THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OF ABRAHAM

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

A. Statement of Problem and Purpose

It is the primary purpose of this study to examine in a sympathetic and constructive manner the so-called Abraham Narrative as found in Genesis 11.27 - 25.18 to determine the nature of the great patriarch's religious consciousness and to note the influence his religious experience has exerted in the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

Abraham has suffered much at the hands of the critics, having been regarded by many, until just recently, as a mythical character, or at best, a shadowy figure about whom little could be definitely known, since the stories about him were declared to be colored by the writer of whichever of the multiple documents was under study at the moment.

No quarrel with these critics is necessarily sought in this study, but as answers to some of the critical problems connected with Abraham arise in the course of its development, they will be properly noted and evaluated. Similarly, there is no system of theology to be verified by this study, although as will be seen later, theology seems to be a logical outgrowth of the rationalization of religious experiences.

The writer is interested simply with Abraham as a man who is a religious man, exactly as portrayed in the Genesis account, a man of hopes and aspirations, a man with remarkable awareness of God, a man who remarkably responds to his God.

B. The Significance of the Problem

The average Bible student is well aware that the phrase "the God of Abraham" occurs many times in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, where the phrase becomes the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". Christian believers find, if they examine the record carefully, that they worship the same God Abraham worshiped, though probably with different understanding, in certain instances, of His nature. There is a sense, of course, in which each oneworships his own God. Someone has said that everyone gives himself to someone or something, and he tends to become like that to which he gives himself. Abraham gave himself in a wholehearted dedication to a great God, greater than any other known in his day, and became himself great, the Father of Faith, the founder of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. It is this role of pioneer which Abraham plays so well that will always make studies of his religious consciousness significant to students in the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

Why did the Hebrews recognize Abraham as the true founder of their religion? Simply because Abraham's God measured up to every emergency. Let it be understood that Abraham did not give himself to a self-created God, made in the image of Abraham or in the image of the many lesser deities infesting the Tigris-Euphrates and Canaanitish pantheons. Abraham's God, according to the Genesis account, was a self-revealing God, a true mark of the Theos, which this study intends to show. Undoubtedly, Abraham's religious life was conditioned to a certain degree by the ancient cultures with which he was associated, as chapter two will point out, but Abraham's God was not a borrowed Deity. He was Abraham's own personal God, the God of his experience. His nature was made known to Abraham by "the order of his activity" within the sphere of Abraham's not so little world. He was literally, "the God of Abraham."

It is not without significance that the Deity who appeared to Moses in the burning bush experience announced himself to the frightened shepherd with the words, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob."[1] Moses and Abraham worshiped the same God. Moses' religious experience is

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[1]Exodus 3.6

generally conceded to be that of a theist. If the Exodus quotation be true, then Abraham must also have been a theist. So then, since the vast majority of Christians follow down from Moses through the prophets to Christ and Paul in tracing the theistic origins of their faith, they can go back a step farther to Abraham as possibly the earliest historical theist about whom very much is known.

Renewed interest in the patriarchs has been evidenced recently, due largely to some interesting archaeological findings which have changed the whole attitude of Bible scholars relative to the historicity and reliability of the patriarchal narratives. Such interest adds to the relevance of the present study, and proper mention of such archaeological discoveries as apply to Abraham will be made as the study progresses.

One further factor lending significance to this study is that few studies of Abraham have been attempted from the viewpoint of the psychologist. Since he was passed by as being non-historical, why bother with his religious consciousness? But now that outstanding scholars like Albright[1] believe that Abraham was a real character, there is real incentive for examining anew the Genesis account to see if there is pictured here a true delineation of the religious experience such as we know it.

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[1]William F. Albright, brilliant archaeologist of John Hopkins University

C. The Delimitations of the Problem

1. As has already been indicated, the chief body of data is the Abraham Narrative, Genesis 11.27 - 25.18. Further data include all references to Abraham in both the Old and New Testaments, studied in the light of their significant context.

2. The approach to the study will be specifically that of a religious psychologist, as has already been noted. That denotes a number of significant things:
a) The religious psychologist is careful in his use of the Biblical record; he takes the book intact--as it is. He is careful to be true to the record. He neither adds nor detracts. From the psychological viewpoint it is not important what the psychologist himself believes as he starts the research, but he must not read into the account that which is not there. He seeks no proof texts to support a theological bias, nor does he approach the record with a view of destroying its validity.
b) He must not forget that he is dealing in this record with believers, people, personalities, whether fictional or historical.
c) He must be careful to get out of the Bible all that is there. As a scientist he does not throw away a part of the record, keeping only such data as he may be looking for. Dr. Albert Wyckoff in his classes at Biblical

Seminary in New York constantly emphasizes that "there is no more in the Scripture than there is in it"[1], but the psychologist must insist on keeping what there is in it. d) This paper will go somewhat beyond the boundaries of religious psychology in that it is interested not only in what Abraham believed about God, but also why he believed as he did. The answer to the latter question will largely follow from the first, for to discover the nature of a religious experience, a psychologist takes into account three fields of observation: 1) the nature of the subject, which is Abraham in this instance; 2) the nature of the object, which is the God Abraham worshiped; and 3) the nature of the relationship established between the two. This intimate and revealing relationship enjoyed by Abraham with his God, an experiential and real thing, will largely explain the Why of his belief.

3. A further delimitation of the problem arises out of the deliberate theistic approach adopted by the writer. Theism is a problem arising out of the nature of religious emotion. The great James[2] defined religious emotion as simply an ordinary emotion turned toward a religious object, but the theist cannot accept this definition.

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[1]Albert Clark Wyckoff, Professor of Religious Psychology at Biblical Seminary in New York

[2]William James: Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 26-27

If there be no qualitative difference between religious emotion and any other emotion except what we ourselves put into it (which was Leuba's thesis), then there is no objective God that Man can discover, and theism must give way to humanism. Conversion becomes simply a subjective experience. Further, Man becomes guilty of creating God in Man's own image.

The first big problem in religious psychology is that of the Theos. The theist's God is not man made, not one whom he can slough off as the needs out of which he was created are met by advancing science and culture. As a theist, the writer must prove that Abraham's experience with Deity is unique, qualitatively as well as quantitatively different. Such is the proposition of this study, which, after a frank appraisal of the facts recorded in the Abraham Narrative, will, it is felt, be substantiated.

Unlike the non-theist, the theist can take the data of the Bible, as long as he does no violence to the record. As Dr. Wyckoff has pointed out in religious psychology classes, a music student does not content himself with studying Foster's "My Old Kentucky Home" and a few other lighter American folk tunes, leaving out of an appreciative survey the Wagners, the Beethovens, the Bachs, et al, and then profess to have made a complete survey

of the entire field of music. Similarly, the theist insists, the entire Scripture record, which reports the religious experiences of the greatest religionists of all times (all of them theists), must be accepted as data if a true interpretation is to be arrived at.

4. There is one final delimitation of this problem, which amounts to a basic assumption, namely, that the writer follows Rudolph Otto[1] in finding non-rational bases underlying the true theistic religious experience, making the theistic experience truly qualitatively different from any other type of religious experience. Otto's non-rational "elements" will be outlined quite fully in a following chapter.[2]

D. Method and Procedure

As a general statement of method, the writer acknowledges a real debt to Dr. Howard Kuist, whose method of Scriptural study has been so excellently set forth in his recent book, "These Words Upon My Heart." Kuist believes that the Bible is deserving of study even if only as literature, which is actually the way a religious psychologist must study it. "The same capacities which men commonly exercise in opening the eyes of their understanding to nature and to the arts should render them

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[1]See Otto's The Idea of the Holy, and Religious Essays.

[2]Post, p. 44 ff

correspondingly sensitive to the appeal of Scripture."[1] Kuist follows Agassiz in the belief that facts are stupid things until brought into connection with some general law[2], and he emphasizes the relation of Ruskin's laws of composition to adequate Bible study, these laws being those of principality, repetition, continuity, curvature, radiation, contrast, interchange, consistency and harmony. They are well enough known not to need definition in this study. "What determines the distinctive merit of any work is not what it says, but how it says it, not its expressed content, but its expressive form."[3]

The foregoing paragraph gives a general picture of how the Biblical data will be handled. As for the actual analysis of Abraham's religious consciousness as followed in this study, it will begin with a chapter on the patriarch's religious background, portraying the Tigris-Euphrates and Canaanitish cultures as he must have known them. The second step will be an examination of the Abraham Narrative in Genesis to see whether or not the non-rational elements contained in the true theistic religious experience are a part of Abraham's experience. With such

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[1]Howard Tillman Kuist: These Words Upon Thy Heart, p. 39

[2]Ibid., p. 78

[3]Ibid., p. 91

a basis established, the next step is to note how these basic non-rational elements become rationalized, clues being found in names for God used by the patriarch, and also the religious roles he assumes. Eventually there is a process of socialization, for Abraham's God-contacts have become common property in which all men may share. Concluding chapters will trace the influence of Abraham's faith on later worshipers, particularly in the Old and New Testament records, and finally there will be a number of conclusions to be drawn, some answers to critical problems enunciated, and an evaluation of Abraham's religious experience.

E. The Source of Data

This aspect of the problem has already been partially dealt with. It has been indicated that the Abraham Narrative in Genesis will be the chief source of data, with other Biblical references to the Patriarch also to be considered. The Hebrew text will be used quite largely in all Old Testament passages bearing on the problem, but since the writer is not well acquainted with the Greek, the better English translations of New Testament passages will have to be relied on.

