
A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE X.

SEMITIC AND ORIENTAL NOTES.

EARLY ISRAELITISH MONOTHEISM.

THE discussion as to when the Israelites became, in any proper sense, monotheists, is not yet ended, if indeed, from the nature of the subject and the character of the proofs adducible, it will ever be finally settled for all alike. There is cumulative evidence of various kinds for the prevalence of early monotheism among the Hebrews, but there are also many evidences to the contrary. In the May issue of the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Rev. Charles James Ball presents some very interesting facts against the monotheistic view.

Among other cases, he cites the fact that in at least two cases Jacob's sons were named after deities quite distinct from the God of Israel, though, as he alleges, often associated with Him in worship. The passage is in Gen. xxx. 9–13 as follows: "When Leah became aware that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob to wife; and Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 'With Gad's help' [pointing בְּגָד], cried Leah, and named him Gad. After that Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 'With Asherah's help,' cried Leah, 'for maidens must needs call me happy'; so she named him Asher."

Gad, Mr. Ball points out, is rightly translated Τύχη in the Septuagint, and is the Latin *Fors Fortuna*. In the Babylonian Exile, the Jews are reproached for worshipping this god of good luck. In Isa. lxv. 11 we read: "But ye that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Gad [Fortune], and fill up mingled wine to Meni [Destiny]." These images were probably worshipped in much the same way as the teraphim of David, alluded to in 1 Sam. xix. 13. He also thinks that perhaps *Gad* here is a Semitic adaptation of the Accadian *Gud*, as a title of Merodach (Marduk), who assigns and determines the fate of men and nations.

Asherah is, he continues, known to have represented the female principle of Nature, according to the conceptions of Canaanitish religion. She is always associated with Baal, and her image was even set up in the temple of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii. 6). Among the planets she was Venus, just as Gad is associated with Jupiter in the Arabic astrology. Another

instance which he cites, is that of the burial by Jacob of all the foreign gods in his family under the terebinth by Shechem (Gen. xxxv. 1–4).

These are not the only instances of this kind in the earlier literature of the Old Testament, and seem to offer pretty clear evidence against anything like a pure monotheistic conception, at least, in either the Jahvist or the Elohist narratives. But there is one thing to be said, in connection with all these cases, and that is, their isolated and comparatively rare character, as connected with the general trend of the worship, which uniformly has Jehovah for its centre and object. These instances look more like survivals, than as indicating a fixed type of worship, though there can be no doubt that Abraham's ancestry and the worship of Sin, the Babylonian Moon-god at Ur, might easily have brought a polytheistic bent into successive generations, both reasonably and naturally. The belief in early monotheism, however, rests not, as Mr. Ball seems to think, upon "special objective revelations" so much as upon the method of explaining with least violence, to the data at our disposal, the phenomena before us. But it is vastly easier to accept a polytheistic touch, in the period from which these examples are chosen, than to suppose, as we are so frequently asked to suppose, that a real monotheism was not attained until after the Captivity. Lapse into the polytheism of Babylonia, during the latter, was natural enough, inasmuch as this usually happens to captive races, that they fall into the religious life and ideas of their conquerors, but hardly is it likely, that, during the prophetic period at its height, the Israelites were anything other than simple monotheists.

Speaking of the little detached passage (Gen. iv. 19–24) about Lamech and his children, Mr. Ball has a much more interesting discovery to relate. Zillah, it appears, was the mother of Tubal-cain, the worker in copper and iron, and his sister's name was Naamah. Mr. Ball points out, the most interesting fact, that, though the Bible has little to say about Tubal-cain, and nothing about Naamah, in both the Babylonian and the Chinese mythology, the inventor of metallurgy shares the honors of his art with his sister, who appears as a co-equal benefactor of mankind. The table as follows shows the connection between the three in a most interesting manner:—

FOUNDERS OF METALLURGY.

Old Babylonian.	Chinese.	Hebrew.
Bal-gin Bilgi.	Bak-ki Fuhhi.	(Tu)bal-cain.
Nin ka-(si) or Nin-gu-(si).	Nü kwa-(shi) or Nü-hi-(shi).	Noğma, "Naamah."

As the affinities of the Chinese with the Accadian become more perfectly known, we shall expect a host more of just such connecting links as this. A large number has already been established, and if a sufficient number more develop, the material for a wider induction as to the sources

of the early Hebrew belief in connection with those of the Chinese, will be of first importance for the more accurate study of early religious ideas.

