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THE REAL RELIGION OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

E. G. KRAELING

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WE are accustomed to view the religion of Israel in the light of the great prophetic utterances and to consider this prophetic religion as being confronted by a debased popular religion, full of superstitious beliefs and practises. But it may be asserted with some confidence that while there was, indeed, a religion of the prophets, no such thing as a prophetic religion existed in Israel. The prophets stand forth as great individuals who rise above the absorbing processes of the group with a new and great experience of god. Our views of the popular religion of Israel have also been incorrect; merely to gather and tabulate the gross superstitions entertained by Roman Catholics would not be a delineation of the Roman Catholic religion. It is necessary to seek the central experience of a given religion as the starting point of any accurate description of it and to put the minor things that belong in the periphery in their proper place. The studies of Mowinckel¹ have provided a powerful stimulus in that direction, and it is the purpose of this paper to call attention to a few of the new viewpoints that he has presented, and to amplify them.

¹ Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien II, Das Thronbestigungsfest Jahwe's und der Ursprung der Eschatologie*, Kristiania 1922. We do not propose to enter here into the importance of Mowinckel's work for the problem of the origin of eschatology, for we intend to deal with that in detail in a forthcoming volume on *The Messianic Hope*. Mowinckel was to a certain extent anticipated by Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwe's*, 1912. Wensinck, *The Semitic New Year and the Origin of Eschatology*, *Acta Orientalia*, I, 1923, arrived at conclusions basically akin to those of Mowinckel without knowledge of the latter's work.

In all primitive religions the central experience is connected with certain highly important rites which are performed at certain seasons of the year. Most frequently an annual occasion is chosen for these solemn festivities. The purpose of all primitive worship is *recreation*, and hence such a festival may be called a Recreation-festival or even (though less happily) a New Year's festival. Where religion has advanced to the point of a belief in personal gods the recreation of the present order of nature is connected in some way with the experiences of a God. On this stage man does not view the cosmos in the light of natural law; his is a dramatic conception that sees everywhere the conflict of darkness and light, in which the light as embodied in the sungod is finally victorious. The various cycles of day and night, the months, the seasons and years are regarded from this angle. Constant voluntary acts of the deity of light for the assertion of his supremacy are necessary. The new life of every springtime is a new creation and, in the cosmologies, that which is conceived of as taking place in nature *now* is projected back into the beginning of things.²

The calendaric year, strictly speaking, does not exist in the primitive stages of time-reckoning. The divisions of time are merely based upon the periodicity of nature itself, coupled with the modes and needs of life. "The new year is equivalent to the new harvest, the new supplies of food which, through the raising of the taboo, are made accessible. Where there are several fruits that ripen at different times there may be several new year festivals."³ The Jewish Hanukka or Light festival in the winter, about the time of the solstice, also possesses a new year's character.⁴ Wherever the sun is worshipped as the world

² Cp. the important remarks of Wensinck, *l. c.*, p. 158 f.

³ Nilsson, *Primitive Time-reckoning*, p. 270. Wensinck, *l. c.* p. 158.—At Erech two New Year's festivals were celebrated, one in autumn, the other in spring. Meißner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, II, p. 99.

⁴ It is clearly a solar festival. Historically it commemorates the restoration of the Jewish temple by Judas Maccabæus in 148 B. C., cf. 2 Macc. 10 5, 1 Macc. 4 51-54. Kittel, *Die Hellen. Mysterienreligion*, p. 18 f., has seen the connection between Enoch, Gen. 5 23 and Hanukka. Significant is the rite of kindling lights at this festival. Cf. also Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, II, p. 209.

creator emphasis is laid upon the change from chaotic conditions into a regulated course of things. For the sun is the supreme factor in cosmic order; it rules the seasons, the days and the years. The great solar festivals naturally take place at the solstices and at the equinoxes. The difficulty of calculating these exactly may partly account for the fact that the primitive festivals extend over a large number of days.⁵

In the seasons of western Asia two periods of fruitfulness and barrenness follow one another. The glad days of spring are succeeded by the devastating heat of summer, when the sun is no longer the benevolent creator but the "burner,"⁶ the "god with the glowing mouth,"⁷ the god of death. Thereupon comes the season of the harvest and the autumnal rains which make the fertility of another year possible, and hence this period, during which the sun is a gracious power, is one of joy. But as the sun declines, with the arrival of the wintry season, cold rain and storm, fog and biting winds, together with the absence of light, give rise to the idea that the earth is now under the sway of the forces of death and destruction. Hence the winter solstice, which ushers in the anticipation of a new season of joy, is a period of supreme jubilation. On the other hand we can also understand that the crises of the sun are viewed as particularly ominous. "The end of the cosmos is seen in an eclipse of the sun, when the very existence of the god of order is threatened and the world is abandoned to the powers of darkness."⁸ We can understand, therefore, why chaos can be regarded either as manifested in heat and drought, or in flood, storm and darkness, while cosmos, or new creation, is conceived of in terms of light, vegetation and gentle rains. Both phases are represented in the Hebrew creation stories; the typically Palestinian Yahwist describes primal chaos as a period of utter barrenness, when no rain had yet fallen upon earth and not

⁵ Wensinck, *l. c.* p. 159.

⁶ *Sharrapu*, a name of Gibil, a phase of the sun-god, in the "west-land" *V Rawlinson*, 46.

⁷ So Gibil is called in the list of gods, *IV Rawlinson*, 24, 54a.

⁸ Wensinck, *l. c.* p. 188.

even a shrub of the field could grow,⁹ and the Priestly author depicts it in Babylonian manner as an era when the waters and darkness prevailed over the earth.¹⁰

Contrary to common belief, cult is no mere formalism such as that which characterized the Jewish worship at the time of Christ. The fall of the second temple showed that Judaism could survive the cessation of cult very easily for the simple reason that its religious experience was no longer bound up with it. A cult is a form of worship in which a group participates with intense seriousness in order to obtain the "blessing" upon which its very life depends. If the cult were neglected the "blessing" would cease. From time to time, particularly at the great festivals, the most sacred and important rites are celebrated and the necessary renewal of "blessing" obtained thereby.

The "cult" is not the affair of the individual but of society, and the "blessing" which it effects is the property of the group. The individual shares it only as a member of his group, for according to primitive belief an ego exists only in identity with a great-ego, i. e., the group. A man alone has no blessing at all, he must be a member of a brotherhood and stand within a covenant that upholds him. The group and not merely the individual suffers if a member of it commits a sin; all Israel was punished by Yahweh for the transgression of Achan or Jonathan. It is apparent, therefore, that to the Hebrew psychology, the *berith* or covenant is the fundamental thing upon which the cult rests; it is the basic relation between the divinity and the group and the chief concern of the cult is its "renewal" from time to time. To be *ṣaddīq*, "righteous," means to maintain the covenant so that the pre-requisites for further "blessing" are fulfilled. Unfortunately, however, the "righteousness" of the group is always impaired through sins committed by its members so that the group must again be "made righteous," or "justified" (*hiṣḍīq*), in order to be able to receive blessing. Only the deity, the lord of the covenant, can restore it again

⁹ Gen. 24f.

