. 1-29, in Driver, op. cit., p.12.

Athar complained that, unlike other gods, he had neither palace nor court, which were essential to the maintenance of his position and rank. El, however, disregarded his plea, because he had decided to depose and deprive him of his authority.³⁸ Baal also complained of not having either palace nor court, chapel nor shrine like other gods. So Anath went to El to get El's consent to build one for Baal.³⁹

F. Intercessory Prayers

In the pantheon of the ancient Semitic religious world, prayers of intercession are common. To mention just a few examples, in the Ras Shamra literature, Baal presents the supplication of Dn'el, an ancient king preoccupied with the problem of progeny, to El. El accedes to Baal's intercession and Baal communicates this decision to Dn'el.⁴⁰ Prayers of intercession are asked too by the Hittite queen Pudu-hepas on behalf of her husband Hattusilis, to be presented to the Storm-god and the Sun-goddess of Arina.⁴¹

³⁸Cf. Baal, III, Tabl.C., Ll. 1-15, in Driver, op. cit., pp.12f.

³⁹Cf. Baal, col.IVb, Ll. 1-43, in Driver, op. cit., pp.89-91.

⁴⁰Cf. John Gray, Legacy of Canaan, 1957, pp.74-77.

⁴¹Cf. "Prayer of Pudu-hepas to the Sun-Goddess of Arina and her Circle", in ANET, pp.393f.

II. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH CONCEPTION IN ISRAEL

These similar features in the different areas of the ancient Semitic world open up the possibility of mutual cultural contacts, which did not leave the ancient Hebrew beliefs unaffected. It cannot be said with certainty, however, to what extent these similar features have influenced the traditional Hebrew conception of the MY. It is clear from our previous chapters IV, V, VI, that there are remarkable differences and in many ways the MY idea shows some distinctive features, which find no precise parallel in other religious beliefs. M. Noth argues, that in spite of all the historical connections and possibilities for comparison with Israel's oriental environment, "Israel" still remains a stranger in the world of its own time, wearing the garments and behaving in the manner of its age, set separate from the world it lived in. The main reason is, according to Noth, that at the very centre of the history of "Israel" we encounter phenomena for which there is no parallel at all elsewhere, because such things simply never happened elsewhere.⁴²

⁴²Cf. M. Noth, History of Israel, sec. ed., 1960, pp.2f.

In the MY Yahweh himself communicated himself with men, but in such a way that Yahweh still remained "transcendent". In the MY we see both ideas of what we call "immanence" and "transcendence". The old Semitic idea of the deity indeed was not merely transcendent, but there was the no less important conception of the intimate relationship between the gods and the members of the group, social, religious or ecclesiastical as well. There was a tendency, however, to fall into one of the two extremes, which ultimately leads nowhere and could endanger the existence of the religion itself. The god becomes so remote, mysterious, and unknown as to be negligible or the god becomes so completely known as to be unnecessary and dispensable.⁴³ Especially in the early narratives of the OT the MY expresses these two ideas in an outspoken and balanced way. The human reactions therefore varied from friendliness to dreadful awe.

In those ancient narratives the MY is an anthropomorphic self-manifestation of Yahweh, connected with the anthropomorphic description of Yahweh in the OT. Yet, as far as Israelite conceptions are concerned, Yahweh

⁴³Cf. Stanley Cook's note in W.R. Smith's Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 1927, pp.564f.

was never fully conceived as a "man". He was conceived as "spiritual" and entirely different from men, who were made of dust. No image of Yahweh is therefore allowed and the transgression of this command is considered as one of the most serious sins. The MY is never pictorialized in a statue, as Yahweh's manifestation is not bound to certain material embodiments. Nor is the MY's appearance bound to a particular place or temple.

