Faith and Thought

A Journal devoted to the study of the inter-relation
of the Christian revelation and modern research

Vol. 90 Number 3 Winter 1958

H. W. F. SAGGS, B.D., M.TH., M.A., PH.D.

Some Ancient Semitic Conceptions of the Afterlife

Introduction: Some Fluidity in Christian Beliefs

Contemporary Christian belief, as represented by certain of its documents no less than by popular practices, contains a large number of diverse conceptions of the Afterlife, some of them incompatible or mutually exclusive. This diversity is at a minimum in doctrinal works, where theologians have deliberately combated heresies or reconciled differences of belief, but remains present not only, as some would say, in the biblical sources of our faith, but also in popular devotion, expressed on the one hand in funeral and memorial customs and on the other in modern hymnody. To quote only one instance from the last-mentioned source, the conception of the point at which the Afterlife begins ranges from that of Mrs Alexander's gloomy dirge[1] which, speaking of the departed in the churchyard, says:

> They do not hear when the great bell
> Is ringing overhead;
> They cannot rise and come to Church
> With us, for they are dead.
> But we believe a day shall come
> When all the dead will rise,
> When they who sleep down in the grave
> Will ope again their eyes.

to the fine hymn of F. W. Faber[2] which clearly implies that it is not in an eschatological future but immediately at the end of its earthly travail that the Christian soul goes to its rest and joy with the Shepherd in Heaven:

> Rest comes at length; though life be long and dreary,
> The day must dawn, and darksome night be past;
> Faith's journey ends in welcome to the weary,
> And Heav'n, the heart's true home, will come at last.

Other examples of similar contradictions could be given. The fact that one belief is officially the true Catholic doctrine[3] to the exclusion of the other does not affect the fact that in popular devotion the two beliefs exist side by side.

When such diversity of popular belief still exists within our own faith despite the fact that for over a millennium the finest intellects of the western world employed themselves in erecting one unified logical and systematic theology of the Christian faith, it is against all probability that it should be possible, without violence to the facts, to abstract from the archaeological and written sources concerning ancient Semitic conceptions of the Afterlife a single unified set of ideas.[4] No such attempt is made in the present essay, which endeavours to describe the more prominent conceptions found and to relate them, where possible, to particular periods, *milieux* and external influences.

Sources

An initial difficulty in discussing any aspect of Semitic religion is to decide what is admissible as source material. The term 'Semitic' itself need not trouble us here: though perhaps not justifiable as applied to anything other than languages, and difficult of precise definition, it is in this connection convenient and generally understood. Quantitatively, the largest mass of documentary material for ancient Semitic civilisation consists of the texts from Babylonia and Assyria, but so great was the influence of the Sumerian sub-stratum on the civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria that there have been authorities who would deny that the religion of these peoples may properly be considered as Semitic at all.[5] This view seems to go too far, particularly in view of some very marked differences (for example, the relative prominence of goddesses) between the purely Sumerian religion of the third millennium B.C. and later Assyro-Babylonian religion; nonetheless it is essential to bear in mind the possibility of Sumerian influence when considering any evidence from the Assyro-Babylonian field for which no parallel can be adduced from Semitic influences uninfluenced by Sumer.

The most generally known evidence on this subject is that of the Old Testament: this has been so frequently recapitulated and so extensively discussed that the treatment of the material in this essay is largely confined to summarising the main opinions, and differences of opinion, maintained by scholars on this subject.

A third source of ancient documentary material, which has become available in the last thirty years, consists of the Ras Shamra (Ugaritic) tablets,[6] of which the evidence for the present investigation is important though not extensive. Interpretation of some of the passages crucial for this subject is still in dispute amongst authorities.

Some scraps of evidence relating to the northern Semites are to be found in a few Phoenician and Aramaic memorial inscriptions, whilst some hints concerning the beliefs of Arabs before Islam may be gleaned from South Arabian inscriptions, burial practices as established by excavation, and traditions in Arabic literature.

Stages in General Conception of the Afterlife

F. Cumont, in his *Afterlife in Roman Paganism* (1922), brilliantly demonstrated that in Roman religion at least three strata of belief were to be recognised concerning the Afterlife. Originally the soul of the dead man was felt to continue some kind of existence within the tomb itself; then the tomb was regarded as being the entrance to the great gloomy subterranean chamber in which all the dead shared a shadowy existence; finally the conception was reached of a celestial heaven, at least for certain of the deceased, who attained this privilege either through personal merit or by salvation through the Mysteries. It is not difficult to illustrate the existence of the two earlier stages of belief amongst the Semites: that they had, prior to and independent of the period of Iranian influence, any conception of a celestial heaven, in the sense of a home of the blessed departed, is less easily established.

Palaeolithic and Neolithic Burial Practices

The archaeological evidence (in the narrow sense) is concerned primarily with burial practices. Here it is difficult to make significant distinctions between the practices of the Semites and those of many non-Semitic peoples, largely because the practices themselves go back to an enormous antiquity, long before a distinct Semitic culture group arose. Indeed, the evidence available suggests that the concern of Man with the mystery of death and therefore with ritual disposal of the body was earlier than *Homo Sapiens*, going back half a million years to *Homo Sinanthropus*.[7] In the Middle Palaeolithic period Man (perhaps because of an increased vividness of his dreams related to the mental development associated with his increasing mastery of tool techniques, though this 'dreams' theory has been criticised[8]) began to pay great and increasing attention to funeral rites and the cult of the dead,[9] and from this time onwards 'ceremonial interment was practised continuously'.[10] Cave-burials of the Middle Palaeolithic period have been found in which the body has been carefully disposed, in some cases with a

specific orientation, and accompanied by tools; this suggests some form of belief in survival in and possibly beyond the grave.[11] In the Upper Palaeolithic period there was further development in the cult of the dead, notably the staining of skeletons with red ochre, doubtless as 'an attempt to make the deceased live again in his revivified body'.[12] In this period also is found the beginning of the practice of flexing the dead body: this has generally been taken as symbolising the foetal position and thus as relating to an idea of re-birth beyond the grave: James suggests[13] more plausibly that the object was to prevent the dead from walking to the discomfiture of living men.

At the neolithic revolution there emerged a myth and ritual in response to the new factors in human economy and society, but behind this there lay the palaeolithic cults concerned with the dead. The new conceptions involved appropriate modifications in the ancient practices, such as the introduction of figurines of the mother-goddess, the source of life of neolithic religion, into the funerary equipment, but the ancient practices themselves continued. There is therefore no necessity to suppose that all aspects of burial practices in the neolithic or proto-historic periods necessarily reflected current conceptions.

Burial amongst the Semites

All the branches of the Semites shared in the ancient idea that there was some kind of continued existence after death: the conception of annihilation at death only began to be considered by them at a very late period and under Greek influence.[14] 'Life' was thought of as something tangible and indestructible, either as associated with the blood[15] or as a kind of vapour which at death passed out through the nose:[16] amongst the pre-Islamic Arabs the soul (*hāma*) was represented in poetry 'as a kind of bird, resembling an owl . . . ,which flies out of the head of the dead man and hovers about near the grave'.[17] Death was referred to, in the Old Testament and elsewhere, as ' sleep'.[18]

Amongst the Semites the mode of disposal of the body was almost invariably burial. Only rarely and in exceptional circumstances did cremation take place. Consignment of the body to the river, which is attested as a means of disposal of the corpse in early Sumerian times,[19] does not appear to have been established by any textual evidence as a practice of the Semitic inhabitants of Babylonia: archaeological evidence is not likely to become available either to prove or to disprove the existence of such a practice.