¹⁰ Gen. 14f.

to its original state of unimpairedness. This is of tremendous importance as without such a restoration there can be no "blessing." From this angle the atonement-rites, characteristic of certain cult festivals, gain their proper interpretation. The removal of sin and uncleanness from the group is vital for the restoration of good fortune; for only thus is *shālôm*, "peace" or, more accurately, "wholeness" obtainable.¹¹

The group may be damaged, however, not merely from within but also from without. Enemies may have infringed upon its "wholeness." Such a state of affairs is also injurious to the covenant, and so God must and will "justify" his people by repairing this damage and seeing to it that his people obtains "justice." Therefore Yahweh "judges" Israel's foes, because in injuring it they have committed a wrong against the covenant. It is the "right" of Israel to be the lord and ruler of other peoples, if it lives up to the faithful worship of Yahweh. For this reason it is to be expected that the cult which is concerned with the renewal of blessing will particularly consider the covenant-god's triumph over his people's enemies, who at the same time are also the enemies of the god.

In a cult the re-creation of the conditions of nature that are necessary for the existence of the group is of paramount importance. Thus the cult of an American Indian tribe that relied for its sustenance on the killing of buffalo had the purpose of insuring the coming of plenty of buffalo in the new season. The cult of a farming population is directed to the end of the fertility of the soil. Since Israel became largely an agricultural people the chief blessing that it hoped to obtain from Yahweh was the first rain and the latter rain¹² which insured good crops. To this end therefore, its annual rites were directed.

Cult is always festival, and festival always in the nature of drama. The dramatic means may be very primitive and meagre, consisting only of mimicking gestures, and manipulations with certain objects accompanied by explanatory words. It would be

¹¹ Cf. the fundamental discussions of Pedersen, *Israel, its Life and Culture*, 1926, p. 263 f.

¹² Deut. 11 12-17.

a mistake, however, to regard these actions as merely symbolic. They are efficacious to the very highest degree. A reality is played and thereby conjured into being. The participants in the drama experience a supreme ecstasy and are filled with new strength and power by the divine. To the primitive mind, to which all ancient Oriental mentality must be reckoned, everything is real and all things are possible. The omission of the cult festival and its drama in times of political disturbance is a great calamity, for the extant supply of blessing is constantly dwindling and must be renewed at certain intervals. The impossibility of holding the festival, or the inability of the god to go forth from his temple to attend it, is of national significance and is constantly recorded in the "Babylonian Chronicle," the brief record of the important events of neo-Babylonian history.¹³

While all the primitive phases of the ancient nature festivals survive even in the more advanced stages of civilization, new impulses enter in when the primitive people has become a nation with an established seat of power. Then the cult religion becomes a *national* cult-religion. The center of political power at once attains a vast importance. The sanctuary of the god is the source and seat of this power and therefore theoretically the whole world-order is dictated from here. The founding of the sanctuary coincides theoretically with creation; when it was established cosmos was created out of chaos.¹⁴ Hence the Babylonian creation epic closes with the account of the origin of the Esagila temple. On the doors of the Babylonian sanctuaries the creation story was commemorated in pictorial scenes as is proven by the Cassite king Agum-kakrime's description of them,¹⁵ and in the liturgy for the restoration of temples¹⁶ the creation was revived. The festival of the New Year is thus at the same time that of the founding of the sanctuary and of creation, and any restoration of a temple will naturally be celebrated at the annual festival.

¹³ *Keilinschr. Bibl.*, II, p. 272f.

¹⁴ Wensinck, p. 175.

¹⁵ Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation*, 1923, p. 10. *Keilinschriftl. Bibl.*, III, p. 134f.

¹⁶ Weißbach, *Babylonische Miscellen*, 1903, p. 83.

Before we attempt to study the cult-festival of ancient Israel, it will be useful to consider the festivals of other cult-religions of the Oriental world to gain the proper perspective. For the anti-cultic attitude of the great prophets has largely relegated the official cult-religion of the Hebrew state, out of which Israel's hope arose, into the background, and hence the foreign analogies will help us to recognize more clearly the traces of the latter that still remain. We shall first, following Erman, deal with the Egyptian cult festivals.¹⁷ At Edfu, the god Horus issues forth from his temple on the day prior to the actual opening of the rites, accompanied by his divine colleague Chons and the four spears with which the gods in primal times fought Seth, the representative of primeval chaos, to meet the Horus of el Kab and the Hathor of Dendera, who have come to visit him.¹⁸ The ceremonies of the festival are concerned with a repetition of the victory over Seth. The visitors from the foreign cities who have come with their gods "sit down and drink and celebrate a festival before this honorable God; they drink and anoint themselves and rejoice loudly together with the inhabitants of the city." The first day of the festival is marked by a procession in which the gods are conducted to an "upper temple" somewhere on the edge of the desert. Here sacrifices and ceremonies follow. The "scribe of the book of God," in the presence of the divinities, proclaims the victory of Horus. Four times he calls out, "Horus has come in triumph, and everything which has been entrusted to him has been carried out. His mother Isis rejoices because he has taken up this his office with a glad heart." The gods of Edfu, "the living souls, sit upon their thrones" and look upon the "lord of the gods," and "joy goes through Edfu." The priests frequently repeat the refrain, "Rejoice, ye living souls! Horus triumphs! Everything which has been entrusted to him he has carried out!" Thereupon the

¹⁷ The great Egyptian cult festivals do not coincide with the calendaric inauguration of the New Year. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that the Egyptian solar year of 365 days was not reconciled with the nature-year. But the creation character of these cult-festivals is plain. Cf. Mowinkel. *op. cit.* p. 30.

¹⁸ Erman, *Die Ägyptische Religion*², 1912, p. 234f.

procession starts again and goes to another place, "the hall of the school." Here a sacrifice of unclean animals is brought, and then the "scribe of the book of God" reads aloud the "worship of Horus whose inheritance is established" and four other books. During further sacrificial ceremonies in which all the names of the god are rehearsed, the priests say, "Praised art thou Re, praised art thou Chephre,"¹⁹ in all these thy beautiful names. Thou dost come hither strong and mighty and art risen beautifully and hast conquered the dragon. Incline thy beautiful face to the king." Thereupon four geese are released to fly to the four quarters to announce to the gods, "King Horus of Edfu, the great god, the lord of heaven, has taken the white crown and added to it the red one" (the white and the red crowns representing the dual monarchy of upper and lower Egypt). A man who plays the role of the "beloved son" thereupon shoots with a bow toward the four quarters and thereby is considered to have slain the foes of the god. Other ceremonies, intended to bring about the annihilation of hostile forces, follow. Thus a wax hippopotamus, upon which "the names of the enemies of all districts" of Egypt are inscribed, and crocodiles of clay are trampled under foot. The entire festivities last thirteen days, and then the visiting gods depart again to their cities.