A not uninteresting passage in Mr. Ball's paper is the following, which, though purely personal, is not less striking as showing a type of scholar not so frequently met with as might be desirable:—

"Speaking as a sincere Catholic, but also as one whose conviction is that the highest interest of Religion is truth, I do not hesitate to say that the Old Testament itself is in manifold contradiction with that uncritical exegesis which arbitrarily ignores too many of the most original facts and features of its unique records to be worthy even of the serious consideration of earnest seekers after truth. . . . Believing therefore in truth, and in the God of truth, I am not alarmed by the results of recent inquiry nor by the hypotheses which those results seem to warrant in the field of Old Testament studies. . . . We can all do something to further or retard progress; and if we are animated by a worthy desire to advance the most sacred of all causes, the cause of that Truth, which is indeed Divine, we shall be content to work our way onward in patience, faith, and humility."

THE THREE RELIGIONS OF CHINA.

The already growing interest in the religions of China has received a decided stimulus, from the increasing evidence of the similarity of the primitive religious ideas of China and the earlier inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, and makes a right understanding of the former of very great importance to the students of the latter. In fact, the comparative study of religions has opened here a wide field for investigation, and we may expect that within a few years there will be a much larger study of Chinese in this country than is at present the case.

At the Oriental Congress held in London, in 1892, Professor Legge, of Oxford, presented a most absorbing paper on the theme "A Fair and Dispassionate Discussion of the Three Doctrines Accepted in China," being a translation, with comments, of a paper or treatise of that title by Liû Mî, a Buddhist writer of the thirteenth century of our era. Liû Mî's book is said to be one of the most widely read and well-known books in Japan. He is an earnest advocate of Buddhism, for which he pleads much more earnestly than for Confucianism or Tâoism, though he gives a very fair account of both these forms of Chinese religion.

The account which he offers of the first appearance of the three religions in China is very interesting. The "Doctrine of the Literati," which is his name for what we know generally as Confucianism, began, according to Liû Mî, with Fû-hsî's making of the Right Trigrams. These are trilineal symbols from which are developed the sixty-four Hexagrams which compose the Yî-Ching. The date of Fû-hsî is not given, but Professor Legge thinks that at least a thousand years elapsed between him

and Yâo, who is said to have lived in the twenty-fourth century B. C. The author probably means to give the impression that Fû-hsî was the inventor of written characters.

The "Doctrine of the Tâo" is dated from the sixth century B. C., during the life of Confucius, though there was an earlier doctrine of the Tâo of which Hwang-tî is said to be the author. His rule is placed as beginning about 2697 B. C.

Buddhism came into China in the reign of the Emperor Ming (A. D. 58-75), though there has been a conjecture, of which this author says nothing, that an entrance was made some time in the third century B. C. It is for the sake of Buddhism that the treatise is evidently written, and though the first two of the doctrines receive careful and painstaking attention, yet genuine enthusiasm appears only in his discussion of the third. His summary of the three and their relation to each other for practical religious living is interesting. He says:—

"The fundamental idea with the Literati is correctness of morality; with the Tâoists veneration or giving honour to their Tâo; and with the Buddhists vastness. They agree in their love of life and dislike of putting to death, and so (the principle of) Benevolence is common to them; in their regard for others as themselves, and so (the sentiment of) Justice is common to them; in their repression of anger and opposition to lust, in their prohibition of excess and precautions against wrong, and so (the maintenance of) Self-Culture is common to them. They all, as if with the crash of thunder, penetrate the ears of the deaf, and, as with the brightness of the sun and moon, give light to the darkened understanding, and so a Transforming influence is common to them.

"It readily appears that there are only two paths of good and evil open to man, and it is the common aim of the three doctrines that all men should take the good path. One writer has said that Buddhism regulates the mind, Tâoism the body, and the doctrine of the Literati, society. But the mind, the body, and society, require each of them to be regulated, and how can any one of the three doctrines be left uncultivated? Another writer has said, that the doctrine of the Literati cures the skin, Tâoism the pulse, and Buddhism the marrow. But as the skin, the pulse, and the marrow, all require to be kept in healthy action, how can any one of the doctrines be allowed to fall into disuse?"