Full use will be made of the findings of such scholars as Albright, William Barton, Jack Finegan,

George Ernest Wright, Floyd Filson, Nelson Glueck, to name only a few, in the matter of setting Abraham in his cultural and political context. There are a multitude of sources relating to critical problems involved in the Abraham stories, and references to them will be made as the problem unfolds.

For psychological data, the writer is particularly indebted to Dr. Albert Wyckoff, who was his teacher at Biblical Seminary in New York, and through Wyckoff to Otto. The psychological aspects of the works of D. C. MacIntosh and Edgar S. Brightman were also a source of help. Exact references will be made as they are called for.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

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A. ABRAHAM OF MESOPOTAMIA

1. Introduction

THE OBVIOUS reason for the brief survey of Abraham's geographical, cultural, religious and historical backgrounds as outlined in the present chapter is that no man, even a great man like Abraham, lives and acts within a vacuum. He reacts even as others do to his environment, although in a unique way that made him the Father of Faith. He cannot be explained apart from the cultures in which he lived. Another reason for this study is that if a close connection can be shown to have existed between the Abraham we have in the Genesis account and the Eastern world of archaeological determination, another strong proof for his historicity can be established.

2. Geographical Setting

SEVERAL STRANDS of Old Testament narrative link Abraham to an early home in or near the city of Ur. Genesis 11.28-30; 12.1-4a, 6-9; and 15.7 identify his birthplace as "Ur of the Chaldees." This same

tradition is affirmed in a prayer in Nehemiah 9.7: "Thou art Jehovah the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham." "Of the Chaldees" may be an anachronism, since the Chaldeans were a Semitic people, whose presence in South Babylonia is first mentioned about 1000 B. C., according to present sources of knowledge.

THE CITY OF UR was once situated on the banks of the Euphrates in southern Mesopotamia, near the head of the Persian Gulf. Now, the river having changed its course, Ur is twelve miles away. Also, the Tigris and Euphrates throughout the centuries have carried rich silt to their mouth and built up the former marsh land so that at present 300 miles of absolutely flat, stoneless alluvial plain intervene between Ur and the Persian Gulf. The coastline is still advancing at the rate of about a mile and a half a century. The area around Ur today is not pleasant, being only shimmering desert sand. Finegan[1] reports the amusing inscription a modern tourist left in the register of the mud hotel at Ur: "No wonder Abraham left; even Job would have!" But times have changed, and as shall be noted shortly, it was not for

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[1]Jack Finegan: Light From the Ancient Past, p. 12

geographical difficulties that Abraham left Ur. It might be mentioned in passing that some scholars maintain that Haran and not Ur was the real city of Abraham's nativity, but this requires considerable violence to the Genesis account. It remains preferable, as Finegan has pointed out[1], to believe that Abraham was born at Ur, moved on to Haran and eventually to Canaan.

ABRAHAM'S MOVEMENTS follow exactly the line of what has been designated as the Fertile Crescent, the semicircular area that stretches from Egypt on the southwest northward through Palestine and Syria to the headwaters of the twin rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and on down the valley they form to the Persian Gulf. Within this Fertile Crescent (and it was "fertile" in Abraham's time), at either end, were the two great centers of early civilization, the Nile Valley and the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. The road of conquest and commerce led along the Crescent from one end to the other, and this was a well-traveled road, much more so than was previously believed before archaeology added so considerably to our knowledge of this early period. It will be pointed out later that Abraham's migration was not so unusual, and certainly not impossible.

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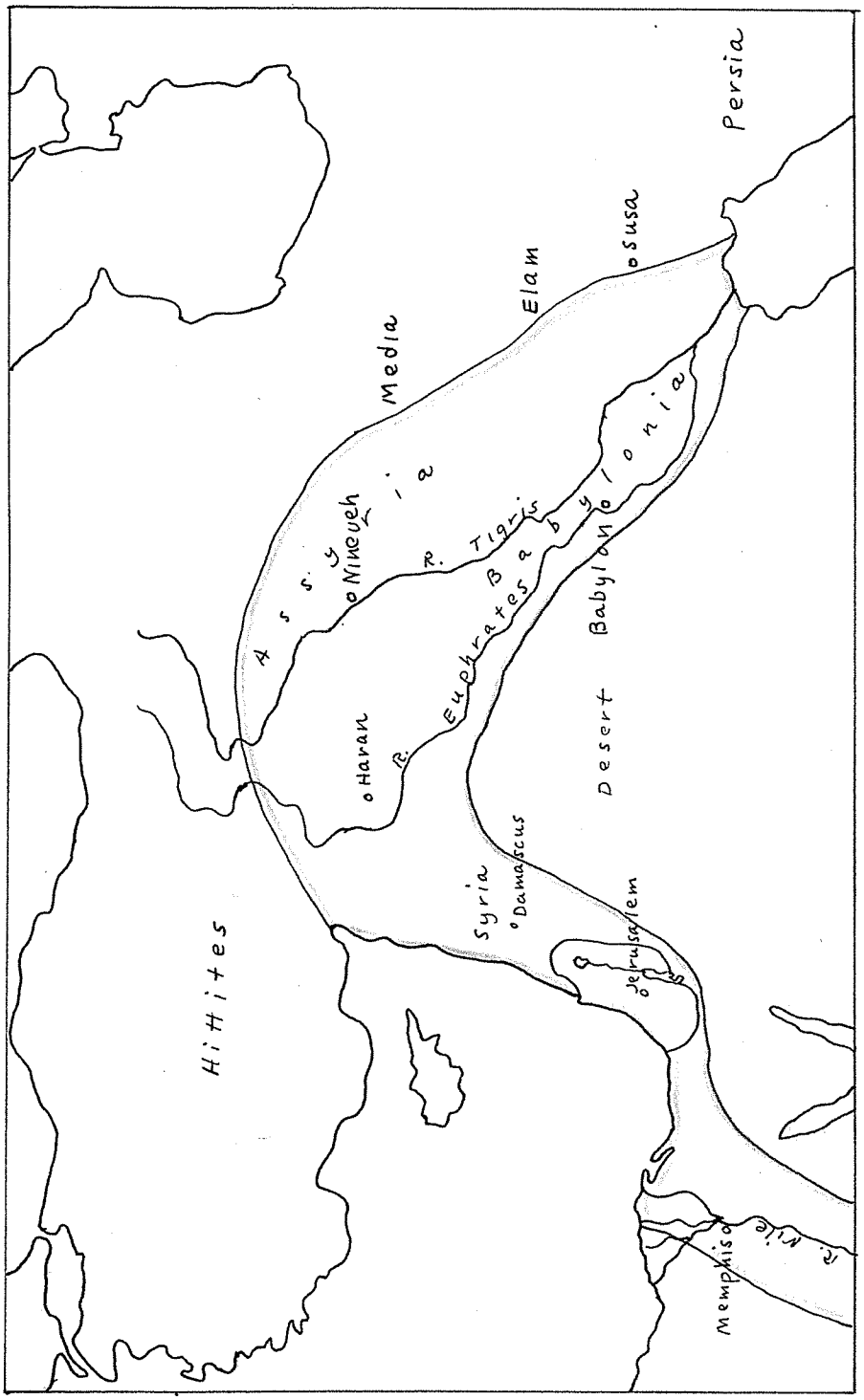
[1]See Finegan, Ibid., footnote, p. 58; also T. J. Meek in Journal of Religion 21 (1941), p. 402



Map No. 1, The Fertile Crescent

3. Cultural Setting

THE MAP on the preceding page indicates the location of Ur and also Haran, to which Abraham migrated. Much has been discovered about Ur in recent years, but perhaps there is nothing definite to indicate what influence this great ancient center had on patriarchal life, which is altogether different as regards Haran. Preliminary work on the excavation of Ur was made by Hall in 1919, but the real systematic excavation was begun in 1922 by Sir Leonard Wooley and continued on up to 1934. No direct light on the patriarch Abraham was found. A number of the royal tombs of the early dynastic kings of Ur were discovered and vast quantities of precious objects, indicating a high level of culture and an age of comparative wealth and luxury long before Abraham. The prize find, however, was the discovery in 1927-28 of Queen Shub-Ad's tomb. Her regalia and head ornaments (her headdress contained nine yards of gold band) were "indescribable"[1]. Some twenty-five persons had been buried with the Queen, a horrible, barbaric sacrifice, but they had apparently gone to their death willingly. Not only this, but nearby were other death pits, one containing the bones of six men and 68 women. M. G. Kyle observes,

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[1]William Albright: Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands, p. 10

> "No wonder that, when God would select a man of Ur through whom he would begin a new revelation of hope to the world, he said, 'Get thee out of thy country...'"[1]

ABRAHAM LIVED in a commercial world. Here again we have nothing definite to connect with Abraham, but in a series of business documents which come from Dilbat, eight miles south of Borsippa and across the Euphrates from Babylon, there is interesting indication of the business dealings of a Babylonian Abraham, a small farmer. One is a contract whereby "Abarama" hired an ox "broken to the yoke", for which he paid a rent of "one shekel of silver". The date of this tablet is 1965 B. C. In another document is the record of the lease of 400 shares of land to "Abamrama." Still another indicates that this Babylonian Abraham paid his rent.[2] This Abraham, of course, is not the Abraham of the Genesis account, but it shows that the name was not unknown in Babylonia, this man having lived about Abraham's time about midway between the cities of Ur and Haran, places where the patriarch is recorded as living.