Another characteristic cult-festival is that of the raising of the Ded-Pillar at Memphis.²⁰ After the king has brought a sacrifice to Osiris "the ruler of eternity," whose head is depicted in the form of the Ded-Pillar,²¹ he goes with his retinue to the place where the "august pillar" lies on the ground. The ruler, with his relatives and an accompanying priest, joins in

¹⁹ Horus has here absorbed two titles of Re, who is Chephre in the morning, Re at noon, and Atum in the evening.

²⁰ Erman-Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben*, 1923, p. 318 f.

²¹ This pillar is originally a tree of the conifer variety. Cf. Gressmann, *Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris*, 1923, p. 34 f. Under these circumstances I feel justified in suggesting that the *et-olam* or "god of eternity" in whose honor Abram planted tamarisks at Beersheba, Gen. 21 22, was Osiris, the "ruler of eternity." There is no need for calling in the Iranian Aion speculations, as is done by Kittel, *op. cit.* p. 76, to explain the name.

the actual raising of the pillar by means of ropes, while the queen, "who fills the palace with love," looks on, and her daughters rattle the sistrum. Six minstrels intonate a hymn in praise of the god, and four priests bring sacrificial tables and set them up at the foot of the pillar. Thereupon Osiris is regarded as having come to life again. A peculiar drama now follows that, with very meagre means, describes the great primeval struggle in which Osiris triumphed over his foes. First, four priests, with fists uplifted, advance toward four opposing priests who seemingly retreat; two others, meanwhile, are engaged in real combat, and one of them invokes the aid of Horus, the god reigning through the person of the king. Then follows a regular *melée* in which fifteen men, in several groups, smite each other with their fists or with sticks; two of these groups, according to the inscription accompanying the scene, represent the cities Pe and Dep, so that we here plainly have an echo of some ancient combat in which these cities were involved. The rites end with driving four herds of oxen and asses four times around the walls of the city.

The death and resurrection of Osiris to which these ceremonies refer were still more vividly celebrated at Abydos.²² "After the enemies of Osiris had been overthrown" a solemn procession to his grave in Peker, the cemetery of Abydos, ensued, where the god was duly buried. Later "that day of great battle" was portrayed "in which all his enemies were cast down upon the waters of Nedit." Then the resurrected god took his place in the great Neshmet barque in which he sailed back to his palace at Abydos amid the jubilation of the multitude. Each of these descriptions of Egyptian festivals furnishes knowledge of some interesting rite that has its parallel in New Year's festivals of the Semites of Asia.

In Babylonia the great cult-festival everywhere was the *Zagmuk*, or *resh-shatti*,²³ celebrated in spring. We can here disregard all the local festivals of the various cities which of course

²² Erman-Ranke *op. cit.*, p. 318.

²³ Lit., "head" or beginning "of the year." On the cult-festival of Sin, the moon-god of Harran, cf. Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 2, p. 305 f.

were national festivals in the days of a city's hegemony, and concentrate upon the best known of all, the New Year's festival of the city of Babylon. When Marduk created heaven and earth, and when the building of Esagila was completed, he invited his divine colleagues into his temple to rejoice and make music.²⁴ Quite naturally, therefore, the other deities celebrate the festival with him as often as it occurs. Hence "the gods of all the cities come to Babylon at New Year's to seize the hands of the great lord Marduk." Already Hammurapi gives his prefect at Larsa the order to transfer the goddesses of Emutbal with their sacred prostitutes to Babylon, no doubt for the festival, and in late Babylonian times a man writes to his friends at the metropolis that "the goddess Belit of Eanna (the temple of Erech) is enroute on the Euphrates to Babel." As in Egypt, the festival was an occasion of supreme rejoicing, and a general pilgrimage to the great metropolis was made.

The Zag-muk was distinctly a solar festival, for its great moment was the 11 Nisan, on which the rays of the vernal sun first struck the golden throne of Marduk in the chapel on the summit of Etemenanki,²⁵ the great Zikkurat or tower of Babel in the center of the Esagila area. But underneath the solar aspect lies the seasonal. Mythologically speaking, the god of light and life has triumphed over the dragon of storm and night, and his enthronization as god of Babylon and the world is repeated anew. The Babylonian creation epic gives us the account of the first enthronization of Marduk as follows: The monster Tiamat, the personification of the great primeval ocean, rebels against the gods. The greatest among the latter, Anu and Ea, attempt to battle with her but are unable to prevail. Thereupon the gods go to Marduk, the youngest among them, and beseech him to fight for them. He assents on condition that they make him king and entrust to him the "tables of fate," i. e., the right to determine the destinies of the world. Marduk is then advanced to the rank of the great gods by

²⁴ Creation epic VI. 53.

²⁵ Cf. Dombart's article, *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, 1924, p. 103f.

receiving a princely chamber; here, "before his fathers, for the kingship²⁶ he takes his place," and the supreme dignity is conferred on him in the words of the great gods: "We have given thee the kingship of universal power over the totality of all things." Thereupon Marduk must display his strength to the satisfaction of the assembled gods by a miracle. A garment is placed in their midst, and the new king is enjoined,²⁷

"Speak thou thy word and let the garment be destroyed,
Command again and let the garment be whole!"

Marduk shows himself able to cope with the situation.

"He commanded and at his word the garment was destroyed,
Again he commanded and the garment was remade.
As the gods his fathers saw the issue of his mouth
They were glad and did homage (saying): 'The king is Marduk!'
They added unto him a sceptre, a throne and a hatchet.
They gave him the unopposable weapon overwhelming the hateful."

It is apparent that this enthronization scene is proleptic. Marduk ideally takes over the kingship and ideally creates the world. For the garment which he causes to disappear and then calls into existence again is probably a symbol of the great cosmos-mantle, a mythical interpretation of the starry heavens.²⁸ After the battle with the Tiamat he actually creates the cosmos, in accordance with the ability that he previously demonstrated, and takes his place in the chamber of fates as king of the gods. The kingship of Marduk is thus based on his victory and the creation of the present order of the universe culminating in the founding of the sanctuary. But the celestial enthronization scene precedes the terrestrial actuality in accordance with the idea developed by Babylonian astrology that a heavenly occurrence precedes each event on earth.