In his description of the doctrine of the Literati, which he shows has to do chiefly with the relationships of the social order, he says, it has to do simply with the bonds of society and the constant virtues, and the power and use of ceremonies, music, punishments, and government. With these dominant, a happy order prevails in heaven and in earth. There seem to be in this doctrine, two parts, namely, (1) that which analyzes human nature into its elements; and (2) that which distributes society into its constituent relationships. It does not appear in the exposition here given by Liû Mî, as Professor Legge thinks it should appear, that a

most important element in the doctrine is the recognition of the fact, that man's existence, nature, and duties, are from a Supreme Being now called by the impersonal term Heaven, and now by the personal name of Supreme Ruler. Not only, says Professor Legge, was the doctrine of the Literati theistic, but even monotheistic, in character. Liû was probably not ignorant of the fact, though his interest in Buddhism made it easier for him to overlook it.

Of Tâoism, he says that it makes "men pure and humble in the keeping of themselves, and lowly and retiring in the assertion of themselves. It washes away all practices of a heedless and disorderly character, and brings its professors back to the regions of quiet, silence, and non-action." On Buddhism, he says that it makes "men put away what is vain, and seek after what is real; reject what is false, and turn to what is true; convert action which requires effort to that which is easy; to advance from what is profitable only to one's self to what is profitable to others. It is the dependence and resource of all living people, to which nothing can be added"; and he quotes the opinion of Lî Shih-Ch'ien, of the Sûi dynasty (589–618), that Buddhism may be compared to the sun, Tâoism to the moon, and the doctrine of the Literati to the five planets."

Commenting on the highest doctrine of each system, he says that the Literati achieve, as their best result, the regulation successively of the person, the clan or family, and finally the State. And by means of the State, all within the "four seas" are regulated, and the doctrine gains the widest acceptance. The Literati are scholars, he says, "complete and admirable," of great service to rulers, and conferring great benefits on the people. They maintain the culture of society and produce the highest order and peace.

Tâoism he sets forth as a kind of mysticism. It starts from the bodily person, but soon rises above the sky, and, mounting from forests and craggy peaks, soars in the boundless infinite to the golden gate of the great firmament. In its greatness it embraces the utmost limits of the sky, and in its minuteness it penetrates the atoms of the dust. Those who embrace the doctrine, study it with undistracted spirits, have union with the disembodied, living grandly in the region of absolute purity and few desires, accumulate meritorious performances and good deeds, and so deliver themselves from the trammels of the body.

Of Buddhists he says, They will be pure and holy, they will be self-forgetful, they will be fearless, they will have contempt for riches or any possessions, their minds will be earnest and resolute, they will be virtuous, and free from error. And, after showing its superiority to the first two doctrines, he adds: "Students of the doctrine of the Literati die, and there is an end of them; they and their system are an affair of but a hundred years. Students of Tâoism eagerly seek after long life; they and their life may endure for a thousand or a myriad years. Students of Buddhism wish to obliterate the distinction between life and death, and

will consequently abide in a condition of tranquillity, passing through a multitude of kalpas innumerable and inexhaustible. The system of the Literati may be compared to a lamp which gives light for a single evening. When the bell sounds, or the clepsydra is exhausted, the oil is expended, and the lamp goes out. Tâoism may be compared to the lamps which the King Ajâtashatrû made to illuminate the relics of Buddha, but which would become extinguished after a hundred years. Buddhism may be compared to the illuminating power of the bright sun, shining constantly through myriads of years, disappearing in the West, but rising again in the East, with unceasing revolution."

The latter, he goes on to show most elaborately, penetrates every part of the world, and its essences, and is the final and enduring quality of all things. It is an interesting estimate by a Chinese scholar, who, with all his extravagances, is quite worthy of his own modest designation of himself as "Liû Mî, the Distinguished Scholar of the Quiet Study."

ON THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF RELIGION.

"*Unter der Hülle aller Religionen liegt die Religion selbst.*" Nothing more profound or far-reaching, as affecting the method and scope of religious investigation, has ever been uttered than this impressive sentence. The exclusivism which, until within very recent times, obscured or misrepresented the religious tendencies of other nations than those which professed Christianity, seems to be in a fair way to break away, and we are coming into the sunlight, where the object is truth first, and particular dogma afterward.

But the pioneers in this investigation were men in whom the religious faculties had been more or less dulled, either by neglect or otherwise, and who brought to their task only the barren furnishing of cold intellectual theories, which, having no kinship with the theme, necessarily brought forth only a single phase of the truth which they were obligated to seek. A healthful spirit is beginning to prevail, which, when it is everywhere brought to bear on the questions at issue, cannot but produce a great deal of light.