OF CONSIDERABLE interest is the translation by Barton[3] of a document that comes from the time of

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[1] M. G. Kyle, ISBE., p. 3039A

[2] George Barton: Archaeology and the Bible, pp. 344-346

[3] Ibid., pp. 346-347

Hammurabi, given here in part:

> "A wagon
> from Mannum-balum-Shamash....
> Khabilkinum...
> on a lease
> for 1 year
> has hired.
> As a yearly rental
> 2/3 of a shekel of silver
> he will pay....
> Unto the land of Kittim (coastlands of the Mediterranean)
> he shall not drive it..."

Barton makes the following conclusion about this contract, written in Sippar:

> "It reveals the fact that at the time the document was written there was so much travel between Babylonia and the Mediterranean coast that a man could not lease a wagon for a year without danger that it might be driven over the long route to Syria or Palestine...When, therefore, Abraham went out from his land and his kindred, he was going to no unknown land. The tide of commerce and of emigration had opened the way. Apparently it was no more remarkable for him to do it than for an Irishman to come to America half a century ago."[1]

Hastings makes a similar statement: "Migration in Abraham's day was the rule, not the exception of Eastern life."[2]

THE GREAT archaeologist Albright seems to believe that there is nothing too concrete about the Ur tradition for Abraham's birthplace. As support for his belief that Haran rather than Ur is the cultural source for Abraham he makes the following points: First, the list of Abraham's ancestors points unmistakably to northwestern Mesopotamia.

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[1]Ibid,, p. 347

[2]James Hastings: The Greater Men and Women of the Bible, Adam-Joseph, p. 138

Peleg, he says, reminds one of the later Paliga at the mouth of the Khabur; Nahor reflects the city of Nakhur in the region of Kharran; Serug corresponds to the town of Sarugi. These and others, he feels, are "not mere coincidences." Second, the early stories of Genesis suggest the formative influence of northern Mesopotamia. The so-called Nuzi texts give support here. These written documents from a small Assyrian city reveal that the peculiar relationship that existed between Abraham and Eliezer was not so strange as had been supposed. It was the custom among childless parents to adopt someone as heir-designate of the family's property. Though a servant, Eliezer was to be Abraham's heir if no son were born (Gen. 15.1ff). These documents also reveal why Rachel was so careful to steal the family teraphim from Laban--they assured the possessor leadership of the family. There are many other Nuzi parallels to Genesis--and Nuzi is in <u>northern</u> Mesopotamia.[1]

HASTINGS SUMS up what he thinks Abraham saw in Babylonia (on the basis of archaeological findings) as 1) idolatry, with its accompanying infamies, e.g., the human sacrifices mentioned above; 2) industry,

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[1]Albright: op. cit., p. 26

involving a great love of trading; 3) a readiness to engage in litigation; 4) accounts of the legends of the Creation and a general Flood.[1]

THE ABOVE SUMMARY does not do justice to the Babylonia of Abraham's day. Archaeology has added immeasurably to the picture. Outstanding new light has come from the excavations at Mari (Tell el Hariri), a city whose kingdom extended from the frontier of Babylon some three hundred miles to the border of Syria. More than 20,000 clay documents from the archives of her outstanding king, Zimri-Lim, have been found. Many of these were letters written to him by neighboring kings in Syria and Mesopotamia. They have been responsible for a change of dating for Hammurabi, who conquered Mari around 1700 B. C. Finegan consequently dates Hammurabi at about 1728-1676 B. C.[2] Zimri-Lim's palace was a tremendous structure, having nearly 300 rooms and covering fifteen acres. The documents found indicate Mari to have been both a commercial and political center in a thriving and efficient state. Findings indicate a widespread interest in "fortune telling" and divination among the Babylonians, who did not have the same faith in an

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 123

[2]Finegan, op. cit., p. 47

hereafter their contemporary Egyptians had and consequently laid more stress on living the good life in the present. It is quite evident, of course, that Abraham and later Israelites, had little to say about an after life. Very likely this is the result of Babylonian backgrounds. Divination as a means of lifting the veil of the future must have carried over into Israel's culture, for there is severe warning against the practice in Deuteronomy.[1]

HAMMURABI'S brilliance overshadowed that of Zimri-Lim. His capital at Babylon must have been an impressive city. Its most noted building was Etemenanki, a temple tower, one of the marvels of the ancient world. It was said to be second in size among ancient structures only to the great pyramid in Egypt. Hammurabi is most famous for his code of laws, which was largely a collection of older laws and customs adapted for use in his present culture. Barton calls attention to one of these laws, without parallel in the Biblical codes but "strikingly illustrated in the patriarchal narratives", which accounts for the practice among the patriarchs' wives of presenting their husbands with a slave-girl as a concubine. The exact quotation of the law as Barton translates it is

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[1]Deuteronomy 18.9-14

as follows (No. 146):

> "If a man takes a priestess and she gives to her husband a maid-servant and she bears children and afterward that maid-servant would take rank with her mistress; because she has borne children her mistress may not sell her for money, but she may reduce her to bondage and count her among the female slaves."[1]

One thinks at once of Sarah's treatment of Hagar in Genesis 16.5-7 and 21.9,10.

ARCHITECTURE in Mesopotamia is largely influenced by the absence of stone on the alluvial plain between the two rivers. Construction was mostly of sun-dried brick. Pillars made of bricks were employed. City walls, of great thickness, were also of brick. Pottery was generally plain, but some painted pottery has been found. The sculpture of the Sumerians is "one of the great achievements of their civilization".[2] Its spirit, originality, perfection of detail, trueness to life are indeed remarkable. Finegan in his new book, "Light From the Ancient Past", has included a number of very excellent pictures showing ancient Mesopotamian artistry.[3] A good summary evaluation of early Babylonian art is to be found in the article by A. T. Clay in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

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[1]Barton: op. cit., pp. 392-394

[2]A. T. Clay: "Babylonia", article in ISBE, pp. 358-368

[3]Finegan; op. cit., section following p. 30

4. Religious Setting

THE BABYLONIANS were never able to rise above polytheism. "With all their wonderful gifts, they were never able to conceive of one god whose very existence makes logically impossible the existence of any other deity. Monotheism transcends the spiritual grasp of the Babylonian mind."[1] There were a multitude of local deities in Abraham's day in Mesopotamia, but the chief gods of the Babylonian pantheon, some of whom were adopted by the later Assyrians, are limited enough in number to be mentioned.

THE GREATEST of the gods in early Sumerian texts was Enlil, or Ellil, identified in later times as Bel.[2] He was Lord of the World and King of the Land. He was saluted as "the great Lord, the command of whose mouth cannot be altered and whose grace is steadfast." Besides this god of the earth there was Anu, who was king of heaven, his chief seat of worship being at Uruk. Forming an early triad with Enlil and Anu was Ea, worshiped chiefly in Eridu, near Ur. He was later treated with reverence by the Babylonians, who thought him to be the

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[1]Robert W. Rogers: Babylonia and Assyria, the Religion of, article in ISBE, pp. 368-375

[2]The writer is indebted in this section to Robert Rogers, op. cit.

father of Marduk. Well known to Abraham must have been Sin, the city god of Ur, and his wife Ningal. At a very early date Sin was worshiped at a shrine in Haran. It may have been a religious tie among others that caused Terah to stop at Haran without reaching the land of promise. Sin was regarded as a kindly god. The sun god, not as important to Babylonians as the moon god, was Shamash, who was the supreme judge in heaven. Ishtar became the chief goddess, probably because she was the goddess of fruitfulness and love. In her temple at Uruk temple-prostitution was practiced. This sexual goddess developed into a goddess who severely judged the sins of men. Marduk has already been mentioned, he being the city-god of Babylon. Others were Nabu or Nebo, god of vegetation; Nergal, god of the underworld; Tammuz, paramour of Ishtar; and Ramman, or Ishkur, god of storms and thunder. Many hymns exhibiting deep religious feeling were written by the Babylonians, some of the best being directed toward Shamash, the sun god, and Sin, the moon god. Most of their prayers are on a comparatively low plane. The Babylonians were tortured by a belief in a demon world, as an immense mass of incantations coming down to our day bears testimony.

IT IS COMMON knowledge that the Hebrew accounts of the Creation and the Flood contain many resemblances

to similar Mesopotamian traditions. This is significant when it is remembered that these same Hebrew stories in no way resemble anything in either Egyptian or Canaanite literature. The resemblances between Hebrew and Babylonian accounts are really only superficial, as Barton has so well pointed out[1], but there are resemblances, and there must be a reason why the country the greatest distance from Israel had the most significant influence on Hebrew thinking as to the beginnings of the race. Wright and Filson[2] come to this interesting conclusion:

> "Today almost the only possible explanation is that the essential outline of the accounts of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, the Flood, Nimrod (Gen. 10.8ff), and the Tower of Babel (Gen., ch. 11) were brought from the homeland in Haran by the patriarchs themselves."