Whilst burial was the almost invariable means of disposal of the body amongst the Semites, the place and details of burial might vary widely. The corpse might be buried under the floor of a house or palace, in a cave or rock-tomb, or in a special graveyard. There is no evidence from Babylonian or Assyrian graves for any particular orientation of the corpse, which might be flexed, unflexed, or pushed into the shape most suitable for disposal in a large pot or other container.[20] At Ugarit burial in a vault, probably wrapped in a shroud,[21] was the normal way of disposal of the body:[22] according to the evidence of an Egyptian source, the story of Sinuhe, the inhabitants of Syria five hundred years earlier buried the body in a sheepskin.[23] At Ugarit as elsewhere women served as professional mourners, pouring ashes on their heads, tearing their clothes, lacerating their bodies, and making lamentation.[24] Mourning practices of this kind, long known from the Old Testament, have recently been found referred to in a Babylonian inscription of the sixth century B.C.[25]

Grave Offerings

There is widespread evidence, not confined to the Semites, for the practice of placing vessels containing food and drink, and various other objects, in or near the tomb.[26] As archaeological evidence for the practice in the Babylonian *milieu* may be quoted the many graves excavated at Assur, which contained a great variety of ornaments, weapons, household equipment, and vessels for food and drink.[27] Since the shades of the dead required sustenance, the unburied, or those lacking the usual grave-offerings, were in an unhappy plight: the *eṭimmu* (ghost) without a grave is mentioned alongside a number of other beings, including 'the *eṭimmu* who has no-one to tend him, the *eṭimmu* who has no provision of food-offerings, the *eṭimmu* who has no libations of water',[28] as likely to be possessing a sick man, and the exorcist warns all such spirits: 'Until you depart from the body of the [sick] man, you shall not drink water. . . . Neither sea water, sweet water, bad water, Tigris water, Euphrates water, well water nor any river water will they pour out for you.'[29] It is interesting also that in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry almost the only feeling ascribed to the departed soul (*hāma*) is that of thirst,[30] and in poems composed on the death of a relation one finds such phrases as 'May he be refreshed with drink'.[31] G. Ryckmans suggests[32] that names given to South Arabian tombs, such as *khrf*, 'Autumn Rain', and *mrw*, 'Stream', may be related

to the idea that abundant rain or libations were beneficial to the departed.

A text from Ugarit[33] makes it explicit that after a man's death his future well-being depended upon offerings made by his son, who also had the pious duty of erecting in the sancturay a stele bearing the name and lineage of the deceased. The presence of pottery in some cave-tombs confirms the statements of the texts that at Ugarit the dead were provided with food and drink. Archaeological evidence also establishes that food and drink offerings were given to the dead amongst the Canaanites in Palestine, whilst tubes leading into Canaanite graves were almost certainly intended to convey drink thither.[34]

The position with regard to funerary offerings amongst the Israelites in Palestine seems to be open to some doubt. Certainly vessels were placed in the graves, but it has been asserted that no 'single clear remnant of food or drink has been discovered in any of the dishes, jugs, and jars placed in the tombs which have so far been excavated in ancient Israelite Palestine'.[35] What if we accept this claim, are we to make of the presence of such vessels in the grave? G. E. Wright, adducing Jeremiah xvi. 7 and Hosea ix. 4 as evidence for the holding of a funeral feast for family and friends, suggests that the vessels were those of the mourners, placed in the tomb for sentimental reasons, as a 'symbolic and/or traditional survival of the primitive custom'[36] of prehistoric times. There are objections to this view. In a tomb of the monarchy period at Tell en-Naṣbeh (a site a few miles north of Jerusalem and possibly the remains of Mizpah of 1 Samuel vii. 5, etc.) a jar did contain some substance which, though it was never properly analysed, was probably the remains of a honeycomb.[37] As to the suggestion regarding the origin of the vessels in the tomb, it is notable that of three classes of juglet found at Tell en-Naṣbeh, two classes 'were largely reserved for funeral offerings',[38] that is, they were not vessels of everyday use such as Wright's theory requires, but special vessels for the tomb.

As to the biblical evidence, it seems possible to take the passages adduced by G. E. Wright in a rather different sense from that normally given them. In Hosea ix. 4 there is no justification beyond the Septuagint translation for the specific rendering 'bread of mourners' rather than 'bread of sorrow', and if the Septuagint translation (*πένθους*, gen. sing.) is to be taken as the basis for the translation, this passage could in fact be interpreted as referring to grave offerings, since *πένθος* is elsewhere in the Old Testament the usual rendering of Hebrews. *ēbĕl*,

which appears to mean in a number of occurrences not simply 'mourning' but 'funerary rites'.

The verse Jeremiah xvi. 7, though in its present form it certainly contains phrases which suggest that the eating and drinking is done by the survivors, may perhaps show traces of an original idea of sharing food and drink with the dead. Jeremiah xvi. 3 ff. refers to certain additional horrors to be added to the common fate of death. The horrors beyond death are: omission of burial (verses 4, 6), lamentation (verses 4, 5, 6), ritual laceration (verse 6) and ritual cutting of the hair (verse 6). These are penalties inflicted not upon the survivors but upon the dead. It seems not unreasonable to take verse 7 as continuing the thought. The first words should in that case be translated not 'they shall not break[39] [bread] for them in mourning', but 'they shall not distribute [bread] to them in mourning rites' (taking *pāras* I^e as in Isaiah lviii. 7, and the third person plural indirect object as referring to the dead, as in all translations). In the phrase 'they shall not cause them to drink the cup of consolation', there seems to be no reason to assume that the third person plural direct object here differs in its reference from the three preceding indirect objects in third person plural, which all undoubtedly refer to the dead and not to the survivors. The remaining words—'to comfort them for the dead' and 'for their father or for their mother'—are against the proposed interpretation of the verse; they may either be taken as conclusive evidence that the verse, despite the points mentioned, never bore any allusion to offerings to the dead, or else treated as containing an editorial attempt to modify a text which was found offensive in that it seemed to condone the practice of making offerings to the dead. Heidel, accepting the usual interpretation of Jeremiah xvi. 7 and Hosea ix. 4, asserts that 'while among the Babylonians and Assyrians it was the duty of the surviving relatives to supply the departed with food and drink . . ., we have no Old Testament evidence that this practice was in vogue also among the Hebrews'[40] and claims that the only passage adduced in support of such a view worthy of consideration is Deuteronomy xxvi. 14, which he prefers to interpret as alluding to gifts of food to mourners. The detailed criticism of Heidel's arguments must be relegated to the footnotes,[41] but the evidence of the Old Testament, though not conclusive for either interpretation, does seem to point to the fact that the provision of food and drink offerings to the dead, like many other pagan cults, was practised amongst the Israelites, and that the practice had not been wholly stamped out, despite the unquestioned

opposition of the prophets, by the Exile or perhaps even by the time of Ecclesiasticus.

Necessity of Proper Burial

Whatever the specific beliefs concerning the destiny of the soul after death, burial according to the prescribed rites was thought to be essential to enable the soul to pass from the vicinity of the corpse to whatever awaited it.[42] In Babylonian religion, without proper burial of the corpse the shade could not find rest in the Underworld and was doomed to wander ceaselessly upon the earth. Amongst the ghosts which might haunt a sick man and require to be exorcised was 'one that lies dead in the desert, uncovered with earth'[43] and 'a ghost without a grave'.[44] Assurbanipal, in exposing the bones of Elamite kings, says 'I brought restlessness upon their ghosts and cut them off from food-offerings and libations'.[45] The idea that denial of proper burial would affect the person concerned after death seems also to have been accepted by the prophets, to judge by Amos ii. 1, where Moab is denounced for burning the bones of the kings of Edom. A similar idea may be recognised in 2 Kings xxiii. 16–18, where it is recorded that the good King Josiah had the bones of idolaters burned but decreed that the bones of a Yahwist prophet should not be disturbed. Burial without adequate rites was a heavy penalty (Jer. xxii. 19, xxvi. 23) and a horror which exceeded death itself (Jer. xvi. 4, 6). Mutilation after death (2 Sam. iv. 12) or cremation (Josh. vii. 25) might be resorted to in the case of a criminal.