The great New Year's festival of Babel was also described as the "festival of the resurrection of the lord of the gods Marduk."²⁹ A new text dealing with the passion and resurrection

²⁶ Langdon, *Epic etc.* p. 128 translates, "consultation," whereby the meaning of this ceremony is completely obscured.

²⁷ IV. 23f., Langdon *l. c.*, p. 128.

²⁸ Cf. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, 2 vols., 1910.

²⁹ Cf. *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, IV, p. 114, etc.

of Marduk, when coupled with the statements of the Greek historians concerning the "grave of Bel," enables us to get a much clearer idea of the meaning and magnitude of the cult-drama which was annually enacted at Babylon.³⁰ The great stage-tower of *E-temen-an-ki* "the house of the foundation of heaven and earth," a replica of the mythical world mountain, was considered to be the tomb of the god during the winter months. No doubt his death and burial were celebrated in autumn, while at the spring festival he was brought to life again. These rites are clearly parallel to the Tammuz-Adonis and Osiris cults which were so universally in favor in the ancient east. The basic thing in the festival, however, was the enthronization of Marduk in accordance with the creation myth, while the passion of Marduk is of subsidiary nature,— at least on the level of the national cult-religion.

The festivities started on the 1. Nisan.³¹ Manifold preparations were necessary; but we need not dwell upon them here, for only those rites interest us which have a bearing on the great ideas of the festival. On the fourth day the *urigallu*, the "Great brother" or high-priest, recited the Epic of Creation, beginning with the solemn words, "*Enuna elish la nabu shamamu*," "when above the heavens were not yet named." The reading of this sacred document naturally consumed a good part of the day. The following morning an atonement ceremony of particular interest took place in connection with the purification of the chapel of Nebo preparatory to his arrival from his temple at the nearby city of Borsippa. The head of a ram was cut off and the shrine besmeared with the bloody rump of the animal, whereupon the officiating persons threw the head and rump into the river and retired to the solitude of the plains until the festival was over. A basic affinity of this ceremony with the scape-goat rite of the Hebrew atonement day is unmistakable. Three and one-third hours after sunrise the high-priest, who was not permitted to witness the atonement rites, came forth

³⁰ Cf. Langdon, p. 35f. Zimmern. *Zum Bab. Neujahrsfest*, II, 1918. Strabo, Book XVII. 5. Aelian XIII. 3. Diodorus XVII. 112.

³¹ Cf. on the ritual Langdon, 20f. Meissner, II, 95f., and especially Zimmern, *Das Babylonische Neujahrsfest*, 1926, (*Der Alte Orient*, 25, 3).

from the sanctuary of Marduk and called for craftsmen. Various preparations were then made for Marduk's exit from his sanctuary *E-umush-a*, under the personal ministrations of the high-priest. He recited a prayer telling Bel that he was about to go to the "house of the festival" outside of the city. Presently Nabu arrived in his ship from Borsippa, and then the king was conducted to the shrine of Marduk to be officially reinstated for another year. After sunset a white bull was brought into the temple court and the king set fire to a bundle of reeds which the high-priest had put into a trench especially dug for the purpose, whereupon king and priest together recited a hymn entitled "Divine bull of Anu." This ancient rite had its background in the astronomic phenomena prior to 1900 B. C. when the new year began³³ with the heliacal rise of Taurus, the constellation symbolized by the white bull, before which, therefore, the new year's bonfire was kindled. On the next day another atonement ceremony was performed in which two especially prepared wooden images, adorned with gold, precious stones, and garments, were decapitated. The "hierogamy," or divine nuptials, between Marduk and Sarpanit also seem to have been celebrated on this day. The climax of the festival, however, was the ceremony "when on the 8th and 11th day the king of the gods of heaven and earth took his seat in the *Duku*, the place of the determination of the fates, and the gods of heaven and earth reverently pay homage to him and stand bowed down before him and he there determines the fates of distant days."³³ Marduk presided over the divine assembly, while Nebo, "the scribe of the entirety," recorded the fates of heaven and earth. For the populace the spectacular processions of the 10. and 11. of Nisan must have been the supreme occasions of the festival. At the invitation of the king, who came "to seize the hands of Bel," Marduk issued forth in his ship-cart *Makua* to go to the "house of the festival" (*bit akitu*) outside of the city limits. His return on the 11. Nisan was of triumphal

³³ Langdon, p. 26.

³³ Cp. Meissner, II, p. 97.—*Duku* (= bright mountain) is the inner chamber of *Ushukkina*, the place of the assembly of the gods.

character. Through the Ishtar gate and over the gorgeous pavements of the great avenue *Ai-ibur-shabun*, then past the Emah temple and the residential section with the temple of Ishtar of Agade on the left and the great walls of the royal palace and the gardens of the temple to the right, the procession came to the eastern gateway of Esagila,³⁴ where the arriving god was welcomed by an old Sumerian hymn of the "lifting up of the hand." Once more he entered the chamber of the fates, as on the day when the temple was founded. At the cessation of the festival the tributary gods who had come to pay homage to Marduk, as well as all the pilgrims who had attended, returned home again.

The New Year's festival was characterized by unbridled license. This was rooted in its fertility character, as particularly evidenced in the hierogamy. The latter is, of course, of cultic importance; through the nuptials of Marduk and Sarpanit new creation and birth are brought about.³⁵ The licentious practices in connection with the festival have their origin in this same atmosphere of ancient magic. They are "sacred prostitution" for the purpose of conjuring forth the new fertility in nature. Another characteristic of the festival was the temporary cessation of all differences in rank. The slaves were permitted to dominate their masters,³⁶ and in place of the king a bogus king was set upon the throne, being permitted to go to any excess and even to cohabit with the royal concubines.³⁷ Once this had interesting consequences; when king Irra-imitti of Isin died during the New Year's festival "the gardener, Ellilbani, who (as bogus king) sat upon the throne, did not arise, but made himself king."³⁸ Ordinarily the bogus king was scourged and put to death after his brief sway. This is also rooted in ancient fertility rites, for the king impersonates the god and hence it

³⁴ Cf. Koldewey, *Das Wiedererstehende Babylon*, 4. ed., 1926.

³⁵ Cf. Frazer, *Origin and History of the Kingship*, 1906, p. 194f.

³⁶ This is supported by the description of the festival of the goddess Bau at the ancient Sumerian city of Lagash. Meissner, II, p. 94.

³⁷ Cf. Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* II, 496.