And Finegan bears the same testimony:

> "The Patriarchal stories fit with thorough congruity and often with surprising relevance of detail into the historical setting of life in Mesopotamia during the early second millenium B. C. ....It may well have been Abraham himself who carried with him upon his historic migration some of the stories and the laws which his descendants were to raise to so high a level and to pass on to the world. If Abraham did come from Mesopotamia sometime in the early second millenium B. C. it is necessary to revise the usual picture of him as a primitive nomad accustomed only to the open spaces of the desert, and to recognize that at least to some extent he was the heir of a complex and age-old civilization."[3]

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[1]Barton: op. cit., part II, chapt. 1, p. 279 ff.

[2]George Ernest Wright and Floyd V. Filson; Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, p. 25

[3]Finegan, op. cit., p. 61

Truly, Abraham's religious insights were remarkable and in advance of his day, but they did not derive from a culture devoid of religious background. Perhaps only such a background as Mesopotamia offered could have produced an Abraham in his day.

C. Historical Setting

THE FOLLOWING brief outline, intended to give a picture of the broad sweep of history in the general time and area in which Abraham probably lived, is based almost wholly on the chart in the Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, and is, the writer feels, the most accurate survey available at present.[1]

The Middle Bronze Age, c. 2000-1500 B. C.
(c. = circa, about)

EGYPT

2000-1780.	The Middle Kingdom (Dynasty XII) Palestine and Syria under Egyptian control
1780-1720.	Dynasties XIII and XIV
1720-1550.	The Hyksos Period (Dynasties XV-XVII) Asiatic rulers (probably mostly Canaanite) seized control of Egypt and established a great empire including Palestine-Syria War of Liberation led by Kamose and Ahmose c. 1600-1550
c. 1546	Beginning of the New Kingdom under Amenohpis I (Amenhotep)

MESOPOTAMIA

c. 2000-1700.	The Amorite Invasion and establishment of Amorite dynasties from Babylonia to the Mediterranean

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[1]Wright and Filson: op. cit., p. 15

18th Century. The Mari Age (named from the archives discovered at Mari
1850-1550, c. First Amorite Dynasty of Babylon, according to new "low chronology". Hammurabi's reign latter part of 18th and perhaps early 17th centuries
Irruption of non-Semitic Indo-Iranian and Horite peoples from the highlands into northern Mesopotamia
c. 1550 Hitties from Asia Minor destroy Babylon

PALESTINE
Under Egyptian control for most of this period
c. 2000-1700. Patriarchs' wanderings in the hill country and the Negeb
c. 1700 Descent of Jacob's family into Egypt
c. 1720-1550. Prosperity under the Hyksos kings
c. 1546-1525. Complete subjugation by native Egyptians under Amenhotep I
Some portion of the house of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) may have returned to Palestine when the Hyksos were expelled

This may be sufficient to orient Abraham in his historical stratum, although the patriarch ought himself to be dated more exactly. For this the writer feels that the date arrived at by Finegan is quite acceptable. He sets the date for Abraham's arrival in Canaan at 1935 B. C., which is quite close to that preserved in Hebrew tradition. "The date means", says Finegan,[1] "that Abraham left Mesopotamia in the troubled period of the Elamite and Amorite invasions. Surely it was a likely time for a family to depart from its old home." To accept the above date for Abraham means that the older belief that the patriarch was a contemporary of Hammurabi will have to be rejected, but this will only disappoint those who tried to make the

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[1]Finegan: op. cit., p. 60

Amraphel of Genesis 14 into Hammurabi, which at best was a difficult proposition.[1]

B. ABRAHAM OF CANAAN

IN GENESIS 12, after explicit direction on the part of Jehovah, it is recorded that Abraham was "seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai..and Lot..and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abraham passed throughthe land."[2] A bit farther on the significant notation is made that "the Canaanite was then in the land."[3] It therefore becomes necessary to get a quick overview of this new situation, this new culture and new environment in which the patriarch finds himself, for surely it influenced his religious life, which is the main consideration of this paper.

1. Geographical Setting

WRIGHT AND FILSON[4] have pointed out that Palestine has wielded an influence in world history far out

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[1]See Barton: op. cit., pp. 352-353

[2]Genesis 12.1-5

[3]Genesis 12.6

[4]Op. Cit., pp. 17ff

or proportion to its modest size and negligible resources. Even though there is a ring of pride in the Hebrew bounding of later Israel "from Dan even to Beer-sheba"[1], it must be remembered that this is a slight distance of somewhat less than 150 miles, the length of this small country. In width at its greatest it is not much over 50 miles. But this small land lay athwart the greatest commercial and military lines of communication of that day, the Fertile Crescent. It has been noted earlier (see pp.16,20) that Archaeology supports the thesis that travel along the Fertile Crescent was common in Abraham's day. From Ur to Haran to Canaan to Egypt, which is the Genesis itinerary of the patriarch, is a line exactly drawn along the Fertile Crescent. And now a reminder about the geography of Palestine proper.

FROM WEST, where Palestine touches the Mediterranean, to East, where the desert begins, there are four distinct geographical sections: 1) the Coastal Plain, well-watered, with rich soil suited to agriculture; 2) the Hill Country, where the patriarchs wandered practically unmolested, later to be the chief center of Israelite strength, population and interest, cut South of Galilee by the militarily strategic Valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon; 3) the Jordan Valley, narrow, sub-tropical in climate

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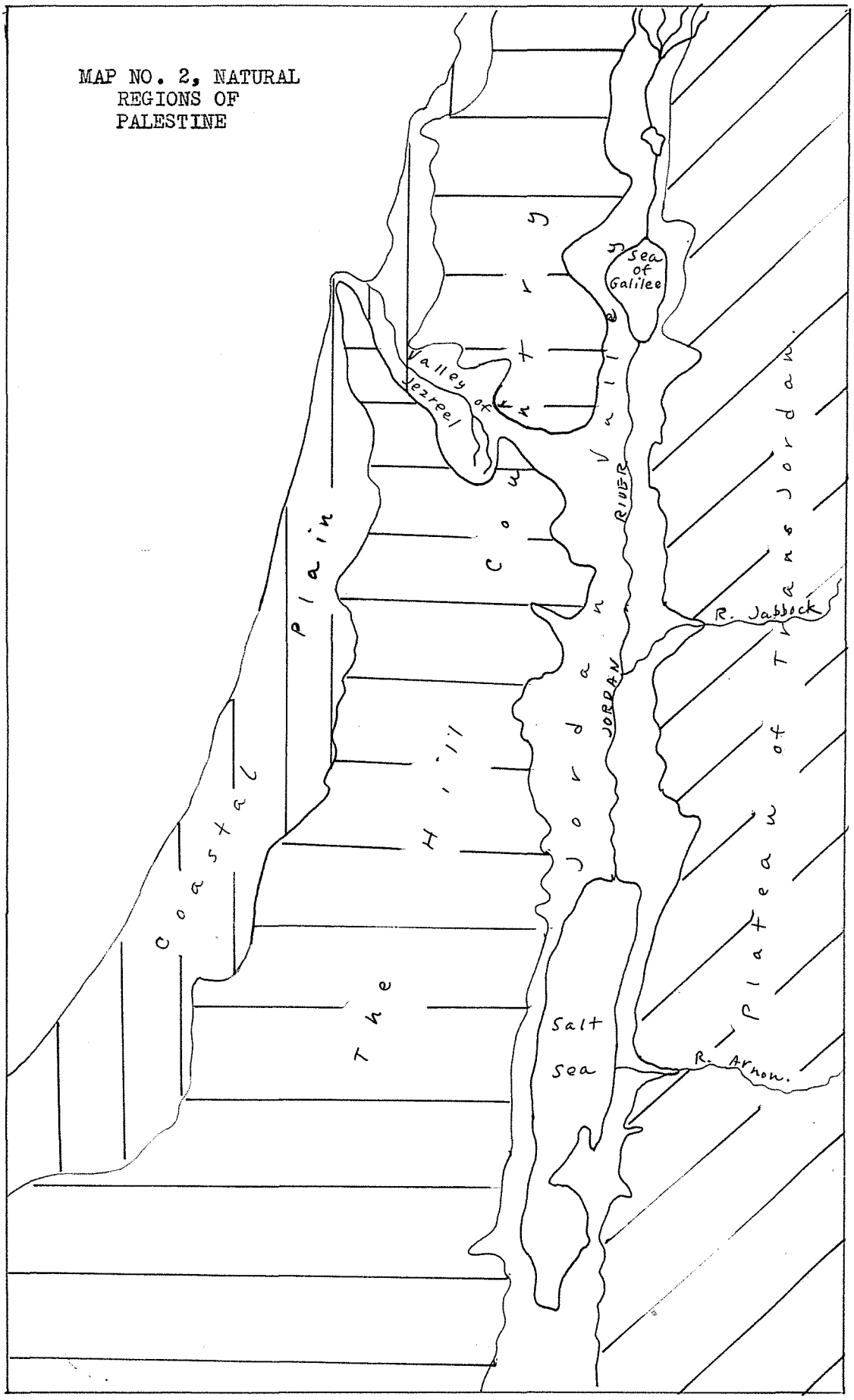
[1] I Kings 4.25

and largely below sea level, a natural barrier of sorts between East and West; and 4) the Plateau of Transjordan, Palestine's breadbasket, a section which at one time, likely in Abraham's day, supported a large population. Geologists affirm that the Dead Sea, which lies at the southern end of the Jordan Valley, was formerly smaller than now and that at its southern tip were situated the Biblical cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar. Somewhere around 2000 B. C., or shortly thereafter, it is believed that some great catastrophe, possibly an earthquake or some volcanic disturbance (for this whole area shows evidence of pre-historic volcanic activity), wiped out these cities,and the whole area was inundated. The Jordan Valley was intensely cultivated throughout ancient times.