The idea that the repose of the soul depended upon the body remaining buried in the proper manner underlies the imprecations inscribed on tombs in other parts of the ancient Semitic world. Thus a funerary inscription of a king of Sidon (*c.* 300 B.C.) reads: 'Do not open me nor disquiet me, for this thing is an abomination to 'Ashtart. And if you do . . . [so] . . ., may you have no seed among the living under the sun nor resting place among the shades (*rp'm*).'[46] Funerary steles in pre-Islamic South Arabia also bear curses intended to fall upon anyone who violates the tomb.[47]

The recognised importance at Ugarit of the proper burial rites has already been referred to.

Whilst in Babylonian belief the ghost of one who had not received proper burial was regarded as malevolent and dangerous to living man, there is only slight evidence in the Old Testament of belief that such

a spirit could harm. Deuteronomy xxi. 22, 23 (cf. Josh. viii. 29, x. 26, 27) which prescribes that an executed criminal shall be buried on the same day, may be related to this conception. Lilith, the female demon (in popular but false etymology 'night-demon') of Isaiah xxxiv. 14 and later Jewish tradition, represents a different conception, that of a primeval spirit which had never been embodied: this is quite clear from the Babylonian evidence where the *lilitu*, the counterpart and original of Lilith, represents a demon or class of demon quite distinct from the *eṭimmu* or ghost.

Passage of Ghosts to the Underworld

If the corpse had been buried according to the due rites, the ghost was able to pass into the Underworld. On its journey thither, in the Babylonian conception, the ghost had to pass over a river, according to the statement of the Babylonian Theodicy: '(Men must) go the way of death; "You shall cross the river Ḫubur", they are ordered from eternity.'[48] The idea was elaborated by the provision of a ferryman, Ḫumuṭ-tabal[49] (Bear swiftly!), to take the soul across to the city of the dead. In the religion of Ugarit the idea of a River of the Underworld seems also to have been held, in view of the occurrence of the term *tpṭ nhr* [50]—'Judge River'—in connection with the Underworld: the phrase suggests that the soul not only crossed but was judged at the River. That the Babylonians may also have admitted the idea of some kind of judgment taking place at the River of the Underworld is indicated by a text in which occurs the passage: 'At the side of the Holy River—the place of judgement of the people who cross. The side of the river—the Ordeal.'[51] However, whilst there is certainly mention elsewhere of judges in the Underworld, the idea of a judgment of souls remained inchoate in Babylonian religion; it is, indeed, just possible that the text translated may have referred to the Ordeal of the terrestrial legal system, in which it was the River-God who in the last resort decided a case.

There seems to be no evidence in the Old Testament for the idea of a river of judgment in the Underworld.

It may be mentioned at this point that it has been denied that there was at Ugarit any idea of the dead passing beyond the tomb: according to one authority, A. van Selms, 'Once buried the dead were supposed to remain in their graves. There they "slept", though they were able to partake of food, especially that in liquid form, which their relatives

bestowed on them.'[52] There is a passage in the Ugaritic texts which, speaking of a man who has been killed, may be translated, 'his soul (*npš*) shall go forth like wind, his ghost like a puff';[53] but this provides, according to van Selms, no reason to suppose that 'a *npš*, after leaving the nostrils, is a sentient being'.[54] The use of the term 'the cave of the gods of the earth' for 'grave' van Selms explains[52] as related simply to the fact that the grave, as a hole in the ground, is part of the domain of the chthonic deities, whilst according to him the statement that the dead 'go down into the earth' merely expresses a literal truth concerning the place of burial.[55] He further claims that 'nowhere is there mention of any act of the dead': this view is not, however, universally accepted and its validity depends upon the meaning of the Ugaritic word *rpum*, which is discussed below.

Whatever doubts may exist as to the doctrine of the soul passing to the Underworld at Ugarit, there can be none concerning its prevalence in the Old Testament. Here the principal word for 'Underworld' is Sheol (*šᵉ)ôl*), but in addition a number of synonyms or presumed synonyms occur, such as Destruction (*)ᵃbaddôn*), Pit (*bôr, šaḥat*), or Death (*māwet*). The term Sheol itself in some passages[56] seems to have been synonymous with 'grave',[57] but it is difficult to accept a view put forward by Heidel that in a number of cases[58] the word meant simply 'death': in one of the examples, Psalm xxx. 4 (R.V. 3), the parallelism shows that Heidel's interpretation is incorrect; in another, Psalm lxxxvi. 13, the qualification 'lowest' for 'hell' seems to be meaningless if 'hell' here means simply 'death', but very much to the point if there was the conception of a hierarchy in the Underworld; whilst in Jonah ii. 3 (R.V. 2) 'from the belly of Sheol', parallel to 'in the heart of the seas' (certainly literal) in the following verse, seems undoubtedly to have a concrete meaning.

A number of authorities, in writing of Old Testament conceptions of the Underworld, have laid emphasis upon the idea of waters of the Underworld. Thus A. R. Johnson writes: 'In many cases the most striking aspect of the psalm is the expression which it gives to the worshipper's fear of death and his vivid sense of already being engulfed by the waters of the Underworld as he descends captive to the realm of the Dead.'[59] Job xxvi. 5 also shows that the dwellers of Sheol were beneath waters. The geographical relationship of such waters to Sheol itself is not made clear, but there is nothing to suggest that they correspond at all closely to the cosmic river of the Babylonian and probably the Ugaritic conception. Heidel explains the situation

by the assumption that 'the Old Testament localises the realm of the dead, or, rather, the realm of certain disembodied human spirits, within the innermost parts of the earth, below the sea',[60] but that the real visible sea comes into the matter is not proved by the passages quoted.

Nature and Inhabitants of the Underworld

In the Babylonian conception the Underworld was 'the Land of No Return', 'the house in which he who enters is deprived of light; where dust is their food and clay their sustenance; where they see no light and dwell in darkness; where they are clad with garments of wings like birds; where dust has spread over door and bolt'.[61] In the Hebrew conception likewise, the Underworld was a place of darkness.[62]

The inhabitants of the Babylonian Underworld included others than the shades of the human dead. The realm was ruled over by a goddess, Ereškigal, with the god Nergal as consort. At an earlier stage of thought, however, Ereškigal must have ruled over the Underworld alone, for an Akkadian myth [63] explains how she came to take Nergal as her spouse. Whilst Nergal was certainly of Sumerian origin, he seems to have become of particular importance after the Amorites came into Babylonia at the end of the third millennium. Nergal, as the killing sun of the Babylonian summer, was regarded as a hypostasis of the Semitic sun-god (as a text expressly states),[64] and it is not impossible that Ereškigal's taking of Nergal as consort may to some extent reflect the patriarchal basis of Semitic society.