³⁸ Meissner, II, p. 99.

is the passion of the god which was here repeated.³⁹ The passion of the god in turn, has a particular connection with the sowing of grain, a fact that still appears in the words, "Except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."⁴⁰

If we strive to penetrate through the great mass of detail to the realization of the constitutive principles of these Oriental festivals, we find that our earlier observations on the nature of cult-religion give us the clue. The *renewal* of creation is, as we saw, the basic idea of the cult, and this object is attained by the repetition of the primeval cosmic drama. With this must be associated also the renewal of the covenant between the group and the deity, involving a restoration of the group's purity by certain atonement ceremonies, and protection against its foes by rites intended to invoke the god's aid against them. Above this primitive substratum there rises, however, the thought of the enthronization of the god as king of heaven and earth and of the particular state, and the celebration of the founding of the sanctuary that is the god's seat ever since he inaugurated his first festival in it. Through these characteristics the cult-festival attains its national and political aspects. Pilgrimages, processions, a general carnival and great rejoicing are constantly recurring popular phases marking the festivities.

The religion of Israel necessarily shared to a very large extent the general heritage of eastern cult-religion. A glance at its ritual will reveal to the practised eye that the same primitive concepts underlie its theory of sacrifice, of holiness, of clean and unclean as are at the bottom of the religions of its gentile neighbors. Hence we must conclude that in Israel also annual rites were of supreme importance. Once upon a time it was the clan that celebrated an annual reunion for sacred ceremonies (1 Sam. 20 6). But the central sanctuary became the true scene of the festival of the people of a given region, and an annual pilgrimage was made to this sacred place (cf. 1 Sam. 1). If the later Hebrew calendar possesses a number of festivals, this

³⁹ Cf. Frazer, *l. c.*, p. 266 f.

⁴⁰ Cf. Saturn as grain-god and the Saturnalia in which this same thing is featured, Frazer, *l. c.*, p. 268.

reveals a more advanced stage and cannot destroy the fact that there is only one great, predominating festival. The latter was necessarily the heir of the old nature-festival of more primitive stages. It is clear, too, that the Hebrew re-creation festival coincided with that of the ancient Canaanites. Since the Palestinian soil, like the Arabian⁴¹ requires rain above all things, its New Year was the *āsif*, or festival of the "ingathering," celebrated in autumn, prior to the coming of the rains.⁴² It was thus at once an occasion of thanksgiving for the benefits of the past season and of invocation to the divinity to "bless" in the coming season. The chief feature of the festival was the sacred procession, as is proven by the Hebrew word for festival, "*hag*," which is akin to the Arabian *hadj*.⁴³ Pilgrimages were naturally made at this time to the more important sanctuaries, sacrifices were brought and vows that had been made were fulfilled.⁴⁴ Another name of the festival, "*hillūlim*,"⁴⁵ characterizes it as an occasion of jubilation. The completion of the harvest and the vintaging is naturally an event productive of great gladness.⁴⁶ On the other hand the festival also stimulated the inauguration of political acts such as the enthronization of a king by the group. For this reason the Philistines who had forbidden Israel to hold such assemblages immediately invaded the land when the

⁴¹ The Arabian festival at Mecca bore strong similarity to the Feast of the Tabernacles. Expectations for healing autumn rains were centered upon Kuzah the god of rain and thunder who revealed himself in fire on the top of the sacred mountain at Muzdalifa. A solar rite in which the pilgrims at sunset of the 9. Dhul-Hidjdja rush toward Muzdalifa, and which is repeated on the following morning when the first rays of the sun illuminate Mount Thabir, is quoted by Wensinck, *l. c.*, p. 162. Cp. also Wellhausen, *Reste Arab. Heidentums*², 1897, p. 79f.

⁴² The calendar inscription of Gezer begins the year with *āsif* the month of the ingathering, cf. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik*, III, p. 36f.

⁴³ Cf. Wellhausen, *l. c.*, p. 110. *Hadj*, "festival," is derived from the sacred procession or "hadj" around the Kaaba at Mecca. *Hadj* then gets the broader meaning, "pilgrimage."

⁴⁴ Judges 21 19f., 1 Sam. 1. and 1 Sam. 12 1. Cp. Deut. 14 23f., 26 1f.

⁴⁵ Lev. 19 24, Judges 9 27, cp. Wellhausen, *l. c.*, p. 110, on the same feature in the Arabian *Hadj*.

⁴⁶ Ps. 126 4.

Hebrews, in defiance of the decree, held their festival of Yahweh at Mizpah.⁴⁷ At Shechem, Gaal and his Israelite clansmen plotted mutiny against the king, Abimelech, and Zebul his prefect, at the occasion of the *hillūtim*.⁴⁸

Concerning the cult-myths of the ancient Canaanite and earliest Hebrew local festivals, we can still draw some inferences from our records. Rites akin to those of Marduk and Osiris were evidently practiced. Thus there was a "tree of weeping" near Bethel under which Deborah, apparently an old bee-goddess, was supposed to lie buried.⁴⁹ The cultic weeping under the sacred tree must have been preparatory to the celebration of her resurrection. The wailing for Jephthah's daughter on the mountain of Gilead,⁵⁰ and for Hadad-Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo,⁵¹ were rites of the same nature. An echo of the lamentation at the burial of the gods of vegetation is to be found in the practice of ritualistic weeping when the grain is planted, as it is presupposed in the words, "He goeth forth and weepeth who sows the precious seed, he cometh home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."⁵² Eisler suggests that in the figure of Joseph, "the multiplier," we have an old nature-divinity, the grain-god of Shechem, whose passion story may be reflected in Gen. 37⁵³ and who was probably worshipped there by being "buried" in the pit in effigy. Beneath the guise of the later tradition we may thus discover the *dromenon* of primitive nature cults of early times.

At Jerusalem the annual festival was known as *Succoth*, or "tabernacles."⁵⁴ It is expressly stated to have been celebrated

⁴⁷ 1 Sam. 7 s.

⁴⁸ Judges 9 27 f.

⁴⁹ Gen. 35 s, and Eisler, *Weltenmantel etc.*, p. 158.

⁵⁰ Jud. 11 40.

⁵¹ Zech. 12 11. Cp. on this god, Dölger, *Ichthys*, II, *passim*.

⁵² Ps. 126 s. Gressmann, *Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris*, 1923, p. 20 f. Weeping was a good omen for a rich harvest. Cp. the weeping of the Babylonian king at the New Year's festival, which was a good omen for the ensuing year. Cf. also Schrank, *Babylonische Sühnriten*, p. 91 f.

⁵³ Eisler, *op. cit.*, p. 276 f.