A SPECIAL WORD ought to be said about the Hill Country, for it was here that Abraham spent most of the years of his life in the Land of Promise. He lived primarily in the southern section known later as Judah. The hills here are not as lofty as farther north. Around Jerusalem they are about 2500-2600 feet above sea level, but they rise to a high point of 3370 feet just north of Hebron. The western slope of this area is well watered by winds coming in from the Mediterranean, but the eastward slopes are quite arid and the section is known as


MAP NO. 2, NATURAL
REGIONS OF
PALESTINE
Sea of Galilee
Valley of Jezreel
Coastal Plain
The Hill Country
Jordan Valley
JORDAN RIVER
Salt Sea
R. Jabbock
R. Arnon.
Plateau of Transjordan

the "Wilderness of Judah". Little agriculture could be practiced here. It may have been that because of this lack of rainfall and the comparative bleakness of the area Abraham found little opposition to his coming from among the Canaanites, who likely had found the more productive regions for their settlement. Place names associated with Abraham, such as Shechem, Bethel, Ai, Hebron, and Beer-sheba, are all located, according to our best knowledge, in the Hill Country. No wonder that "the land was not able to bear" the combined large flocks and herds of Abraham and Lot. And too, it is not strange that Lot in making his choice should notice that the Plain of the Jordan "was well-watered everywhere".[1] It is not without significance that many of the great men Israel produced lived in the less favored parts of that small country. Abraham, the first great Hebrew, was one of these.

ALBRIGHT HAS an interesting statement concerning place names in the stories of the patriarchs:

> "It is remarkable that most of the towns mentioned in connection with the patriarchs were demonstrably or probably occupied during part of the first half of the second millenium and the end of the third. It is also very striking to note that none of the important religious centers of Israel in the time of the monarchy whose remains show no trace of

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[1]Genesis 13.6,10

> occupation at so early a date, appears in connection with the narrative of the Patriarchs. If the Patriarchal stories grew up around Israelite cult-centers, we should expect to find the Patriarchs playing a bigger role in them."[1]

This seems to indicate that from a purely geographical standpoint the Abraham narrative cannot be attacked as being mythical in character nor unreliable. Refer to the map on page 33 to locate places mentioned.

2. Cultural Setting

THE NAME "Canaan" was used by the original inhabitants of this land, defined in Genesis 10.15-19 as extending from Gaza on the South to Arvad and Hamath on the north, as early as the fourteenth century B. C. Likely the name Canaan originally meant "Land of the Purple", since the early residents of Syria had learned to make a fabulous purple dye from the murex shellfish found along the Mediterranean coast. Culturally as well as historically and geographically "Canaanite" and "Phoenician" are identical.

CANAANITISH material civilization is older than was previously thought. Albright has pointed out[2] that a rich ceramic culture of the Khirbet Kerak type flourished about the middle of the third Millenium.

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[1]Albright: op. cit., pp. 26, 27

[2]Albright: op. cit., pp. 28, 29

Before 3000 B. C. cities like Jerusalem, Ai, Jericho, Gezer, Megiddo, Beth-shan, Byblos and Hamath were already flourishing. Remains at Byblos (Gebal) attest to the wealth of its inhabitants and the dominance of the Egyption culture. For at least two thousand years Canaan was the cultural bridge between the two great centers of civilization on the Euphrates and on the Nile, although the nomadic "Amorite" wave that swept into Palestine about the end of the third millenium gave material culture a severe setback. According to Genesis 14.13 some of these Semitic Amorites were in the land when Abraham came. Hastings makes the comment that Abraham was not viewed as a stranger by the men of Canaan (he refers to Mamre, Eshcol and Aner mentioned in the above quotation from Genesis as Amorite chiefs) and was quite likely racially allied to them.[1] The Hyksos too must have lived in Canaan after their expulsion from Egypt, at least until the time of Thutmose III, and it is quite likely that the Hittites also settled here during that same period.[2]

CULTURALLY, Abraham was in some respects behind the accomplishments of his Canaanite neighbors,

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 162

[2]See Genesis 23 and Ezekiel 16.3,45

although Ur and Haran, from which Abraham migrated, had an advanced culture. It has been established that the later Hebrews borrowed from the Canaanites, among other things, designs for dishes, jugs, cooking pots, weapons and jewelry, the alphabet with which the Old Testament is written, poetic styles as found in Old Testament poetry, musical instruments and musical arts. The potter's wheel had been introduced into Canaan in the Early Bronze Age, and the period of Abraham is characterized by good pottery. Around 1900 B. C. the first known writing of a purely alphabetic form was attempted in the vicinity of Sinai.[1] It is well to remember that the Greeks borrowed the alphabet from the Phoenicians (Canaanites) and passed it on to almost all other literate peoples (Chinese and Japanese excepted). Even the Greek word for book, "biblion", was a derivative from the Syrian city of Byblos. Thus it can be seen that Abraham had not come in his wanderings to the edge of the world. He was not exactly a a frontiersman, for in all of his migrations he was in constant touch with the comparatively advanced culture that flourished along the Fertile Crescent. What is remarkable, however, is that he should have developed such a unique religious consciousness, especially in

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[1]See Finegan: op. cit., pp. 126, 127

view of the religious practices with which he came in contact.

3. Religious Setting

THE CANAANITES are noted for the extremely low level of their religion. It is more completely centered on sex and its manifestations than that of either Egypt or Mesopotamia. Large numbers of figurines of naked goddesses of fertility, some distinctly obscene, have been found in ruins from this period. Nowhere else does the cult of serpents appear so strong.

LIKE MOST ancient peoples the Canaanites were polytheists. The head of their pantheon was El, a remote, shadowy figure generally. He lived "a thousand plains and ten thousands fields" from Canaan. The father of men and of gods, he was called "Father Bull" and likened to a bull in a herd of cows and calves. He was a brutal, blood-thirsty tyrant, a seducer of women. Chief among the offspring of El was Baal, the personification of the forces producing rain and vegetation. His wife was Anath (sometimes Ashtoreth or Astarte), the personification of love and fertility. And there were many more having no moral character whatever. Indeed, as Wright and Filson have pointed out, their conduct was on a much lower level than

that of society as a whole.[1] Albright gives a very vivid portrayal of the erotic aspects of the debased Ashtoreth cult among the Canaanites and also a grim picture of the terrifyingly bloodthirsty Anath, one of three Canaanite goddesses "who conceive but do not bear", never losing their virginity.[2] Sacred prostitution was an almost invariable concomitant of the cult of the Canaanite goddess, whether her name was Anath or Ashtoreth or Astarte. Human and especially child sacrifice was practiced, although not quite as generally as was formerly supposed. Later Hebrews were to have a difficult time to keep free from the debasing practices of the Canaanites. Even Abraham shows some of its influences, if Hastings is to be believed.[3] He mentions, as evidences of the relation of Abraham's religion to that of a neighboring Semitic peoples that 1) the revelation of Deity was largely confined to certain specific places, such as Shechem, Bethel, Hebron and Beer-sheba; that 2) reverence was paid to pillars, trees, etc.; and that 3) teraphim were used for oracular purposes (this last seems to apply to Jacob rather than Abraham). The patriarch does seem

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[1]Wright and Filson: op. cit., p. 35, 36

[2]William F. Albright: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, Ayer Lectures 1941, pages 68-94

[3]Hastings: op. cit., p. 117

to have been influenced by the practice of child sacrifice, about which more later.

IN THE OLD Testament itself are to be found numerous passages which would indicate the moral corruption of the pre-Israelitish population of Canaan. There are, for instance, the references in Genesis to the perversion of the Sodomites: Genesis 13.13, 18.20ff, and 19.1ff. In the books of Kings, the wicked kings are compared in their wickedness to the peoples who lived in Canaan when the Israelites arrived: I Kings 14.24, 21.26; II Kings 16.3, 17.8, 21.11, etc. Almost entirely this wickedness involves faulty religious practice. There is also a strong warning to the Israelites that they should not persist in "these abominations" which the native population indulged in, found in Leviticus 18.24ff. Such was the nature of the religion and culture of the people among whom Abraham had been sent by Jehovah, the natives of the Land of Promise.

C. ABRAHAM AND EGYPT

IT IS DIFFICULT to determine what influence Egyptian culture had on Abraham. In his day Egypt was ruled by the brilliant Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 2000-1780). Their political control extended over Palestine and Syria. Considerable sea trade was carried

on with Syria, Cyprus, Crete and Punt. The copper and turquoise deposits of the Sinaitic region were exploited. This was truly Egypt's Golden Age, and was so regarded by them. It was an age of great prosperity, great political expansion and great literature.