There was another group of divine beings, probably belonging to a set of ideas of Sumerian origin, known as the Anunnaki, who dwelt in a separate building called the Egalgina: they served (though this may be a Sumerian conception) as judges, sitting outside their palace on golden thrones.[65] Gilgamesh, a partly divine Sumerian king of Erech of the first quarter of the third millennium, is also met with as a god [66] and judge [67] of the Underworld, but here also the conception is probably Sumerian rather than Semitic. Other divine figures of the Underworld are described in an interesting but unfortunately much damaged Assyrian text [68] which gives an account of the descent thither, apparently in a dream, of an Assyrian Crown Prince, probably a son of Esarhaddon though not necessarily Assurbanipal. Most of the first half of the text is fragmentary, so that the circumstances of the descent are far from clear, but at the point at which the text becomes readily intelligible Ereškigal has appeared to the prince and granted him his

desire: subsequently he sees the Underworld. Fifteen divine creatures are described, including Namtar (otherwise known as a plague-demon), vizier of the Underworld, and a number of composite human-animal creatures: one of these was a black man with a face like the divine Zu-bird, garbed in red and bearing a bow in his right hand and a sword in his left. Nergal himself, crowned, sat on his throne with the Anunnaki to left and right. Nergal, on seeing the prince, stretched out to him his divine sceptre, full of *puluḫtu* (*mana*) to kill him with its touch, but was stayed in his purpose by his counsellor the god Išum. The prince, after reproof for his presumption in approaching Ereškigal, was handed over to the doorkeeper Lugalsula to return to the upper world by the gate of Ištar and Ea.

It is thus clear that there was a developed hierarchical pantheon in the Babylonian Underworld, though there is no evidence that this is to be treated as a distinctly Semitic rather than a Sumerian conception. In addition to the divine beings already mentioned were hordes of lesser anonymous non-human spirits, such as the evil *gallē* (ghouls?), evil gods, and evil winds:[69] 'evil' in such contexts relates not to any moral standard but to the malevolence to living men of such beings when they escaped from the Underworld.

Condition and Activities of the Dead in the Underworld

Despite the mention in Babylonian literature of judges of the Underworld, and some allusions, in both Sumerian and Akkadian texts, to judgment after death,[70] there is very little if any suggestion that a moral verdict was at any point passed on a man's course of life: references to 'good' and 'evil' in connection with judgment seem to relate to observances of ritual rather than moral requirements. The fate of the dead seems to have depended only upon their status in life, their manner of death, and the correctness or otherwise with which the heirs carried out the funeral ritual.[71] In the Epic of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, when allowed to return from the Underworld to inform his friend of conditions there, gives some details of the scale of merit.[72] A man's advantages increased with the number of his sons, the man with one son weeping at the foot of the wall and the father of five sons being honourably admitted into the palace as a scribe. The warrior slain in battle was provided for, though normally the man without an heir had to feed on scraps and garbage. At Ugarit the principle, if not the details, was similar, since the lot of the departed after death

depended upon the action of the heir, and the worst fate that could befall a man was to die without a son.[73] The same attitude was displayed amongst the Israelites, where the institution of levirate marriage gave the deceased a chance of acquiring a son posthumously.[74]

In the Old Testament sphere, despite the clear statement that 'all go to one place',[75] it has been denied that the souls of pious persons, like those of the unrighteous, were believed to descend to Sheol. Heidel, who takes this view, bases it upon Psalms lxxiii and xlix.[76] These passages need not, however, be taken in a sense which supports Heidel's contention. In Psalm lxxiii the crucial verse is 24, translated in R.V. 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, And afterward receive me to glory'. Heidel annotates the second half of the verse '*Or*: "Thou wilt receive me with honor." The ultimate sense is the same.'[77] The ultimate sense is in fact very different. 'Glory' in English has undergone a semantic development which enables it to be employed in some contexts in the sense of 'the splendour and bliss of heaven':[78] no evidence has yet been adduced that the Hebrew original underwent such a development, and in the absence of such evidence the term must be taken in the sense 'honour' or 'renown'; 'glory' is a legitimate translation in English only if it is understood in its more primitive meaning.[79] Heidel's other passage of supposed positive evidence, Psalm xlix, has been very differently interpreted by other scholars.

In the cases in which 'Sheol' indisputably occurs of the place to which a righteous man goes, the term is interpreted by Heidel as meaning merely 'death' or at the most 'Afterworld',[80] whilst of the common expression 'to be gathered to one's fathers' Heidel says that it 'cannot mean anything else than that the soul or spirit of a certain person leaves this world at death and enters the afterworld, in which his fathers or certain of his kindred already find themselves'.[81] Since, however, the very evil Manasseh at death 'slept with his fathers',[82] who included his own pious father Hezekiah, and was afterwards joined by his pious grandson Josiah,[83] this expression does not allow one to differentiate between the Afterworld of the bad and the Afterworld of the good: 'all go to one place.'

The indisputable piece of evidence on this subject, the coming up of the ghost of Samuel when conjured by the witch of En-dor,[84] does not appear to be fairly faced by Heidel. Heidel speaks of 'the much-debated question whether the apparition described . . . was the real Samuel or whether it was an evil spirit who had assumed the outward appearance of Samuel'.[85] This question, highly important if one

is attempting to discover the facts of the incident with a view to testing the validity of Spiritualism, is completely irrelevant when we are considering not the facts of the incident but the beliefs (which may have been in conflict with the facts) of the ancient Hebrews: whether the witch was an impostor or not, quite clearly Saul, himself an erstwhile prophet, in asking the witch to 'bring up Samuel', expected Samuel to come *up* from below. It may have been the fact that Saul was, as Heidel puts it, 'distracted, Godforsaken, and desperate' [86] that led him to take part in a practice on which official religion frowned; but whilst his spiritual state undoubtedly distorted his view of the *rightness* of necromancy, there is no evidence whatever to suggest either that it affected his view of the *possibility* of necromancy or that it clouded his memory of such a purely technical point as the direction from which a ghost would be expected to come. Far from Saul's nocturnal *séance* being an isolated aberration, it is clear that it was part of an evil cult of necromancy sufficiently widespread to necessitate legislation against it in Deuteronomy and Leviticus and condemnation by Isaiah.[87]

On the basis of the above considerations it is therefore concluded that the original and prevalent conception in the Old Testament was that all the dead, pious and impious alike, went to Sheol, the Underworld. There are, however, indications that within the Underworld there was, as in Babylonian religion, the possibility of some differentiation between the lots of different men. Sheol itself seems to have been divided into more or less remote parts, as is indicated by the occurrence of such terms as 'the depths of Sheol', 'loins (furthest parts) of the pit', 'the pit of the *taḥtiyyoṯ* (lowest parts)' ('*taḥtiyyoṯ* of the earth' being a phrase for 'Underworld'), and 'lowest Sheol'.[88] Ezekiel xxxii. 21-32 seems to imply that the warriors of Meshech and Tubal (i.e. Muśku and Tabalu of Assyrian sources) would be separated from the rest of the uncircumcised in the Underworld. Within Sheol the departed retained at least part of the characteristic distinctions of their earthly life, for Samuel still wore his mantle,[89] and kings still sat upon thrones.[90] The only passages which speak of everlasting punishment for the wicked, Isaiah lxvi. 24 and Daniel xii. 2-3, are recognised by almost all authorities as coming from a period when the Jews were or had been strongly exposed to the influence of Iranian thought.