⁵⁴ Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, 1907, p. 395, would connect the name with the god Sikkut, to whom Am. 5 26 refers as Israel's "king."

after the end of the year in the month of Ethanim (= Tishri) with which the New Year began.⁵⁵ The custom of camping in huts of boughs and leaves during the festival is plainly of primitive character. The underlying idea was the renewal of vegetation. Forest and orchard were to be conjured to spread their canopy of leaves to the joy of men. With this may early have been associated the idea of the hierogamy or sacred nuptials of the gods.⁵⁶ In the Adonis cult of the Canaanites the bed upon which the hierogamy of Adonis and Aphrodite took place was sheltered with a canopy of fresh green. Since the latter festival also took place after the autumn harvest, and since the Adonis-gardens and the tabernacles were both set up either on the roofs or in the outer courts and both had associated with them the water libation, the likelihood of a direct connection between the two is very great.⁵⁷ It is not accidental that the Song of Songs was a part of the scroll for the Feast of the Tabernacles in late Jewish times. Solomon and Shulamith, it seems, were substitutes for the divinities whose mention could not be tolerated by Judaism, but whose hierogamy lived on in this innocent guise.⁵⁸ The great tenacity of nature-worship becomes apparent when we consider some of the rites that hold a position of importance in connection with this feast at the time of Christ. Thus the celebration was inaugurated by a nocturnal torch-dance which clearly shows the purpose of the festival to be the renewal of the light of the sun.⁵⁹ Similarly the water-libation has its basis in the purpose of bringing about rain;⁶⁰ the "fountains of salvation" from which the water is obtained are waters conveying a

⁵⁵ Ex. 23 16, 34 22.

⁵⁶ Eisler, pp. 565, 596. The practice of sacred prostitution "on every high hill and under every green tree" is an echo of this hierogamy.

⁵⁷ Gressmann, *Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris*, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Cp. Meek's claim that Canticles is a Tammuz liturgy. *AJSL*, 39, 1f. *JBL*, 43, 245 f., and Waterman, *JBL*, 44, 171 f.

⁵⁹ Cp. the Hanukka festival which has borrowed this feature of the renewal of "light." The antiquity of the use of torches at the New Year's festival may be inferred, perhaps, from Judges 7 16 f., which has earmarks of being composed with reference to some New Year's dramatization of an ancient victory.

⁶⁰ Cp. Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest Jahweh's*, p. 31.

particular salutary effect, or blessing, by virtue of their sanctity.⁶¹ The procession with the branches and fruits about the altar is another practice calculated to reawaken nature. Peculiarly interesting is the rite of establishing contact between each individual and the altar so that the power inherent in the altar can go forth upon the worshippers. "Form a cordon with branches, unto the horns of the altar."⁶² If the Mishna tells us that the branches were finally set up around the altar with the benediction, "Beauty to thee, O Altar," the underlying idea is the recharging of the altar with new power in order that it may be able, thus replenished, to give forth more blessing.⁶³ Thus the primordial characteristics of the festival lived on.

In pre-exilic times the Succoth feast was far more comprehensive in character than later, for it doubtless included three great festivals that in after days were independent, Rosh-ha-shanah or "New Year" on the 1. Tishri, the Atonement day on the 10. Tishri, and the Feast of the Tabernacles on 15-21. Tishri.⁶⁴ They were not yet separate entities in the days of the Deuteronomic law.⁶⁵ The change of calendar, probably inaugurated under the Chaldean domination just before the exile, however, made the year begin in spring with the month of Nisan and thus converted the Paschal and Mazzoth feasts into the real New Year's festival. The Exodus-story, originally intimately connected with the autumnal celebration was transferred to the spring festival to become the cult myth of the Passover.⁶⁶ In the wake of this change followed the above mentioned division

⁶¹ Is. 123f. is recited when the priest, entering the temple via the water-gate, brings the golden vessel with water from the pool of Siloam to the high-priest, who stands at the altar in his full regalia to offer the libation.

⁶² Ps. 118 27. Haupt, *ZAW*, 1915, 102f. Mowinckel, p. 105.

⁶³ Mowinckel, *l. c.*, correctly points out that "beauty" (*yophā*) is here synonymous with "holiness;" it is Otto's *fascinum*.

⁶⁴ Mowinckel, pp. 83f., 206f.

⁶⁵ Deut. 16.

⁶⁶ A connection between Succoth and the Exodus is still revealed by Lev. 23 43. Ps. 81 is, in Jewish tradition, connected with the celebration of the feast of the Tabernacles, and not with the Passover, as one would expect from the reference to the Exodus.

of the Succoth Feast into three independent holidays, but in spite of this reduction it could not be dislodged from its place of great importance. As late as Josephus and Plutarch⁶⁷ it was regarded as the most sacred of Jewish festivals. When the Gola, or "captivity," of Ezra celebrated its reunion with the colony of Jerusalem, and wished to make the day one of a great renewal of the national life, it chose the feast of the tabernacles as the occasion.⁶⁸ It was a day of great rejoicing, of sacrifice and blowing of the ramshorn trumpets, a day of the giving of presents and of feasting and drinking. Significant, too, was the reading of the law by Ezra on the first day of the feast from morn to midday. Whereas in earlier days the mythical or historical explanation of the world must have played the decisive role of cult-myth, the new Jewish legalism considered the Mosaic constitution the basis of the life of the nation. Yet even here it was not possible to get away from the ancient creation character of the feast. The mere fact that Ezra, as he read the law, stood in the street before the "water gate" shows the connection of this rehearsal with the rite of the libation to which we have already referred. Since the latter is rooted in the creation-idea it is attractive to suppose that the reading of the law has usurped the place of a creation story which was previously rehearsed at this occasion, just as the epic "*Enuma-lish*" was read at the Babylonian New Year's festival. One phase of the original celebration, however, had dropped into oblivion with the downfall of the state. Just as the other national cult-festivals of oriental peoples celebrated the sovereignty of their chief god, so the cult-festival of Israel in the days of the monarchy must have been the celebration of Yahweh's sovereignty.

In the early times Yahweh is never, as in the late Rabbinic texts, compared to a king,—he *is* the king.⁶⁹ He is the one "who sits (enthroned) on mount Zion," who roars forth from Zion and from Jerusalem gives forth his voice.⁷⁰ In a very

⁶⁷ *Sympos.* IV, 5.

⁶⁸ Neh. 8.

⁶⁹ Hempel, *ZAW*, 1924, 60.