THE TALE OF Sinuhe", an Egyptian story, comes from this period. It describes the adventures of Sinuhe, an Egyptian official who was forced to flee his own country for political reasons, in eastern Syria among the Amorites. He describes in great detail and vividness the wealth of these semi-nomadic Amorites, people who most certainly lived lives comparable to that of the patriarchs. They had their flocks and herds, but they also practiced agriculture occasionally. There is a beautiful Egyptian painting that was discovered on the wall of the tomb of a noble at Beni-hasan showing the entry into Egypt about 1900 B. C. of an Amorite chieftan named Absha together with his family. It seems to have been quite common during periods of drouth and famine for these semi-nomads to come to Egypt for food, just as Abraham did (Genesis 12.10). The men and women both are pictured as wearing elaborately-woven, multi-colored woolen clothes, sleeveless and a bit below the knees in length. Joseph's coat could scarcely have been more colorful. The men wear sandals and the women wear shoes. They carry skin water bottles, bows,

javelins, throw sticks and even an eight-stringed lyre. Two youngsters are riding in a saddle-like affair strapped to the back of an ass, of which there are several. The men wear beards and the women's hair is in long braids. According to the hieroglyphics on the painting the family totals thirty-seven in number. It is not at all difficult to imagine that we see here Abraham himself, together with his family and possessions, coming in to Egypt to escape the famine back in Canaan.

D. CONCLUSION

THUS THE STAGE upon which Abraham walked has broadened. Much of the preceding material was not known until just recently. The fact that Abraham was not a simple primitive in nowise lessens the marvel of his God-consciousness. Perhaps the rich and often pagan culture of his times makes his religious insights all the more remarkable. The next chapter will begin the actual study of the patriarch's religious consciousness.

CHAPTER IV

THE RATIONALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS: NAMES FOR GOD

CHAPTER III

THE NON-RATIONAL ELEMENTS IN ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. Introduction

IT WAS indicated in chapter one that a basic assumption of this study was to be the positing, along with Otto, of certain basic non-rational elements underlying the theistic religious experience, elements which make the theistic experience qualitatively different from any other religious experience. This chapter will define those elements and then examine the Abraham Narrative to discover what evidences of their presence are to be found in the patriarch's religious experiences.

B. Otto's Non-Rational Elements in Religious Consciousness

IN HIS revealing work, "The Idea of the Holy", Rudolph Otto made a significant contribution toward an understanding of the uniqueness of the theistic experience by detecting at least four underlying non-rational elements essential to it.[1] Although the writer will continue to use the same terms Otto used, the words themselves are not as important as the ideas they express.

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[1]Rudolph Otto: The Idea of the Holy, trans. by J. W. Harvey,

Outlined in brief they are as follows:

1. Creature Feeling: That which makes the human feel apart from the Numen (Otto's name for Deity). It is an awareness, a sort of unconscious acceptance of creaturehood. It is more than a feeling of dependence, which is a rationalization. Rather, the Numen is felt as objective and outside the Self. This is not quite the same as self-consciousness, which is also in the field of the rational.

2. Mysterium Tremendum: This is more than and different from fear; it is joined to other qualities. Otto finds in it elements of a) awesomeness, b) overpowering majesty, and c) energy or urgency. Whatever there is in the non-rational, as one stands before inexpressible mystery, that is mysterium tremendum.

3. Fascinans: There is that in the Holy (Numen) which fascinates one, which draws one in spite of his fear. Mysterium tremendum might cause Moses to cover his face in the presence of the Numen and tremble with fright[1], but the fascinans will not let him run away. He must see what happens to the bush. Rationalized, the element of fascinans becomes akin to love.

4. Orge: This is the element of power--beneficent power. The rationalized "wrath of God" contains the non-rational element of orge. In the Old Testament it is present in the divine Spirit, and the Spirit of the Lord. In the New Testament it becomes the Holy Spirit.

Many scholars have criticized these non-rational elements of Otto, and, as can plainly be seen, for the theist they leave something to be desired. The value of his concept is often passed over because it lacks the immanent aspect. MacIntosh,

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[1]Exodus 3.6

for instance, declares,

> "Mere numinous, or awe-inspiring quality and the like, is by itself insufficient criterion of revelation of the divine...The truly divine is the spiritually ideal, and this it is which is the true criterion of genuineness of all that claims to be revelation of the specifically divine. Manifestation of mere power might arouse feelings of dread and awe, but only the ideally true or beautiful or good, or something equally spiritual can command our reverent and willing devotion."[1]

He goes on to say, in effect, that Otto places too great a stress on the "wholly other" aspect of Deity. God's transcendence overshadows his immanence for Otto, who follows in the train of Kantian epistemological dualism. Brightman has the same criticism to make, finding that Otto makes his religious values, the numinous, too unique, too "other-than" other values. He insists on what he describes as the "coalescence of religious values with other values . . . Religion cannot maintain its uniqueness apart from the inter-penetration of the other values with it."[2] Since there seems to be justification for these criticisms--at least Otto seems unduly to emphasize the transcendent aspect of God's nature to the near exclusion of the immanent element--and since the theist cannot have a God who is "wholly other", the writer accepts, with Wyckoff, a fifth element, which

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[1]D. C. MacIntosh: The Problem of Religious Knowledge, pp. 176-178

[2]Edgar S. Brightman: A Philosophy of Religion, pp. 103-105

which gives balance to the non-rational elements of Otto: 5. Personality. It will take no stretch of the imagination to find in Abraham's contacts with his Deity elements of creature feeling, mysterium tremendum, fascinans and orge, as Otto has set them forth, but together with these "other-than" aspects of God one finds a remarkable interplay, in the narrative, of persons: God and Abraham, apprehending, thinking, fellowshiping, responding, experiencing. The theistic experience is always a relationship of persons. One who meets with the Theos always finds himself becoming involved in the situation. One will expect to find, if the record is genuine and true to life experience, all five of these non-rational elements (one must conceive of personality also in its pre-rational aspects) in Abraham's religious consciousness and responses, since the theistic experience cannot be achieved with any one of these five elements. They are all present in every theistic experience, although in varying degrees. Often they are so blended and mixed within a single experience as to be difficult of differentiation, but they are nevertheless present, and they make such an experience qualitatively different from any other experience man knows.

It now becomes necessary to examine the Biblical record for the purpose of discovering whether or not these elements are present. They will be considered in the order followed above.

C. Creature Feeling

THERE ARE numerous passages that indicate that Abraham was aware of an objective Deity. Although God was real and personal, Abraham never forgot his place, never forgot that he was creature in the presence of his Creator. The following passages from the Abraham narrative will serve to bring out this fact:

12.2 "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great." God is speaking here. It is doubtful that God spoke in an audible voice, but Abraham had an awareness of the communication of His will and direction to him. Note the idea here of God's making him a great nation and making his name great. This consciousness of the leadership and direction of God is everywhere present in the Abraham narrative and is a clear indication of the non-rational creature feeling Otto has discerned in the theistic religious experience.

12.7,8; 13.18. There is recorded here the successive building of altars to God at Shechem, Bethel and Hebron. Altar building was not an innovation of Abraham's, but it nevertheless is a rationalization of the creature feeling idea. God is felt to be outside the self and it is necessary to bring Him close.

14.20. "And he gave him (Melchizedek) a tenth of all." The giving of the tenth to the priest of El Elyon is again a rationalization, but behind it is the element of creature feeling. Abraham, just returned from victorious battle with the kings, is aware that El Elyon, possessor (perhaps the better translation is "creator") of heaven and earth, gave him the victory and the spoil, and the payment of the tithe is simply a manifestation of his feeling of creature-hood. Such manifestation of one's non-rational response is perfectly consistent with theistic experience.

14.22. "I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, El Elyon.." Abraham here calls on One outside himself, above himself, to witness and seal the oath which he made not to keep any of the spoils of war. Here again is an element of creature feeling.

15.1. "Fear not Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward". Abraham seems to be dejected at the moment of God's revelation, perhaps because of his fear of retaliation at the hands of the kings whom he had defeated, perhaps because no heir had come as God had promised. He now becomes aware of one greater--other than himself. The element of orge is also here, as shall be noted later.

15.5-7. "And he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now towards heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him. I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." Creature feeling is present thruout this interesting passage. There is no question about God's dominating this scene, about the impact of his personality upon Abraham.

15.18-21; 17.1-27. These are accounts of the Covenant. Note that God makes the Covenant with Abraham (15.18;17.2,7,9,19). It is His Covenant. Although Abraham is a party to it, it is God-initiated and God-supported. However, there is not meek submission on Abraham's part. He appears always eager to meet his great God on His terms.

18.27. "And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes." This may be merely a formula clause, and yet Abraham would feel just like that as he prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah, which richly deserved the judgment that was to come--he would feel like that as a theist.

20.8. Abimelech, a King, obeys the dictates of God, who had communicated His will to him in a dream. Even a King feels the part of a creature in the presence of the Creator.

20.17. "And Abraham prayed unto God". Prayer is an outgrowth of the creature feeling, which is quite a simple observation.

22.3. No more clear portrayal of creature feeling in the experience of Abraham is to be found any place than here. Note the words "early in the morning". Abraham could not wait to perform the will of his God as he understood it. It was as though he had to do the deed at once, before he had a chance to be unfaithful to the Faithful One. That God could not only make such a request but also have it actually met is an indication both of Abraham's great faith and of the greatness of the God who could inspire such faith and trust, since the request seemed to repudiate all the great promises and make as nothing all his high hopes for the future.

THE WRITER THINKS the above instances establish the presence of a non-rational element of creature feeling in the Abraham narrative. In themselves they do not prove that we have here a theistic experience. One must look for all the elements of the non-rational, so now we look for the element of mysterium tremendum.