A term to be considered in connection with the Hebrew conception of the Underworld is *rephaim* (properly *r*^{e}*p̄ā'îm*), which eight [91] times occurs in the Old Testament as a designation of the dwellers of the Underworld. In view of Proverbs xxi. 16 and the parallelism with the

word for 'dead men' in some other cases, it can hardly be proposed that the term refers to some species of chthonic beings other than human souls. The matter is complicated by the application of the term *rephaim* in other cases to pre-Israelite giants. The two usages have been explained on the theory that originally the term 'referred to the giants . . . who were destroyed by God from the earth and cast down into the Underworld' and eventually 'came to be used as a general designation of all those in the Underworld' [92] including the departed from this world; but unless it is assumed that the belief in the Underworld found no part in Hebrew religion before the entry into Canaan, there seems no reason why the inhabitants of Sheol should have been particularly associated with the pre-Israelite dead rather than with Israel's own ancestors. The term *rephaim* also occurs in some Phoenician tomb inscriptions. In these a curse is called down upon anyone who disturbs the tomb, and the sanctions include a clause that such a person shall have no resting-place with the *rpʾm*. Since the potential violator is specified in one case as 'any prince or any man',[93] it cannot be argued that the *rephaim* here represent a class of divinity which a king alone, by virtue of his divine kingship, might join.

An Ugaritic term, *rpum*, also comes into consideration here; some have sought to connect it[94] or even identify it with Hebrew *rephaim*. However, whilst all authorities accept that the two terms come ultimately from the same root, it cannot be proved that *rpum* and *rᵉp̄aʾîm* have undergone corresponding semantic developments, and it has been denied that there is any significant relationship between the two terms. Van Selms gives the opinion that in Ugaritic religion 'there is no real argument for assuming that human beings became *rpum* after death. These beings, whose name recalls the Old Testament *rephaim* of whom we know even less, were certainly deities; that cannot be said of the *rephaim*. . . . All this points more to [*rpum* being] a certain class of minor gods than . . . the ghosts of the dead.'[95] J. Gray, in regarding the *rpum* as 'a sacred guild closely associated with the king in his office as dispenser of fertility',[96] takes a view acceptance of which removes the term from consideration as evidence on the subject of the Afterlife. However, could it be proved that *rpum* was equivalent to *rephaim*, the passages concerned would show that in Ugarit the lot of the shades was distinctly brighter than in the Hebrew conception, since they could hold a feast, make a sacrifice, or be invited by the supreme god to his palace.[97] This happy lot was certainly possible for the departed soul, at least of the king, in the north Syrian state of Yaʾdi (of

which the capital is represented by modern Zinjirli), since in an Aramaic inscription of the eighth century B.C. a dead king, Panammu, instructs his sons to sacrifice to the god Hadad saying: 'May the soul (*npš*) of Panammu eat with Thee, and may the soul of Panammu drink with Thee. . . .'[98]

Whether the *rephaim* of the Old Testament had any relationship with God, or with the world of the living, seems open to doubt.[99] A lack of relationship with God is supposed for the dead in the Underworld in certain passages in the Psalms and in Isaiah xxxviii. 18, whilst a contrary belief is expressed in Psalm cxxxix. 7-12. As to knowledge of events on earth, R. Pettazzoni, as a general conclusion from the comparative study of religions, says: 'The dead . . . know everything. . . . In [the case of the knowledge of animals, birds and serpents] we have to do with a magical or oracular wisdom. . . . The spirits of the dead also possess knowledge of this sort.'[100] Despite this general principle, in Psalm lxxxviii. 13 (R.V. 12) Sheol is called 'the land of forgetfulness', and a similar idea underlies Psalm cxlvi. 4: 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; In that very day his thoughts perish.' Yet Samuel was believed to recognise Saul on returning to the earth, and to be acquainted with current human affairs, whilst Ezekiel xxxii. 21 expects gentile warriors who are already dead to recognise the Egyptians when they come down to join them. Likewise in Isaiah xiv. 9-10 the dead are expected to know and even mock at the king of Babylon coming to share their shadowy lot. Jeremiah xxxi. 15 speaks of the long-departed Rachel weeping at the adversities which had befallen her children.

In Babylonia doubt as to the continuing relationship of the dead with their kin on earth and even with the gods did not arise. In the Babylonian Underworld prayer could be made to the gods: the spirits of the dead could receive the prayers of their descendants and families and intercede with Shamash and Gilgamesh for them.[101] This was perhaps made possible by the fact that Nergal, the god of the Underworld, was an hypostasis of the sungod Shamash, the god of Justice. The pantheon of the Underworld was, it may be noted, ultimately under the authority of the supreme god Anu, to whom the individual gods of the Underworld were subordinate.

Escape of the Dead from the Underworld

In what circumstances could the shades of the dead escape from the Underworld? That they were thought to be able to do so, at least

temporarily, is borne out by specific instances from Babylonia and Israel, as well as by the widespread belief in ghosts in other parts of the Semitic world. The theoretical possibility is made clear in the Babylonian version of the myth of the descent of the goddess Ištar to the Underworld, in which Ištar at one point threatened to break down the bolted doors of the Underworld, whereupon the dead would rise *en masse*.[102] How far this is a Semitic fancy, as distinct from one taken over from the Sumerians, is uncertain, though it may be noted that in the Sumerian *Descent of Inanna* upon which the Semitic *Descent of Ištar* is based, at Inanna's return to the upper world she was accompanied by swarms of beings—not necessarily human souls—from the Underworld.[103] Though certain classes of spirits might come forth from the grave to consume mortuary offerings,[104] there seems to be no evidence that the shades of dead humans normally did so: the manner in which these shades received the offerings and libations made for them is not clear, though it is probably connected with the fact that, in addition to the one principal entrance to the Underworld,[105] each grave was also an entrance, and in some parts of the Semitic world there were arrangements whereby offerings could be introduced into the tomb.[106] By special command of a god, a shade might be permitted to leave the Underworld for a short period: such was the case with Enkidu, whose spirit, at the application of Ea, was permitted by Nergal to appear to Gilgamesh. Nergal opened a hole in the Underworld, so that the spirit (*utukku*) of Enkidu came forth like a *zaqiqu*:[107] *zaqiqu*, often translated with the sense of 'wind', is known elsewhere as a type of being which comes forth from the Underworld in quest of mortuary offerings.[108] A more substantial resurrection was possible in the case of certain dying gods or those primeval beings imprisoned in the Underworld,[109] but this does not relate directly to the Afterlife of humans.

In the Ugaritic religious literature—of which probably no more than a small fraction has been recovered—there has so far been found no conception of human resurrection, either in finite time or eschatologically.

In pre-Islamic South Arabia, certain titles of rulers found in the inscriptions have very dubiously been related to the conception of the possibility of apotheosis of kings after death:[110] this, if a valid conclusion, would indicate that kings at least might escape the common lot.