Another distinct feature is that the MY was the self-manifestation of Yahweh as the God of the Covenant and as such it expresses the Covenant relationship between Yahweh and His people. It expresses also the fact, that God revealed himself to Israel in an entirely different and special way.⁴⁴ This marks a particular and advanced God-idea which was uncommon in the other heathen religions. This is proved by the fact, that the MY-appearances never resulted in a MY worship or MY-cult; therefore the MY never has a sanctuary; he is never deified or given a special personal name. Instead, the name of Yahweh was invoked and the holy places and altars

⁴⁴Vriezen sees the uniqueness of the Covenant-relationship in the fact that it has not been looked upon as natural, but as placed in history by Yahweh; cf. Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 1958, p.140. Cf. W.R. Smith, op. cit., p.318, on the distinctiveness of the Covenant.

were dedicated to Yahweh himself. This is a striking peculiarity if we consider this in the context of the ancient world of the Near East, where in such cases men were eager to render special worship to such divine manifestations promoted to a godhead. The OT does not permit any such worship and when later on angelology came into being this MY-figure became less important and finally was not mentioned any more. The task of the MY was then taken over by the prophet and the priest, cf. Ch.VI. The fact that the MY "disappeared" in the advanced stage of angelology is probably an indication that in other contemporary Babylonian or Persian beliefs there was no exact figure which could be compared or identified with the MY of the OT.

The functions of the MY and Yahweh's activities were not unfamiliar to the more developed religious thoughts of the ancient oriental world, in this sense that God was considered as the only cause in the world and as acting in the history of men, revealing His will. But on the other hand people hesitated to ascribe these actions plainly and directly to the godhead, considered as a wholly transcendent being. Thus they sought the solution of this problem in some mythological figures who were considered as the bearers of God's acts and revelations and thus inserting a new divine figure which filled

up the gap as an intermediary. However, these became in turn very influential and honoured by men as a real divine being.⁴⁵ These mythological heroes, who had communication with men, soon became an object of worship and pushed back those gods whom they represented more the less into the background. Yahweh in the OT, on the other hand, remained the only and the one God of Israel, who was irreplaceable and to whom was due all worship and adoration. Eichrodt remarks that in this matter "die Israelitische Religion hat diese Zersplitterung der gottlichen Einheit erfolgreich abgewehrt."⁴⁶

The MY could therefore neither be incorporated among the gods nor among the jinns in the ancient Semitic world. They are of an entirely different nature and character. Neither could the מלאכי אלהים in the E narratives be considered as synonymous with the jinns, as was suggested by Proksch.⁴⁷ A close comparison shows the differences immediately.

The MY in the earliest narratives cannot be

⁴⁵Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Bd.II, Leipzig, 1935, p.8.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Cf. O. Proksch, Die Genesis, 1924, on Gen.28:10-17, "Sie sind in E anonym wie die arabischen Dämonen (Wellhausen, Reste², S.213) und stumm und haben keinen Kultus bei den Hebräern ..."; cf. also exegesis on Gen. 28:10-17 in Ch.IV.

explained along the lines of the vague ideas of the Egyptian "Ba" or "Ka". The MY was never symbolized like the Ba or considered as the guardian alter-ego of Yahweh, like the Ka. The MY sometimes guarded the people, but sometimes punished them. It expresses the living relationship between Yahweh and His people. Neither is there any parallel between the King-god idea and the MY idea. They are on an entirely different level.

The closest parallel is the fiery phenomenon adopted by a deity. Indeed the fiery appearance is one of the forms of the MY-appearances. This is natural as Yahweh often manifested himself in fire and the god idea in general in the ancient Semitic world was often connected with fire and light.

It seems that the divine messengers in the various myths and epics, however closely they ever may represent their Sender, are always clearly distinguished from the Sender in the whole narrative. They are clearly described as messengers, followed by a description of the message they had to convey. These descriptive details are always lacking in the MY passages in the OT.

Once the MY was the angelic intercessor, praying for the people (Zech.1:12), but the position of the MY is quite different from for instance the intercessor Baal, who was considered as the mighty god and practically

x mightier than the chief-god El himself, who was remote and more the less "otiosus". It was because of the intercessor that El complied with the request, not primarily because of the personal relationship between him and the worshipper.

From these comparisons we conclude that the MY has distinctive features besides some minor similarities. This is in line with that typical Hebrew unwillingness to assimilate themselves into the ways of neighbouring peoples. An unwillingness most clearly exemplified in the spiritual leaders of the community.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Cf. H. Frankfort, Before Philosophy, p.241.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGIN AND THE MEANING OF THE MAL'AKH YAHWEH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. The Origin of the Mal'akh Yahweh Conception in Israel

81 This aspect of the problem has not been, to my knowledge, much investigated. The MY is mentioned for the first time in Gen.16:7. There is, however, no explanation from the author or redactor as to whom the MY is and how this conception came into being; on the contrary it is supposed to be known already by the contemporary Israelites. Nor is the evidence from the field of comparative religion altogether satisfactory.