D. Mysterium Tremendum

IT SHALL BE noted here that some of the passages quoted above appear again, and that is as one might expect. These non-rational elements, as was previously noted, are all present, are interwoven, inseparable in the true theistic experience.

15.1 "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This may be partly a mere physical fear--of his enemies, of failure to obtain an heir--but there is an element of awe and mystery also as the word of Jehovah comes in a vision. It must be evident that there is a close connection between creature feeling and mysterium tremendum.

15.12. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror (literally "terror") of great darkness fell upon him." There is here an attempt to put into words the over-poweringness of the awesome mystery of God. The fact that the language seems a bit confusing is all the more significant. You can't define exactly the inexplicable. Abraham is overcome in the presence of One who looks into the future, rolls it out before him, and makes a covenant with him. The element of mysterium tremendum is made more vivid in verse 17: "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was

dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces."

16.13. "Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?" These are the words of Hagar, but Hagar's experiences are tied in with those of Abraham, and it was likely Abraham that perpetuated this incident. Hagar, having fled from Abraham's household, is found by the angel of Jehovah in the Wilderness, recognizes Him, and makes the above statement, which means that she still lives, even though God has looked upon her. Here is mysterium tremendum, pure and simple.

17.1 "Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am El Shaddai". In this connection note a part of verse 3: "And Abram fell on his face." What else can one do, a mere mortal in the presence of the mysterious power of Mighty God? Abraham does the obvious thing--at least from a theistic viewpoint.

18.15. "Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid." God had just asked why Sarah laughed when told she would bear the child of promise, and now He asks another question "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" Sarah is put in the place of a doubter, of one who makes light of the word of almighty God. To find one's self in such a predicament is to fear.

This is not quite pure mysterium tremendum, but there is a trace of it here.

19.23-29. There is pictured throughout this passage in awesome detail the terrifying destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Israelites have always stood in awe before this manifestation of the solemn judgment of God. Abraham saw God at work here and there was mysterium tremendum in his being.

20.3. God is speaking to Abimelech in the matter of taking Sarah to wife. He has come to Abimelech in a vision or dream, and He says, "Behold, thou art but a dead man." It was then, as later, a "fearful thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of God". Perhaps these were not the actual words of God, but they seemed to be just that to Abimelech, who here gives evidence to the presence of mysterium tremendum. When he relates his experience to his servants, "the men were sore afraid" (verse 8).

21.17. "What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not." The situation is similar to the one noted above. Hagar has now taken the boy Ishmael and left Abraham. They are in the wilderness and God comes to meet their desperate need. Hagar is afraid as she encounters God--mysterium tremendum again.

SO FAR there have been discovered clear instances of creature feeling and mysterium tremendum in the Abraham narrative. The element of fascinans must also be located in the patriarch's religious experience before it can be called theistic.

E. Fascinans

THERE ARE not so many instances where fascinans is specifically present, but the following passages are quite definitely revelatory of this non-rational basis for love and attraction, which find their culmination in Jesus Christ:

Chapter 15. It was previously noted that this chapter tells of Abraham's awesome experience, when in a trance, he had revealed to him by God great and mysterious things, God having passed among the covenant sacrifices as a flaming torch. Literally, the "fear of the Lord" must have come over Abraham, but he does not run away. There is a certain attraction to this awesome God.

Chapter 16. Hagar here also experiences the fearful thing of meeting God face to face. Verse 13 indicates she felt real concern, but like Abraham she did not run away. Fascinans makes her stay to hear what El Roi has to say. God has drawing power.

18.22,23. "Abraham stood yet before Jehovah". God had just revealed to Abraham that terrible destruction was coming to Sodom and Gomorrah. It must have seemed frightening to Abraham, but he "stood yet before Jehovah"--fascinans is present here. Notice verse 23: "Abraham drew near". His God might be a God of Judgment, but He attracted Abraham because there was more in His nature than justice. The patriarch dared to intercede for the wicked cities. And is it not true that God draws prayers from one's hearts?

19.27-28. "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before Jehovah: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah." He was fascinated by the destructive power of God. It is not only God's love but his justice that attracts man.

ABRAHAM IS nowhere repelled by his God. His power, his majesty, his retributive justice, his tremendous demands are clearly portrayed, but Abraham gladly and willingly gives himself to Him. Such is the indication of the element of fascinans in Abraham's religious consciousness. There are still two elements that must be found here to satisfy the requirements of the religious experiences of a true theist-orge and personality. Orge like fascinans is not too clearly pointed up, but it is present nevertheless. The personal element is, however, everywhere present.

F. Orge

14.20. The name of the God whom Abraham here worships seems to indicate the presence of the orge element. It was noted earlier that Otto represents the orge as being an awareness of the beneficent power of God, sometimes found in the wrath of God, but not generally. Abraham pays a tithe to the priest of of God Most High (El Elyon), and identifies his God as El Elyon, whose power enabled him to prevail against the kings. Another chapter will deal more specifically with these names for God as found in the Abraham narrative and it will be seen that they are most significant. There seems here to be a basic non-rational element of orge in the rationalization, "El Elyon".

15.1. "Fear not Abram: I am thy shield." This passage was quoted to illustrate the element of mysterium tremendum, but the reference to the shield indicates the presence also of orge. It was the strength, the beneficent power of his God upon which Abraham would rely.

18.23-32. This prayer of Abraham's carries with it an implied recognition of the power of God. Abraham wouldn't have prayed so earnestly and prevailingly if he had doubted the power of his God to do the

thing he asked. This is the orge element in his non-rational being. In verse 30 another aspect of orge is revealed when Abraham says, "Let not the Lord be angry."

21.19. This is rather obscure as regards any indication of the orge element, but it may be implied in God's opening Hagar's eyes so that she saw a well of water. Beneficent power is here exhibited, and Hagar must have been conscious of it.

22.8. Here Abraham is relying again on the beneficent power of God, as the orge in his soul leads him to reply in response to Isaac's question about the sacrifice, "God will provide himself a lamb."

G. Personality

THIS ELEMENT scarcely needs much elaboration, since it is everywhere present and quite obvious throughout the Abraham narrative. There are so many places where Abraham responds just as you might expect him to. Granting that there are problem passages, a careful student must admit that, the overwhelming evidence points to two real and great personalities interacting here: God and Abraham. The following few among many instances will serve to elaborate this point:

12.1. "Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out."

12.2. "I will make thee....I will bless thee..."

12.4. "Abraham went out as Jehovah had spoken unto him."

12.8, 13.4, 21.33. Abraham here calls on "the name of Jehovah". There seems to be more of a personal relationship than previously.

13.15-17; 15.18 ff; 17.1-27. These passages refer to the covenant relationship between Abraham and his God. You can't have a covenant without two personalities. The personal element is most obvious throughout these sections.

15.1-8. The narrator seems to have some difficulty in explaining clearly the event here described--the vision and the ensuing covenant pageantry--, but the careful reader cannot escape the feeling that this is an historical event, not a myth. It is too personal, too much like our own mystical experiences.

16.8ff; 21.18-20. These encounters of Hagar and Ishmael with God also have the marks of personal interchange. It will be noted a bit later how significant is Hagar's name for God used here, "El Roi".

18.17ff. How revealing, this indication that God took Abraham into his confidence. And note the wording of verse 33: "As soon as he (Jehovah) had left off communing with Abraham."

21.22. The words of Abimelech and Phicol to Abraham speak for themselves of the personal relationship existing

between the patriarch and his God: "God is with thee in all that thou doest."

22.1 "God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said Here am I." So real, so personal, was God that he could get an immediate response from Abraham, as though he had audibly spoken his name.

H. Conclusion

THERE ARE other instances of the use of terminology, other rationalizations which indicate the presence in Abraham's consciousness of the five non-rational elements of the theistic religious experience. Perhaps the ones mentioned are the most significant. They should have made it clear that Abraham's encounter with God was not on purely pantheistic or deistic levels. Rather, there is a picture of true theistic experience, beginning with the basic non-rational elements noted above. But one's experience cannot stay on the non-rational level, as must have been already discovered from Abraham's experience. Personality rationalizes these things. Once rationalized they gradually are socialized, the two steps yet to be taken in the study of Abraham's religious consciousness. Chapter 4 is a study of the names Abraham uses for his Deity. The writer has found that they are generally true rationalizations of the non-rational elements outlined in the present chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE NON-RATIONAL ELEMENTS IN ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER IV

THE RATIONALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS: NAMES FOR GOD

A. Introduction

The previous chapter developed the thesis that Otto's non-rational elements, characteristic of the theistic religious experience, were very much in evidence in the record of Abraham's religious experience as recorded in Genesis. It must already be evident that one's religous consciousness cannot be maintained for long on the non-rational level. The average person is not even aware of this non-rational basis at all. This chapter and the two following will have some elements of repetition as the rationalization and socialization of the great patriarch's religious consciousness are delineated, since they are all based on the general data outlined in chapter three, but such repetition will serve to emphasize both the validity of Otto's analysis and also the historicity of Abraham as a great religionist.