The clearest evidence in the Old Testament for the possibility of the

temporary release of a human shade from the Underworld is the story of the bringing up of Samuel by the witch of En-dor. This incident, however, is clearly parallel to the appearance to Gilgamesh of the shade of Enkidu, and the account is no evidence for a Hebrew belief in an eschatological resurrection. The view, which has often been advanced, and is still maintained by some, that belief in an ultimate resurrection was a part of Old Testament theology, rests largely on the supposed evidence of Job xix. 25-27 and some passages in Daniel. The interpretation of Job xix. 25-27 remains controversial, and on this matter a quotation of one of the most recent and moderate statements of the facts must suffice. W. Baumgartner, speaking of '[Job] xix. 25-27, once the *locus classicus* for the resurrection', says 'Opinions still differ as to whether Job is to "see God" in this or a future life. [Many noted scholars] support the first view. Those who support the *post mortem* interpretation, however, are not showing a mere return to tradition as may be seen by the varying ways in which it is treated by [them]. These general points seem to me to be clear: (i) The rendering of *gôʾălî* by "my Redeemer", which goes back to Jerome and Luther, does not rightly express his legal function; (2) "Vindication, not the vindicator is the essential requirement of the situation" (Stevenson); since the person is not defined, must it inevitably be God? (3) The setting of these verses in a connection where this confidence bears no fruit tells against according to the verses a central significance in the old sense. In the same way the parallel with the cultic cry of the Ugaritic myth: "I know that Aliyn Baal is alive" is purely fortuitous, since both times it occurs in entirely different situations.' [111]

Job xiv. 7-14, with the crucial verse 12—'so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep'—is most naturally interpreted as a denial of the doctrine of resurrection,[112] though Heidel argues otherwise. He takes the view that 'till the heavens be no more' implies that the death of a man is only temporary, on the ground that Psalm cii. 26-28 and Isaiah xxxiv. 4 and li. 6 show that the heavens *will* pass away: all texts which, on the contrary, say that heaven and earth are eternal are dismissed without adequate consideration.[113] The statement of E. C. S. Gibson seems still to be applicable to this passage: 'It would be entirely out of place to read into this verse the thought of the extinction of the heavens spoken of in Isaiah li. 6, and to imagine that Job was teaching that man actually would rise again, but not till this took place. This has indeed been the view of many commentators since the days of Gregory

the Great. But nothing could be clearer than the fact that Job here definitely denies any resurrection.' [114]

Isaiah xxvi. 19 has also been adduced as evidence for an ancient Hebrew belief in the mass resurrection of the righteous,[115] but verses 15 and 20 strongly suggest that the passage is to be applied not to individuals but to the nation. The Targum explains 'dead men' of verse 19 as 'the bones of their dead bodies',[116] but even if the Targumic interpretation is taken as meaning a physical resurrection in the Christian sense (and it could with equal validity be explained as meaning mere magical revivification of skeletons, the interpretation being influenced by Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-14), this was merely the interpretation current at the time of writing of the Targum and not necessarily the original Hebrew conception.

An Old Testament passage which has been taken as referring to the resurrection and as containing the doctrine of the Afterlife in a very developed form is Isaiah liii. 8-12, one of the so-called 'Servant Songs' of Deutero-Isaiah. Old Testament scholars are, however, far from unanimous in accepting this interpretation, and one of them in a recent work explains the meaning of the passage Isaiah lii. 13 to liii. 12 as being that 'suffering and privation, contempt and an ignominious death are to be taken, despite all natural human inclination, not as proof of dereliction and guilt, but as vicarious self-sacrifice, voluntarily undertaken for others; further, that this has made available a hitherto unheard of depth in the conception of life and the universe . . .' .[117]

Daniel xii. 1-3 undoubtedly refers to a general resurrection of both good and evil, with a distinction between the final fates of the righteous and the unrighteous. This passage, however, though highly relevant in a discussion of the Christian doctrine of Judgment and Immortality, is generally accepted as coming from about the middle of the second century B.C., and it is questionable whether it is to be taken as a development which arose in purely Semitic thought or as one which took place under external influence.

Heaven

Related to this *Daniel* passage is the problem of the belief in Heaven, the abode of the blessed, distinct from the Underworld. As has been shown, the idea was widely diffused throughout Semitic thought of some kind of judgment after death and a distinction (not necessarily based on moral considerations) between the lots in the Underworld of

different men. There is also, as pointed out above, some indication from Hebrew terminology that the Underworld itself was divided into more or less remote parts. Daniel xii. 1-3, where the idea of the Judgment and Separation is beyond doubt, compares the wise and righteous, after judgment, with the firmament and the stars, thus suggesting (though not proving) that the realm of the blessed was thought to be astral or celestial and distinct from the Underworld. Psalm lxxiii. 23-25 has often been adduced as further evidence of the same belief, but the objection to interpreting this passage as a reference to life after death has been mentioned above: moreover, even were it conceded that the passage could and should be interpreted on those lines, the parallelism of verse 25, where 'heaven' balances 'earth', would make it inadmissible to interpret 'heaven' as intended to designate the place to which God will take the Psalmist 'to glory'.

An instance, and that a relatively early one, in which there can be no doubt that the place of the blessed was thought to be in the celestial sphere and not in the Underworld is the assumption of Elijah, who was taken up to Heaven in a whirlwind.[118] The only possible parallel to this in the Old Testament is the fate of Enoch, who 'walked with God: and . . . was not; for God took him'.[119] However, despite the traditional interpretation that Enoch escaped death, the meaning of the passage is by no means assured; and even if the two cases are accepted as parallel, they only establish that the taking of humans into Heaven was a most rare privilege which could only be accomplished by exempting the favoured man from the normal process of physical death. The difficulty of reaching Heaven, the abode of God, is clearly shown in the dream of Jacob, in which the angels of God required a ladder to pass between earth and heaven.[120]

In the Babylonian literature also are found references to the possibility of eternal life in a realm of the blessed distinct from the Underworld. Adapa, summoned before the great gods to answer for his impiety in breaking the wings of the south wind, as a result of the counsel of his protector, the god Ea, behaved in so conciliatory a manner that he was in fact offered the bread of life and water of life. These, believing them to be bread and water of death, he refused, and thereby failed to acquire immortality.[121] A motif found on many cylinder-seals has been interpreted as 'an enthroned god bestowing on his worshipper a vase with the water of life and bread of life' [122] and related to the belief in the possibility of attaining immortality, but such an interpretation is highly speculative.

The problem of the possibility of attaining immortality is also dealt with in Babylonian literature in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh, terrified at the thought of death, undertook a long and difficult journey to his ancestor Uta-napištim, and Uta-napištim, in answer to his enquiries, related how he himself had attained immortality. Long ago, the god Enlil had sought to destroy mankind by a great flood. Forewarned by the god Ea, Uta-napištim had built a ship, by means of which he and his wife, together with their family, had been able to escape drowning. When the flood subsided Enlil was at first full of wrath that his plan had been thwarted, but, when his anger had been appeased, he apotheosised Uta-napištim and his wife, and proclaimed that they should live 'afar off, at the mouth of the rivers'.[123] Here, for ever, lived Uta-napištim and his wife, but there is no suggestion that their place of abode was with the sky-gods, and the idea approximates more nearly, in terms of Christian thought, to the Garden of Eden than to Heaven.

It was proved to Gilgamesh himself that he could not bear immortality, but as a consolation he was given the secret of a magic plant, not of eternal life but of escape from old age. This he found, but during his return home it was stolen by a snake. Gilgamesh, in great distress but at last convinced of his fate, sat down and lamented that he had, for all his toil, acquired nothing for himself.[124] This negative result of his quest reflected the Babylonian belief that before the destiny established for him by the gods man was helpless; there was nothing man could do to escape from the common lot of old age and death.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 575.
2. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 223.
3. E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, p. 146.
4. A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, p. 222, at the end of his valuable essay on *Death and the Afterlife* (which has been extensively used in the present article) states as a supposed conclusion from his examination of the Old Testament material that 'whilst there is progress in the unfolding of the Hebrew eschatological beliefs, there is no conflict between the earlier and the later writings of the Old Testament, correctly interpreted, in the matter of death and the afterlife'. It is, however, clear from Heidel's treatment of the Old Testament material that this is not an independent conclusion but an initial theological premise. That Sellin takes the same viewpoint (Heidel, op. cit. p. 222, n. 255) merely emphasises this fact, since for Sellin 'Old Testament theology is only interested in the line which was fulfilled in the Gospel . . . [and]

. . . should leave on one side not merely the Canaanite influence but also the whole national-cultic side of Israel's religion'. (N. W. Porteous, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 328, in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study*.