F. Stier, who adhered to the theory that the MY was a heavenly grand vizier, suggested three possibilities:

- a. the transcendent origin of this Israelite "Mittelwesenvorstellung" in the ancient tradition of the pre-Yahwistic religion, which, however, could no longer be historically investigated.
- b. Parallel to the vizier-roles of the Babylonian Ninsuburra, Nebo, and Nusku and the Egyptian Thot, as products of theological reflections, the Vizier in the OT and other heavenly messengers could be presumed as originally independent gods,

who were "defeated" by Yahweh and later on became subordinated to Yahweh through theological reflections.

c. The MY as a Vizier figure was borrowed by Israel from the non-Israelite religions.¹

These two latter possibilities could be substantiated only if in the attributes and functions of the MY in the OT traces or evidences could be found concerning its previous independent existence as "one of the gods". Such evidences are, however, wanting in the OT. From the previous subsection we may conclude that these two latter possibilities are unlikely. The solution may better be sought along the lines of the first possibility, i.e. the transcendent origin of the MY, especially in the light of the distinctiveness of the MY,² i.e. it is primarily based on a special revelation of Yahweh to the Patriarchs.

In dealing with the Patriarchal tradition, M. Noth declares³, that in the so-called "Überlieferungsgeschichte" before the settlement in Palestine, there

¹Cf. F. Stier, Gott und sein Engel im Alten Testament, 1934, p.143.

²Concerning this possibility Stier remarks: "Auch der Historiker muss die Möglichkeit eines transzendenten Ursprung der israelitischen Mittelwesenvorstellung wenigstens grundsätzlich offen lassen." (Ibid.)

³M. Noth, History of Israel, sec. ed. 1960, pp.121ff.

were certain major themes. One of these themes was the "Patriarchs", one of the traditions that survived among the confederacy of the twelve tribes of Israel in Palestine. The figures of the patriarchs were revered as the founders of the cults associated with their names. After the settlement and after the Israelite confederation of the twelve tribes this patriarchal tradition was transferred to Palestine and further developed. Numerous local Palestinian traditions became attached to the personalities of the patriarchs which were not originally associated with them at all. In this way new local traditions came into being in which the patriarchs got an important role to play. These are the pentateuchal traditions before they finally got a fixed form in the OT. To this new local cult-traditions belong the MY passages, e.g. the theophany to Abraham (Gen.18), the whole story of Sodom (Gen.19), the explanation of the name Mahanaim (Gen.32:1,2), Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen.28:11-22), Jacob's struggle at Peniel (Gen. 32:23-32), etc. All these stories are considered by Noth as originally non-Israelite. He believes that the patriarchs as historical personalities did not really belong to Palestine but only to its desert vicinity, so that the historical setting of this tradition was among those nomadic shepherds on the southern border of

Palestine. Concerning the divine manifestations to the patriarchs recorded in the OT, he concludes, that it was only after the fulfilment of the promises made to the patriarchs and the establishment of the worship of the "god of the fathers" by their descendents in Palestine, "that the tradition of the patriarchs assumed the form in which the patriarchs had all their encounters with the deity at these same holy places".⁴ No definite historical assertions about the time and place, pre-suppositions and circumstances of the lives of the patriarchs as human beings can, therefore, be made. In this way Noth deprives the MY narratives of historical reality. They are rather the fictitious reflections of those descendents of the patriarchs, who constructed these aetiological myths, which ultimately, through the long course of transmission, found their record in the OT. Aetiology is then considered by Noth as a creative factor in the formation of the tradition, which consequently has little historical reality.⁵

As far as the origin of the MY conception is concerned Noth's theory does not provide us with any

⁴Noth, op. cit., p.123.

⁵Cf. John Bright's valuable criticism on this matter in Early Israel in Recent History Writing, 1956, pp.90ff.

positive solution; the subject as such is not dealt with. Yet Noth acknowledges that there are some historical features in the patriarchal myths, e.g. the personalities of the patriarchs, the fundamental constituent of this tradition consisting of divine promises regarding the possession of the land of Palestine and regarding the descendants through repeated divine revelations. He also believes that in the southern border of Palestine "the 'god of Isaac' and 'the god of Abraham' were worshipped on the basis of the divine manifestations which had occurred ..."⁶ In this context it might be argued, whether the basic idea of the MY, as a form of divine self-manifestation closely connected with these divine revelations, belongs to the historical features or not.