At the Anthropological Congress, held during the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, there was read a very suggestive paper by Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania. Its title was "The Scope and Method of Historical Study of Religions." It is interesting to find him suggesting a point which has appeared more than once, already, in these *Notes*, namely, the importance of applying the results of the new psychology to the historical study of religions. He says on this point:—

"No less important than the utilization of researches made in this direction, are the bearings of the new psychology on the history of re-

ligions. The interdependence between psychical processes and physiological states, is the part of the subject which I have more particularly in mind. Complementary to the more general bearing of racial traits, we have in the study and interpretation of mental phenomena, a valuable aid to an understanding of special and individual religious temperaments. It is perhaps too early to apply the results of physiological psychology in their fullest extent, but one is quite safe in predicting that our view of the great religious teachers of mankind, more especially of the mystics, is certain of being both clarified and modified by a deeper penetration into the workings of the mind peculiar to them."

Dr. Jastrow has here sounded a note of vast importance, and which, as he intimates, is bound to make a great difference in many of the received views about holy things and holy places, and in the regard which primitive man had for certain objects of worship. We shall find it not unlikely, that the rationale of the worship of sacred trees and stones, of caves and jinns, may have a very different foundation than that which is now commonly supposed. In the discussion of totemism, this view is sure to make a vast change of view. Of course the application can be neither complete nor thorough, until the phenomena of the primitive religious mind have been as carefully and thoughtfully gathered and classified, as those of primitive religious practice and worship have been. The emphasis upon the history has had as one of its injurious effects, as Dr. Jastrow indicates, but does not state, that the personal element has been almost entirely ignored. On the spirit of such study, he has also some very good words. He says:—

"It is idle to disguise the fact, that in many even scientific circles, there prevails a certain fear upon entering what appears to be a thorny field; in other quarters there is a vague notion, that in some way the investigation of religions is bound to create havoc within the domain of religious faith. I venture to controvert both allegations involved. The scholar who permits himself, in his researches, to be swayed by any other motive or consideration than the pursuit of truth, is a traitor to his cause, and yet I see no reason why the scholar in dealing with matters that constitute the most sacred possessions of mankind, should not be reverent in his manner of treatment. He should remember that the ground on which he treads is holy—if not to him, then what is more important, to others. This is the one concession that may be legitimately demanded of him, or rather a proper regard for the feelings of others should be so natural to him as to remove the consciousness of making any concession."

It is the lack of this very spirit, for which the essayist so thoughtfully pleads, that has been productive of the greatest difficulties in the way of securing the wide acceptance of the best established results of modern scholarship, both in Oriental study and comparative religious research. It is in this one characteristic, that the English Semitic scholars so far excel their Continental brethren, that, though they are the inferiors of the

latter often, in their breadth of view and the philosophical insight into the problems handled, yet they reach the popular mind and sway the popular thought. To some scientific men this is not a great achievement, and radicals who imagine that they are accomplishing nothing if they are not slashing into the sensibilities of non-experts, will probably continue to accuse moderates of truckling to prejudices. But it will still remain true that the reverent scholar who has proper regard for the momentous character of the effects which his investigations will produce, will, all things considered, more surely and more wisely lead his generation out into the larger light of scientific views and rational interpretation.

Perhaps it is too early to expect a department of Psychological Anthropology, a division of the subject which shall have for its *Aufgabe* the gathering of the materials for the study of the mental life of primitive man. But here we shall find the missing link in our present theory of primitive religions. It is one of the most suggestive facts, that this demand comes from so many different sources simultaneously. Dr. Emmanuel Bonavia, who has just published a book on the "Flora of the Assyrian Monuments," also calls for a re-examination of mythology from the psychological view. But that we should have supposed, or that we should have been asked to believe, that the primitive worshippers, without reason or rationale, built up a vast mass of symbolic ritual and religious practice, without a single thought in their minds as to the results they sought, or without any primary convictions as to themselves, their deities, or the world in which they lived, will, in the light of such study as is here suggested, be very amusing. Perhaps we shall even find that the making of cosmogonies, which until now we have imagined to be a very late manifestation of the religious activity of earlier peoples, began at a much earlier period. At all events, in this as in other branches of the historical study, we shall endeavor to get all the facts, and follow, as Dr. Jastrow observes, the leading of the facts, without *Tendenz* indeed, but with a surer and more sound instinct for the truth. And we may be sure that no true interest of either religion or faith will sensibly suffer.

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