5. So É. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, p. 4. For the contrary view, very moderately stated, see J. Bottéro, *La religion babylonienne*, p. 5.

6. Datable to *c.* 1400 B.C. For the most convenient recent edition see G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (1956).

7. E. O. James, *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 31 f.

8. W. F. Otto, *Die Manen oder von den Urformen des Totenglaubens* (1923).

9. Sir R. Paget, *Cahier d'histoire mondiale*, vol. i, p. 410.

10. E. O. James, op. cit. p. 32.

11. E. O. James, op. cit. p. 33.

12. E. O. James, op. cit. p. 34.

13. E. O. James, op. cit. p. 35.

14. This idea of annihilation, illustrated in the Old Testament in *Eccles.*, also had currency in pre-Islamic Arabia; see A. A. Bevan, *Journal of Theological Studies*, **6** (1904), 20, and Nabih Amin Faris, *The Antiquities of South Arabia*, p. 104, alleged inscription of dhu-Shallam.

15. Deut. xii. 23.

16. G. R. Driver, op. cit. pp. 56, 58, *Aqhat*, III. i. 25, 36.

17. A. A. Bevan, ibid. p. 21.

18. Ps. xiii. 4, Job xiv. 12; G. R. Driver, op cit. p. 62, *Aqhat*, I. iii. 45.

19. F. Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumerischen und akkadischen Königsinschriften*, p. 49, col. 6, line 15; S. N. Kramer, *Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living*, line 26, in J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 48.

20. A. Haller, *Die Gräber und Grüfte von Assur* (1954), pp. 38-45.

21. So G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 62, *Aqhat*, I. iii. 41, and J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (1957), p. 86. The interpretation is not beyond question, and A. van Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature* (1954), p. 135, denies any mention of shrouds.

22. For textual evidence see G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 62, *Aqhat*, I. iii. 6, 20-21, 34-35, 40-41, and for archaeological evidence *Ugaritica*, I (1939), figs. 60, 61, 69, 70, 75, and plates XV-XVII. A passage from one of the Ugaritic texts (G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 54, *Aqhat*, II. vi. 35-37)—'What does a man get as the final lot? Glaze will be poured on (my) head and quicklime upon my pate; and I shall die the death of all (men) and myself indeed shall die'—has generally been taken as referring to acceptance of old age and death as the lot of all men. However, if it be accepted that the two halves of the second sentence could be taken as expressing a parallelism rather than a consecution of events, it is just possible that the references to 'glaze' and 'quicklime' may have originally been literal, referring to an ancient burial custom, so far known only from Jericho (*c.* 5000 B.C.), of coating the skull, from above the eye-sockets downwards, with plaster; see *Illustrated London News*, 18 April, 1953, p. 627 and 17 October, 1953, supplement, plate IV. The great time lapse and the complete lack of archaeological evidence for such a practice at Ugarit in the 2nd millennium B.C. are against this interpretation.

23. J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 21, lines 195-199.

24. A. van Selms, op. cit. p. 134.

25. C. J. Gadd, *Anatolian Studies*, **8** (1958), 55-57, 91.

26. F. Cumont, *Afterlife in Roman Paganism*, 50, 200 *et passim*.

27. A. Haller, op. cit., *passim*.

28. R. C. Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, I, 40. The list includes spirits other than ghosts of humans.

29. R. C. Thompson, op. cit. I, 44.

30. The idea is not wholly extinct. A grave stands alone in the churchyard of Henham (Essex) at the spot upon which the gutter spout on the tower discharges rain water. Living witnesses recall that the grave was so sited at the request of a blacksmith who died at the end of the nineteenth century, having composed an epitaph revealing his motive. The epitaph, of which the incumbent forbade the erection, identified the deceased as 'old Johnny Hayden come for a drink'.

31. A. A. Bevan, ibid. p. 21.

32. *Les religions arabes préislamiques* (1951), p. 36.

33. G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 48, *Aqhat*, II. i. 21-29.

34. A. Lods, *Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century*, p. 115.

35. Heidel, op. cit. p. 168, leaning on G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeologist*, 8 (1945), 17.

36. G. E. Wright, ibid.

37. W. F. Badè, *Excavations at Tell en-Naṣbeh 1926 and 1927; a Preliminary Report* (1928), p. 27; C. C. McCown, *Tell en-Naṣbeh, I, Archaeological and Historical Results* (1947), p. 83.

38. McCown, op. cit. p. 89.

39. The phrase 'to break bread' means (Murray, *A New English Dictionary*, sub *bread* 2c) (*a*) 'to break it for one's own mouthfuls; hence to eat or partake of bread or food; (*b*) (from N.T.) to break it for distribution to others, to dispense bread . . .'. 'Break [bread]' is a legitimate translation for Heb. *pāras* only in sense (*b*), since the basic sense of the verb seems to be that of 'dividing' and not simply 'breaking'. In Mic. iii. 3 the context suggests that this verb does not mean 'break [bones]' but 'divide [bones]', i.e. 'separate [the carcase] into [joints]' after skinning and before cutting up for the pot.

40. Heidel, op. cit. p. 204.

41. Heidel interprets Deut. xxvi. 14 in the sense he gives it 'in the absence of literary or archaeological proof that the ancient Hebrews provided a dead person with food, and in view of the custom prevailing among them of sending food to the mourners for their refreshment' (op. cit. p. 205); but some of the passages adduced in support of this either can or must be interpreted otherwise than Heidel interprets them. The matter of the supposed lack of archaeological evidence has been discussed above (p. 162). The evidence adduced by Heidel for the custom of sending food to mourners consists of 2 Sam. iii. 35, Jer. xvi. 7, Ezek. xxiv. 17. The Jer. and Ezek. passages and the first clause of Deut. xxvi. 14 prove that eating a funeral meal was established as a custom a little before the Exile, but tell nothing of the origin of the custom. 2 Sam. iii. 35, in which David refused to eat on hearing of Abner's death, shows not that a mourner normally ate at that period but that he fasted, since David was giving the greatest publicity to the fact that he was a mourner for Abner and not a party to his death: the favourable impression made upon public opinion by David's conduct (verse 36) would be inexplicable if by fasting David had been

flouting a custom of partaking of food at a funeral. The conclusion drawn is that at *c.* 1000 B.C. a mourner fasted, whereas by *c.* 600 B.C. he took part in a funeral meal. The innovation of eating at a funeral requires explanation; a possible explanation is that the pagan practice of making food-offerings to the dead (still observed in the time of David and Tell en-Naṣbeh tomb 5), had been proscribed by official religion (hence Deut. xxvi. 14) and with difficulty deliberately replaced by a simple memorial feast. Num. xix. 14 ff., another text adduced by Heidel in support of his interpretation of Deut. xxvi. 14, relates only to uncleanness from a dead body spreading by contagion (cf. Hag. ii. 13), and provides no evidence that the use of a part of a crop at a simple memorial feast would render the rest (if not in physical contact with the dead body) unclean; indeed, verse 16 indicates that even a vessel actually in the tent with the corpse, provided it was sealed, was not unclean. Heidel is prepared to accept (n. 213) that Ps. cvi. 28 may refer to the eating of offerings actually made to the dead, and so appears to concede the occurrence of the practice otherwise denied. His insistence that 'we are dealing with a pagan rite which the psalmist condemns' seems beside the point, since all scholars who see evidence in the Old Testament of offerings to the dead accept that it was a feature of popular practice proscribed by official Yahwism. Heidel also appears to accept the occurrence of food-offerings to the dead amongst the Jews of the intertestamental period (Tob. iv. 17, Ecclus. xxx. 18; *add* Bar. vi. 27), but seeks to attribute this to Greek influence.