It is too tentative and beyond the scope of this study to trace back how and when exactly this MY conception came into being in the earliest tradition. As a matter of fact we are still in the position of uncertainty and ignorance about the origin of the proto-traditions of Israel as well as of other ancient peoples.⁷ We can now only try to trace back the motives that were supposed to

⁶Cf. Noth, op. cit., pp.125f.

⁷Cf. J. Bright, op. cit., pp.93f.

induce this conception.

According to ancient traditional myths God himself in his concrete essence appeared, spoke, and visited men. We can read this kind of appearance and naïve communication between Yahweh and men in the stories of the Creation, the Tower of Babel, the Deluge, etc., which were influenced by other ancient myths of the surrounding peoples. The traditions of the theophany were usually connected with the origin of certain "holy places" or cult-places.⁸ When the godhead appeared at a certain place, that particular spot was then considered as a "holy place" and this place received accordingly a certain name. This was supposed to be the special place, where men could get regular contact with the godhead. In such a sphere the MY also appeared in the early period of Israel's pre-history. It is not unlikely that this ancient religious phenomenon in the ancient Semitic world induced the early Hebrew conception of the MY. H.W. Robinson remarked in this connection,

Because Yahweh is conceived to be in some sense there [i.e. at the holy places], they became points of possible contact between God and man. They are constituted holy by the divine initiative. Here Yahweh has chosen to reveal Himself; here, therefore, His presence may still be sought and is likely to be again found. 9)

⁸ Cf. Noth, op. cit., p.122.

⁹ H.W. Robinson, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, 2nd ed. 1956, pp.133f.

8/ In support of this view he pointed out that in the time prior to the Deuteronomic Reformation this worship of Yahweh at these "high places" was perfectly legitimate.¹⁰ That Yahweh could be approached at certain places was not just a fancy of the people, but declared by Yahweh himself in Ex.20:24, " ... in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you." Such appearances of Yahweh at certain places were indeed not impossible according to the ancient Israelite beliefs.¹¹ These underlying thoughts could at least illuminate our problem.

If Noth acknowledges the existence of Patriarchal traditions before the settlement, then it is probable that most of these early MY narratives, which contain aetiological elements, were based on early traditions, whether written or oral. In the long history of transmission of these traditions they could easily undergo some alterations, esp. in minor details. We do not know the extent of these changes. When they appeared in written form, i.e. from Gen.16:7 on, either by J or by E, the MY conception seems to be fixed. This conception

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The idea of the Tabernacle, אהל מועד e.g. Ex.27:21, also indicates this kind of belief.

underwent certain "theological" reflections of the compilers or redactors, who preserved the distinctive features of the MY records, as far as its nature and character in the earliest narratives are concerned.¹²

The interpolation theory which could clarify the process of redaction of the MY does not solve the problem of the ultimate origin of the MY conception either. Neither is the evolutionistic development-theory, from the heathen local god to the MY, satisfying. The borrowings from the heathen beliefs and myths underwent radical transformations and remouldings to express their own Hebrew ideas.¹³ Thus it can be assumed that the ancient tradition of the theophanies were dominantly of Israelite origin, as part of god's revelation to His people. Here again we are faced with the problem of the historicity of those aetiological myths. John Bright, in opposing Noth, says, that Formcriticism

¹²Cf. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, ATD, 1956, p.163.

¹³B.S. Childs sees within the mythical material in the OT elements which proved to be compatible vehicles for re-use by the Biblical writers and served a unique purpose in communicating the Biblical understanding of reality, which opposed the mythical. In this way Israel succeeded in overcoming the myth by forming theological categories to express the uniquely Biblical concepts; Cf. B.S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960, pp.95f.

cannot pass a final verdict on historicity. He agrees with von Rad, that the patriarchal narratives can be saga as well as history. Myths may contain a greater or lesser degree of historical content.¹⁴ Dealing with the anthropomorphic theophany, James Barr remarks, that in the earliest stages it can be traced to the memory of the ancestors and the meeting of their God with them. Later on many of these stories would have been transmitted as sacred stories or foundation stories of holy places where these events were remembered.¹⁵ From the MY passages it is also evident that due to the theophany the name of that place is changed into a new name, which is connected with what was supposed to have happened there.