⁷⁰ Is. 63; Amos 1 a.

present sense he is the "judge of all the earth."⁷¹ The relation of the reigning monarch to the king, Yahweh, is a subject too large to enter upon here. It is sufficient to take note of the fact that Yahweh's kingship is the primary thing to the Hebrew. Historically, of course, the kingship of Yahweh did not come into existence until a monarchy had been established at a definite capital, for *melek*, "king," originally "counsellor," is the title of the ruler of a Canaanite city state.⁷² Before Saul's time Yahweh was merely *Elohē Yisrāēl*, "god of the Israel tribe," and therefore a "*baal berith*," or "covenant god." He became "king" when Israel adopted the monarchy. But the oriental point of view is different; here the deity's kingship is believed to precede that of the earthly rulers. Therefore the temple is also the true seat of the government. It is not accidental that the Babylonian word *ēkallu*, "palace," became the Hebrew word for temple, *hēkal*, for the temple is nought else than the palace of the divine king. Therefore Jerusalem is the "daughter of Zion" because Zion, the temple-hill, is the source of the city's life. The basic importance of the temple is still plain from Haggai's teaching that Yahweh will only "bless," i. e. give fertility, to the land if the desolate temple be rebuilt. Since the king Yahweh has his seat in Zion the future kingdom can be described as "sovereignty of the daughter of Zion."⁷³ It is interesting to note that the sovereignty of Babylon, too, is vested in the sacred precinct where the god Marduk resides, who as determiner of the fates of the world bears the title "king of heaven and earth."

Since the sovereignty of Yahweh was a present reality it required renewal, and to this end the annual festival was directed. The oldest allusions to a celebration of Yahweh's kingship are found in the Balaam pericope, Num. 24 21: "Yahweh his god is with him, and the shout of a king is among them;" and in Hosea 7 5: "To-day is the festival of our king." The connection between the celebration of the sovereignty of Yahweh

⁷¹ Gen. 18 25.

⁷² Von Gall, *Wollhausen-Festschrift*, p. 152.

⁷³ Mic. 4 8.

and the New Year's festival is definitely established by Zech. 14 16, where the coming of the Gentiles to Jerusalem in the latter days at the occasion of the Feast of the Tabernacles to pay homage to the *king* Yahweh is referred to. Here the present cultic reality that has secondarily been projected into the future is directly traceable. Yahweh's Sovereignty, as established by subjugation of his enemies and his enthronization on Zion, was the real theme of the Feast of the Tabernacles, when the latter was the great state festival of the royal city of Jerusalem. It is an interesting fact that the *Malkiyoth*, or passages of the Old Testament dealing with the sovereignty of God, along with the *Shofaroth*, or passages mentioning the trumpet blowing, and the *zikronoth*, those referring to God's "remembrance" of his creatures, are the scripture lessons for the Succoth feast in the Mishna.

We saw in the case of the royal cult-festivals of Babylon and Egypt that the idea of the deity's sovereignty was closely connected with the creation of the world. In Israel the real cult myth of Yaweh's sovereignty was the Exodus-legend. But here, too, there was a strong trend toward going back to the beginning of things and toward connecting Yahweh's kingship with creation. No doubt the primitive myths of Yahweh's victory over Leviathan or Rahab, as outlined by Gunkel in his *Schöpfung und Chaos*, give us a clue to the kind of creation myth utilized at the great festival of Israel. I shall pass over this matter of the cult-myth here, however, inasmuch as I intend to deal with it in detail elsewhere.

In the pre-exilic festival the ark must have played a prominent part. Yahweh is the one who "sits enthroned between the cherubim."⁷⁴ The ancient Hebrew *hag* or "feast" of Jerusalem must therefore have been a procession with the ark.⁷⁵ The vast importance of this object for the cult may also be inferred from its titles "Ark of Yahweh," or "Ark of the Covenant," or "Ark of the Lord of all the Earth." It is self-

⁷⁴ 1 Sam. 4 4; 2 Sam. 6 2. Cf. Gressmann, *Die Lade Jahweh's*, 1920, p. 20.

⁷⁵ Cp. Hartmann, *ZAW*, 1917-18, 225. Gressmann, *l. c.*, p. 3 f. on the ark as sacred processional object. Yahweh becomes "the lord of all the earth" (Josh. 3 11 f.), wherever the ark is borne about.

evident, in view of the cultic character of Israel's religion, that this potent object, which radiated holiness and hence could confer both blessing and curse,⁷⁶ can not have reposed idly in its adyton. Like the idol of Marduk which issued from its shrine at Babylon once a year, the ark was doubtless brought forth annually from the Holy of Holies for the supreme occasion. Such was its holiness that to gaze upon it at other times than at the festival was fraught with grave danger.⁷⁷ Of course on the festive days all sorts of precautions were taken to direct this destructive phase of the ark's sanctity towards the god's enemies rather than toward his adherents. But just this very fact of its dangerous qualities was essential to the cult, in which the defeat of the adversaries of Yahweh and his people was among the things to be conjured up. How prominent this idea was may be seen from the old cultic formula for the exit of Yahweh's ark from its shrine:⁷⁸

"Arise, Yahweh, that thine enemies be scattered,
And they that hate thee flee before thee."

With this may be compared the address to the idol of Marduk and his spouse at the New Year's festival of Babylon, less militant in tone because the supremacy of Marduk was better established:

"Go forth lord, the king waits;
Go forth, our lady, the king awaits thee.

The lord of Babylon issues forth, all lands are bowed down before him."⁷⁹

Yahweh's sovereignty is extremely military in character. His throne is established over his prostrate foes, and hence the renewal of his victory in the cult-drama is of primary importance.

Since it was the proud boast of the Davidic dynasty that its ancestor first brought Yahweh in to Jerusalem, and since the creation-festival, naturally, as in Babylon, had its climax in the creation of the sanctuary and the first annual festival held in it by the god, a two-fold reason existed for the yearly repetition

⁷⁶ 2 Sam. 6 7, 11.

⁷⁷ 1 Sam. 6 19.

⁷⁸ Num. 10 35 f.

⁷⁹ Cf. Zimmern, *Neujahrsfest*, p. 18.

of the arrival of the ark. Every indication, therefore, favors the assumption of Mowinckel that the accounts of the induction of the ark under David and Solomon⁸⁰ give us the clue to an important phase of the cult-drama of Jerusalem. The 132. Psalm may then, with this author be interpreted as a liturgy for this occasion, and it must be admitted that this is particularly attractive in view of the fact that the account of 2 Chronicles 6 41f. borrows vv. 8-10 of the psalm. The theme of the poem is the recovery of the ark at Baalath, or Kiriath Jearim. The dramatic performance naturally began by taking the ark out to this town, or else only to the outskirts of the city, to the house of Obed Edom.⁸¹ The reigning king, Mowinckel thinks, impersonated David by bringing home the sacred object to Jerusalem once more. At this occasion he was clad in priestly garments and personally officiated at certain sacrifices,⁸² for the king was originally the chief-priest of the god. Perhaps he was reinstated in an especial ceremony, as was the king of Babylon; Ps. 132 10,

⁸⁰ 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Chron. 15f. 1 Kgs. 8. 2 Chron. 5-7. Cf. Mowinckel, p. 109f. An interesting parallel to the induction of the ark is the return of Nanai to Erech, *Vorderasiat. Bibliothek*, VII, 2, p. 58. Just as Yahweh finds his "resting-place forever," Ps. 132 14, so Nanai is made to dwell in a *parak darā'ni*, "a shrine of everlasting." But this does not preclude an annual exit at the festival!