42. A. Lods, op. cit. pp. 116, 222, speaks of a suggestion that in some circumstances the Semites may have believed in reincarnation. The present writer sees no trace of evidence for this.

43. R. C. Thompson, op. cit. **1**, 38, line 48.

44. R. C. Thompson, op. cit. **1**, 40, line 6.

45. H. C. Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, V, plate 6, lines 75-76.

46. G. A. Cooke, *A Text-book of North Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 26, Tabnith, line 8. Cf. ibid. p. 30, Eshmun-ʿazar, line 8.

47. G. Ryckmans, *Les religions arabes préislamiques* (1951), p. 35.

48. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, neue Folge, **9**, p. 47.

49. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, neue Folge, **9**, p. 16, Rückseite 45.

50. G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 76, *Baal* III* C 7, p. 78, *Baal* III* C 21.

51. H. C. Rawlinson, op. cit. **5**, plate 47, lines 30-31.

52. A. van Selms, *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature*, p. 131.

53. G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 56, *Aqhat*, III, O. i. 24-25. For a general definition of the Semitic *nephesh* as 'l'âme végétative de l'individu qu'on est obligé de nourrir' and which 'reste attachée à la tombe', see R. Dussaud, *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant Islam* (1955), p. 33.

54. A. van Selms, op. cit. p. 130.

55. A. van Selms, op. cit. p. 132.

56. Isa. xiv. 11, Ezek. xxxii. 26-27, Job xxiv. 19-20, listed and discussed in Heidel, op. cit. pp. 174-5. In Ps. cxli. 7, also adduced as evidence by Heidel, it is not the term 'Sheol' but the expression 'the mouth of Sheol' which means 'grave', and it does so because 'Sheol' by itself here means 'Underworld', to which the grave was an entrance.

57. Possibly this was the original meaning of the term, for which no satisfactory etymology has been offered; the development of meaning to 'Underworld' would have occurred in association with the development of the conception that the dead passed from the grave to a vast subterranean chamber.

58. Heidel, op. cit. p. 176.

59. A. R. Johnson, *The Psalms*, p. 171, in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, pp. 162-207; see also p. 174.

60. Heidel, op. cit. p. 178.

61. P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (1900), p. 80, lines 1, 7-11.

62. Job xxxviii. 17, x. 21-22. The former passage is accepted by Heidel (op. cit. pp. 180-1) as establishing this. The latter passage Heidel takes as referring to the grave, but it is difficult to see how the final words—'when it shines, it is like darkness'—are to be fitted into such an explanation.

63. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 78, Stück II, lines 11-21.

64. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, alte Folge, **6**, 241, lines 52 ff.

65. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 88, lines 31-33.

66. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, neue Folge, **18**, 18, obv. 3, line 11.

67. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 266, lines 1-4.

68. See W. von Soden, *Die Unterweltsvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen*, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, neue Folge, **9**, 1-31.

69. See R. C. Thompson, op. cit., *passim*.

70. Two interesting texts (one in Sumerian and the other from Elam) referring to judgment after death are edited in E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (1931), pp. 20-23. A difficult passage from the end of Tablet X of the Gilgamesh Epic, adduced by B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, **2**, 146, as evidence of judgment after death, is probably to be restored and translated in a different sense: see Heidel, op. cit. p. 79.

71. The text *V.A.S.*, **1**, 54, quoted in Heidel, op. cit. p. 154, might be interpreted as implying the idea of moral retribution, but it is more probable that the clear water in the Underworld was the direct magical result of the blessing which would follow the pious deed, just as a curse might pursue the violator of a tomb.

72. Heidel, op. cit. p. 100, line 99 to p. 101, line 153.

73. G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 50, *Aqhat*, II. ii. 15-17.

74. Deut. xxv. 5, 6.

75. Eccles, vi. 6, iii. 20.

76. Heidel, op. cit. pp. 183-6.

77. Heidel, op. cit. p. 184, n. 159.

78. See Murray, *A New English Dictionary*, sub *glory*: the earliest occurrence of the word 'glory' in precisely that sense which Heidel's interpretation requires is dated 1648.

79. According to H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (1926), p. 210, the crucial verse 16 'has nothing to do with assumption into heaven without death occurring, nor with the eternal life of the community, but refers to protection against the threat of death in the hour of danger'.

80. Heidel, op. cit. pp. 186-7.

81. Heidel, op. cit. p. 188.

82. 2 Kings xxi. 18.

83. 2 Kings xxii. 20.

84. 1 Sam. xxviii. 7-20.

85. Heidel, op. cit. p. 189.

86. Heidel, op. cit. p. 190.

87. Deut. xviii. 11, Lev. xix. 31, Isa. viii. 19.
88. For these phrases see Prov. ix. 18, Isa. xiv. 15, Ps. lxxxviii. 7 (R.V. 6), Ps. lxiii. 10 (R.V. 9).
89. 1 Sam. xxviii. 14.
90. Isa. xiv. 9.
91. Isa. xiv. 9, xxvi. 14, 19; Ps. lxxxviii. 11 (R.V. 10); Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, xxi. 16; Job xxvi. 5.
92. W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, *Hebrew Religion*, p. 251.
93. G. A. Cooke, op. cit. p. 30, Eshmun-ʿazar, lines 6-7.
94. G. R. Driver, op. cit. p. 10.
95. A. van Selms, op. cit. p. 130.
96. J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (1957), p. 92.
97. A. van Selms, op. cit. p. 130.
98. G. A. Cooke, op. cit. p. 160, lines 15-17, 21-22.
99. Ps. vi. 6 (R.V. 5), xxviii. 1, xxx. 10 (R.V. 9), lxxxviii 5-6 (R.V. 4-5), 11-13 (R.V. 10-12).
100. R. Pettazzoni, *The All-Knowing God* (1956), pp. 3-4.
101. E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier*, p. 131, lines 34-41.
102. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 80, lines 16-20.
103. J. B. Pritchard (ed.), op. cit. p. 56.
104. R. C. Thompson, op. cit. **2**, 130, lines 1-10.
105. This was at the place where the sun set; see E. Ebeling, op. cit. p. 141. lines 14 ff.
106. A. Lods, op. cit. p. 115.
107. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 262, lines 21-24.
108. R. C. Thompson, op. cit. **2**, 130, line 6.
109. For a criticism of the view that the Babylonians believed in the death and resurrection of Marduk see W. von Soden, *Gibt es ein Zeugnis dafür, dass die Babylonier an die Wiederaufstehung Marduks geglaubt haben?* in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, neue Folge, **17**, 130-166.
110. G. Ryckmans, op. cit. pp. 36-37.
111. W. Baumgartner, *The Wisdom Literature*, p. 221, in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, pp. 210-235.
112. That the doctrine could be specifically denied shows that the writer knew of some contemporaries who held the belief.
113. See Heidel, op. cit. p. 217, n. 246.
114. E. C. S. Gibson, *The Book of Job* (1899), p. 71.
115. Heidel, op. cit. pp. 218-220.
116. J. F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 82.
117. O. Eissfeldt, *The Prophetic Literature*, p. 149, in H. H. Rowley (ed.) *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, pp. 115-160.
118. 2 Kings ii. 1, 11.
119. Gen. v. 24.
120. Gen. xxviii. 12.
121. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 98, lines 24-33.
122. B. Meissner, op. cit. **2**, 140.
123. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 244, lines 204 f.
124. P. Jensen, op. cit. p. 252, lines 307-313.