According to the biblical narratives the first theophany to Abraham is expressly mentioned in Gen.12:7, when Abram reached the land of Canaan. No form of appearance, however, was mentioned here. When no theophanies were expressly mentioned, the text plainly says, "Now the Lord said to Abram" (Gen.12:1; 13:14). But the fact that this was not followed by the building of an

¹⁴Bright, op. cit., pp.90f.

¹⁵Cf. J. Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament", in Supplement VT, 1960, p.38.

altar to Yahweh at that place, opens the suggestion that there was no talk of a theophany. In Gen.15, however, it is said that, "... the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision." It is remarkable too that the Covenant was then made with Abram in darkness, when the sun had gone down. Also the physical condition in which Abram received the word of God is now clearly described, i.e. "a deep sleep fell on Abraham; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him." (vs.12). In that darkness the Covenant was then made by Yahweh, who apparently appeared as "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch", passing between the pieces (vs.17). Then it was announced that "on that day Yahweh made a Covenant with Abram" (vs.18). This is the first time that the Covenant between Yahweh and Abram, and in Abram also whole Israel, is mentioned in biblical records. It was some time afterwards that the MY appeared in a theophany to Hagar. In that following chapter of Genesis the MY is already supposed to be a familiar figure to Hagar (Gen.16:13).

Thus according to the biblical tradition the MY conception must have been born in the inter-period between the establishment of the Covenant and the theophany to Hagar. The underlying influences of this conception might be traced back to the different expressions

used here for describing the relationship between Yahweh and Abram. From these expressions it seems that the more sharply defined Yahweh's relationship was with Abram, the more concrete and elaborate it was in its description of the theophanies. As such the MY conception represents a more advanced God-idea than other myths, and is connected with the Covenant relationship.

From these biblical evidences it can be concluded that the ultimate origin of the MY conception was not the borrowing from the surrounding religions, but from the special contact of Yahweh, as the God of the Covenant, with Abraham or Israel "in corporate personality", which is the fundamental structure of the religion of Israel.¹⁶ It remains, therefore, a specific Israelite religious phenomenon.

B. The Meaning of the Mal'akh Yahweh for Israel in the Old Testament

The distinctiveness of the MY in the OT is connected with its special meaning for Israel. From

¹⁶Cf. John Gray, Legacy of Canaan, Suppl. VT, 1957, p.133, saying, "The Covenant with its essentially moral implications is the basis and essential expression of Hebrew religion."

Ch.V¹⁷ we saw that there is a pluriformity of the MY-appearances and related to them also the various functions of the MY. These functions, however, are unotenable, even if in later period the MY is considered as an intermediary angel. In both cases the MY expressed the personal relationship, based on the special Covenant between Yahweh and Israel. As a theophany it serves the general purpose of revealing Yahweh's attributes and invisible essence.¹⁸ Yahweh, as the God of the Covenant, is faithful. He is the God of righteousness, who punished the people for their sins in breaking the Covenant; but on the other hand he is also the God of mercy and love; cf. Ex.34:6f; Deut.4:31; II Chron.30:9b; Pss.86:15; 112:4; 116:5; Neh.9:17,31 etc. Israel was His elected people and He had a special purpose with this people. Thus it was God's initiative to enter into a special personal and living relationship with Israel. The living structure of God's revelation is indeed partly reflected in the MY; therefore no attempt can be made to give one static homogeneous meaning to the MY throughout the whole OT.

¹⁷vide supra, pp.203ff.

¹⁸Cf. Th. Boman, Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen, Göttingen, 1952, p.92.

This relationship was one of divine grace and blessings, expressed in many different ways.

a/ The MY was active in proclaiming the good news and promise of descendants to Abraham, Jacob, Manoah. In this context the promise was given to Hagar too, because of Abraham. That the MY also appeared to Hagar was thus merely based on the Covenant of Yahweh with the patriarch Abraham.

x It is remarkable that the MY was often engaged in the acts of blessing. At Peniel Jacob insisted a blessing from the "unknown opponent", which was the MY himself (Gen. 32:26,29). In blessing the sons of Joseph, Jacob mentioned expressly the name of the MY (cf. Gen. 48:15,16). In the story of Balaam it was the MY who gave the words of blessing to him; the MY converted Balaam becoming a blessing prophet for Israel.