⁸¹ 2 Sam. 6 5, 11. Theoretically, but probably not actually, the ark stayed three months in the house of Obed Edom, because of the fear of evil consequences from its presence in the city. "Pereš Uzzah," for which an etymological story has been invented, may have some connection with the Assyrian word *paraṣu*, "sanctuary," and was perhaps the adyton of this temple. Uzzah is "strength." The phrase perhaps means "the shrine of the potent object." The house of Obed Edom may then have been an originally pagan sanctuary where the destructive effect of the ark was to be regarded with equanimity. There was a Palestinian goddess Edom, spouse of Reshef, the god of pestilence (cf. Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 1896, p. 316, Hommel, *Geographie und Geschichte*, etc., 1906, p. 164). The depositing of the ark in this place may have had the purpose of neutralizing the pestiferous activities of this divinity in the interest of the population of Jerusalem. From 2 Sam. 24 16f. we may conclude that the founding of the sanctuary of Jerusalem on the site of Arauna's threshing floor had some connection with the worship of the deity of pestilence.

⁸² 2 Sam. 6 18.

and the phrase "renew the kingship" in 1 Sam. 11 14, point in that direction.

Either at the occasion of leaving or of returning to the city the sacred object must have been borne about the walls. The purpose of such a rite, to which we have related an Egyptian analogy, was to impart the strength of the god to the fortifications in order to render them impregnable. This is indeed the significance of the procession along the newly built walls of the post-exilic city which Nehemiah ordained: "The priests and Levites hallow themselves and then they hallow the people, the gates and the wall."⁶³ Having absorbed "holiness" from its source in the temple, they transfer it also to the city's new defences. We can rest assured that so potent an object as the ark of Yahweh was the primary factor in similar rites of pre-exilic times. This assertion receives indirect support from the story of the fall of Jericho.⁶⁴ The procession with the ark around Jericho for seven days corresponds to the length of the feast of Tabernacles, whose characteristic *shofar*- (or trumpet-) blowing is very prominent in the narrative. The magic character of the procession is plain; the holiness of the deity is to be imparted to the city, but since it is a pagan city the destructive character of this holiness is made manifest. It drives out the "strength" of the pagan god, so that the walls collapse. The opposite effect of strengthening the walls naturally resulted when the ark was carried about Yahweh's own city, and such stories as this helped to enhance the faith in this marvelous object. The conception of a procession about Jericho was simply modelled after the sacred procession about Jerusalem, to which the New Year's Psalm, 48, also refers:

"Walk about Zion and go round about her and count her towers,
Mark well her bulwarks and walls and consider her citadels."

The liturgy for the return of the ark to the sanctuary is, Mowinckel thinks, still preserved in the 24. Psalm. As a prayer of the "lifting of the hand" was sung when Marduk came to the gate of Esagila, so the following chant may have been

⁶³ Neh. 12 27f. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁶⁴ Josh. 6.

uttered when the ark reached the gate of the city or of the temple:

"Lift up your heads, o ye gates,
even be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
that the glorious king may enter!"

Before the imagination of the devotees in the festive procession Yahweh, who is present with his ark, is of gigantic stature; it is not enough that the gates be swung open. They must lift up their heads, i. e., be raised up high so that he can pass through.⁸⁵ But the sentinel who watches over the god's palace must be sure that it is the real king who is seeking entrance and hence must inquire:

"Who is this glorious king?"

Tumultuous is the cry from without the gates:

"Yahweh, the mighty hero,
Yahweh, the hero in battle!"

After the same invitation and question have been repeated in due solemnity the full cult-name of the divinity was pronounced:

"Yahweh Sabaoth,
he is the glorious king!"

We may imagine that this cult-drama was one that brought joy to all participants. At this occasion were sung hymns especially composed for the day beginning with the invitatorium, "Sing unto Yahweh a new song." The *terûā*, or "shout," and the blowing of the *shofar*, or ram's horn trumpet, accompanied the journey of the god to his temple:

"God has gone up amid a shout,
Yahweh amid the sound of the trumpet." (Ps 47 a.)

The procession was not stately or measured but rather in the nature of an ecstatic dance.⁸⁶ The dance is a natural expression of the ecstatic cultic experience of being filled with the spirit of the divinity. At the same time it is also conducive to achieving this ecstatic condition, which is so important a means for obtaining the divine "strength." Ecstatic joy was a proof

⁸⁵ H. Schmidt, *Die Thronfahrt Jahweh's*, 1927, p. 20, thinks Yahweh had a chariot, cp. Ps. 68 12.

⁸⁶ 2 Sam. 6 5. Cp. Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance*, 1924; Mowinkel, p. 112.

that the deity had come to his people.⁸⁷ For this reason David, having danced before the ark, feels that God is with him, when reproved by Michal for his plebeian conduct.

The rites of the festival came to an end when Yahweh, like Marduk, returned again to his *menuha*, or "resting place," until another year.⁸⁸ When he arrived there the words were recited—

"Return, O Yahweh,
thou myriads of regiments of Israel."

Enthroned again as king of his people and of the world, Yahweh's first act must have been to receive the homage of his people and tributaries, as Zech. 14 16 presupposes.

Hans Schmidt⁸⁹ has tried to go beyond Mowinckel in the matter of the processions of the great Yahweh-festival. But we shall refrain from entering into the subject any further, because too much use of the imagination is not apt to make the case more convincing. We must doubtless admit that it is next to impossible fully and accurately to reconstruct the ancient cult-festival of Israel. But the great weight of the analogies that we have cited, and the recognition of the real nature of the Hebrew religion as shown by the large primitive element in its ritual, give us the right to utilize certain O. T. passages which almost force themselves upon one's attention for an attempt at reconstruction. But all these details have only an accidental interest. Our main purpose is to point out the importance of the cultic and national phases of the religion of Israel for any adequate treatment of that subject.

⁸⁷ Neh. 8 10.

⁸⁸ Cf. the liturgy addressed to Marduk at his return to the temple, which constantly echoes the idea that he should "calm himself," "*nu-uh belwan*." Cf. Jensen, *Texte zur Assyrisch-Bab. Religion*, 1915, p. 36 f.

⁸⁹ *Die Thronfahrt Jahweh's*, 1927.