The MY acted in redeeming the people from destruction and suppression: the calling of the prophet (Ex. 3) and judges (Jgs. 6; 13), the driving away of the enemies of Israel (Ex. 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:2), and the guidance and protection of Israel in the desert (Ex. 14:19). The MY was also concerned with the life of the individual: saving Lot and his family (Gen. 19), in providing Abraham with an offering and at the same time saving Isaac's life (Gen. 22:9-19), showing His care

towards the prophet Elijah (I Kgs.19:5,7) and saving Elisha from the imminent threat of the Assyrians (II Kgs.6:15-18). In this connection von Rad calls the MY as "ein Organ des Gnaden-verhältnisses Jahwes zu Israel; er ist die Person gewordene Hilfe Gottes für seine Volk."¹⁹

The connection of the MY with the Covenant is another remarkable aspect. In the previous sub-chapter it has been pointed out, that the MY appeared after the Covenant had been made between Yahweh and Abram. Thereafter his appearances were closely related to the maintaining and re-affirming of the Covenant; cf. Gen.18; 22:9-19; 28:10-17; 48:15,16. At the end of the Law-giving at the Sinai, as an affirmation of the Covenant, Yahweh promised to send his angel before Israel to guide and protect Israel in the desert (Ex.23:20-23). In Jgs.2:1-5 the MY rebuked and reminded the people of the Covenant which he had made with their fathers, saying, "I will never break my covenant with you." At the end of the last book of the OT he is called the "mal'akh habberith" (Mal.3:1).

One important function that has been ascribed to

¹⁹Cf. von Rad, Das erste Buch Mose, ATD, Göttingen, 1956, p.163.

the MY was that he made intercession for Israel in Zech.1:12, praying for God's mercy on Jerusalem. It was again through the MY that Yahweh would again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem (vs.17). In Zech.3 the MY is active in restoring the honourable priesthood based on the Levitic covenant. In this post-exilic period when the MY ceased to be a form of theophany, he still maintained the unique and important meaning for Israel in the OT, namely as Intercessor and Revealer's of God's will.

Referring to the god-idea in early Israel, E. Jacob rightly noted that the idea of the MY not only allowed Israel to declare a continuity even an identity between the religion of the patriarchs and that of Moses (cf. Ex.3:1-6), but also made it possible for Israel to speak of the presence of Yahweh in many places without calling in question his unity, and his intervention amongst men without challenging his transcendence.²⁰ He was not just the spiritual Leader of Israel, who revealed the will of Yahweh, as it has been suggested by R. Smend.²¹

²⁰E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, London, 1958, p.76.

²¹Cf. R. Smend, Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte, 1893, p.46.

The most significant feature of the MY for Israel was the human form in which it often appeared. In this form he could freely communicate with men, speak, and act without deducting the transcendence of Yahweh.

Considered from the viewpoint of the whole Heilsgeschichte, in which Israel plays an important rôle, it can be said, that these particular features and meaning of the MY were realized and fulfilled in a unique and perfect way in the Incarnation of God the Son. The OT speaks of Yahweh as the God of the Covenant and of Grace. In general the MY in the OT, whether conceived as manifestation, representation, or messenger of Yahweh, induced, in its own ways, the visualization and realization of God's blessings and grace among Israel. As such the MY has special "messianic" features: the appearance in human form, the works of redemption, bearer of God's face (*panim*), name (*shem*), and glory (*kabodh*). In this sense it is justified to consider the MY as "the premonition or adumbration of the Messianic work in Christ, the prelude to a permanent redemptive self-revelation of God".²² The works and function of the MY, as the witness and symbol of the

²²Cf. A.B. Davidson, "Angel", in HDB, pp.94ff.

promise of salvation, have been ultimately fulfilled by the Messiah.²³ There is, however, no reason to identify the MY with Christ or the Logos or to consider it as the pre-existence of the Second Person of God. It is likewise to go beyond the OT understanding to see in the MY the personal distinction in the Godhead.

²³Cf. J. Blaauw, Gezanten van de Hemel, Baarn, no date, pp.63-69; von Rad considers the MY even as a "type" and a "shadow" of Christ; cf. op. cit., p.163.

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