The present chapter, as the title indicates, proposes to present a study of the names for Deity employed in the Abraham narrative (Genesis 11.27-25.11 or 18). They shall be regarded as rationalizations

arising out of the patriarch's basically non-rational religious consciousness. T. H. Robinson has said that

> "A name to the ancient Hebrew was never merely a name; it was an essential element in the personality of him who bore it, and the communication of a particular name for God indicated that in a special way he was to be known to man or men to whom the communication was made."[1]

One cannot escape noting that certain attributes and certain experiences in Abraham's life are associated with certain names given to the Deity. The names of Abraham's God speak of what He was and is, and they appear to reflect the creature feeling, the mysterium tremendum, the orge, the fascinans and the non-rational personality aspects of the one who is having the experience of God.

There are three names for the Deity which are most frequently found in the Abraham Narrative: Jehovah, יְהוָה, which appears 75 times; God, אֱלֹהִים, which occurs 43 times; and Lord, אֲדֹנָי, which is found 10 times. The relative proportionate use of the two most common names for Deity compares quite well with the use of these two names through out the Old Testament. Brown, Driver and Briggs in their lexicon give the following statistics for the entire Old Testament: אֱלֹהִים, 2570 times: and יְהוָה, 6823 times.[2] It is interesting

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[1]T. H. Robinson, Abingdon Commentary, page 231

[2]Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs: Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, pp. 43 and 217

that יְהוָה should be used so often in the Abraham Narrative in the light of Exodus 6.3, even granting non-Mosaic authorship and J and E sources, for the Exodus passage, where God is speaking to Moses, says "I appeared unto Abraham...as God Almighty (אֵל שַׁדָּי); but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." More will be said about this critical problem later.

The three above mentioned names for Deity will be considered first, and then a number of rich attributive names found in this section. It will be noted what characters use these names, passages where more than one name is used in close connection, and some summary conclusions will be drawn. Before going in to the study proper, here is a chart to show frequency of occurence in the various chapters of the Abraham narrative of the three most common names for God:

Table I. Frequency of Occurrence of Names For Deity in the Abraham Narrative.

Chapter	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Name Jehovah (יְהוָה)	7	6	1	7	8	1	10	7	1	3	5		19		
God (אֱלֹהִים)							10		2	6	12	5	1	6	1
Lord (אֲדֹנָי)					2			5	2	1					

B. JEHOVAH (יְהוָה)

JEHOVAH, יְהוָה , has been called the name "most distinctive of God as the God of Israel."[1] It is the combination of the tetragrammaton HWHY (יהוה) with the vowels of אֲדֹנָי . Out of reverence for the divine name there grew up the custom among the Jews around 300 B. C. in reading to pronounce the word Lord, אֲדֹנָי , in its stead, or, when it follows אֲדֹנָי to pronounce the word God, אֱלֹהִים . That is the reason why, when the vowel points were added to the Hebrew consonantal text, that the pointings of אֲדֹנָי and אֱלֹהִים were given to the tetragram. "Jehovah" is quite certainly a false form, most scholars believing that the original pronunciation was Yahweh, יַהְוֶה . Edward Mack feels that, nevertheless, Jehovah is a better name than many of the generic names, for, as he says,

> "It is the personal name of God, as distinguished from such generic or essential names as 'El, 'Elohim, Shadday, etc. Characteristic of the Old Testament is its insistence on the possible knowledge of God as a person. It is illogical, certainly, that the later Hebrews should have shrunk from its pronunciation, in view of the appropriateness of the name and of the Old Testament insistence on the personality of God, who as a person has this name. The American Revised Version quite correctly adopts the transliteration "Jehovah" to emphasize its significance and purpose as a personal name of God revealed."[2]

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[1] Edward Mack in the ISBE, (volume 2) p. 1266

[2] Ibid., p. 1266

Jehovah is the God of revelation and grace, dwelling with his people, guiding and delivering them and receiving their worship. He became identified later on as the national God of the Jewish people. It is doubtful that Jehovah was all these things to Abraham. Certainly, when the Hebrews wrote or thought Yahweh, even though they didn't speak it, they were writing of or thinking of a personal God, and personality is one of the non-rational elements present in the theistic religious experience. Jehovah became Israel's distinctive name for Deity.

THERE IS some question as to whether or not Jehovah as a name for Deity originated with the Hebrews. Delitzsch, Hommel, Winckler and Guthe claim to have found the name in Babylonian inscriptions and Davidson finds it in Arabic and Egyptian records, but Albright gives almost conclusive evidence to the contrary.[1] This is beside the point, actually, because Jehovah became Israel's distinctive name for Deity. Mack goes on from this point to say that "Jehovah" was

> "not first made known at the call of Moses (Ex. 3.13-16; 6.2-8) but, being already known, was at that time given a larger revelation and interpretation...The name is assumed as known in the narrative of Genesis; it also occurs in pre-Mosaic names (Ex. 6.20; I Chron. 2.25; 7.8)"[2]

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[1]William Albright: From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 197

[2]Mack: op. cit

Or as another has stated it,

> "To know that God is Jehovah and to know the name of Jehovah do not denote a mere external acquaintance with the word Jehovah, but an experience of God manifesting himself to his people in grace and love..In Exodus 6.2-8 God promises that the Children of Israel shall be delivered from bondage and have an experience of his gracious intervention and love such as their forefathers had not known."[1]

Perhaps Abraham did not grasp the full significance of the Jehovah he worshiped and followed, but it shall be observed in a moment how varied and significant are the experiences he had with Jehovah, experiences which overshadow those of most Hebrews who lived after Sinai. But first, let us consider the root of the name Jehovah.

MOST COMMONLY accepted as the root of Jehovah is הָיָה , the name being the Qal imperfect of that root and signifying the "One who is", "the absolute and unchangeable one", "the existing", the "ever-living". Recently, some scholars, among them Albright, have held that Jehovah is the hiphil imperfect of הָוָה , יַהֲוֶה , the "One bringing into being", "Life-giver", "He who brings to pass". One cannot be dogmatic as to the original root of Jehovah, but the Hebrews themselves seem to have connected the name with הָיָה . (Ex. 3.14).

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[1]Westminster Bible Dictionary, p. 287

More productive for the Bible student than looking for the root meanings is to study the situations in real life in which Jehovah acts, for it is God who is the hero of the Abraham narrative, as He most certainly in throughout the Old Testament. The chart presented on page 64 revealed that Jehovah as the name for deity is used almost exclusively in chapters 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 24. And now the conditions under which Jehovah reveals himself are to be studied.

1. Jehovah Called Abraham to leave Haran and go on to Canaan (12.1). Jehovah himself speaks in 15.7 saying, "I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee a land to inherit it." Again, in 24.7, where Abraham is instructing his servant, about to go to seek a wife for Isaac, he says, "Jehovah, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my nativity...He will send His angel before thee." "Jehovah" here seems to be a rationalization of creature feeling and the personality element. However, to be honest with the record, there is one instance in which not Jehovah, but God, אֱלֹהִים, is credited with leading Abraham from his father's house: in 20.13, where Abraham is dealing with Abimelech.

2. Jehovah receives the worship of Abraham. It is to Jehovah that Abraham builds altars when he arrives

in the Land of Promise--at Shechem (12.7), at Bethel (12.8), where the account tells us he "called upon the name of Jehovah", and at Hebron (13.18). It is also recorded that Abraham prayed unto Jehovah (18.22ff) when he was interceding for Lot. He "stood yet before Jehovah". At the conclusion of this tremendous prayer experience there is this significant line, "And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left off communing (דַּבֵּר) with Abraham." (18.33). At Beersheba also Abraham "called on the name of Jehovah" (21.33). "Jehovah" again seems a rationalization of the creature feeling element.

3. Jehovah Is The Object of Abraham's Faith (15.6) The word of Jehovah having appeared or come to Abraham in a vision and promising that He was Abraham's "shield and exceeding great reward", Abraham addresses Him as Lord Jehovah, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, denoting exceeding esteem. After Jehovah's promise of an heir and numberless descendants (by the way, Jehovah makes many great promises--12.1-3, 13.14-17, 18.14, etc.), there appears this great statement: "And he believed in Jehovah". Here is the true faith attitude. Abraham has faith not in what Jehovah had told him, but his faith was rather in Jehovah himself. Abraham took Jehovah rather than his promises, which together with their fulfillment were assured, Jehovah being the kind of God He was. It was Jehovah, incidentally, who promised

Isaac in chapter 18. It appears to the writer that "Jehovah", as an object of faith in the instances here noted, is a rationalization of the elements of fascinans and personality.

4. Jehovah Makes a Covenant with Abraham (15.18) Again, in chapter 22, after the great testing on Mount Moriah, it is Jehovah who renews the promises of the Covenant (verses 16-18). However, it must be remembered that primarily, the Covenanting God is thought of as the God designated in chapter 17, where we have the clearest and most specific record of the Covenant, God Almighty, אֵל שַׁדַּי , about whom more later.

5. Jehovah Has Various Attributes. He has POWER. When Sarah laughs at the promise of a son in her old age, Jehovah says, "Is anything too hard (or wonderful) for Jehovah?" (18.14). He is MERCIFUL in his dealings with Lot (19.16). He it is, who in mercy hears Hagar and stoops to her affliction (16.7-14), although it is the "Angel of Jehovah who acts here. Abraham's servant gives some insight into the character of Jehovah in 24.27, which bears exact quotation: "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my Master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his LOVINGKINDNESS and his TRUTH toward my Master." Abraham's was not a cold, austere God. Jehovah showed lovingkindness and

fidelity in his dealings with Abraham, Moreover, he blessed Abraham materially (24.35). Perhaps it was because Jehovah was a God of truth that Abraham swore by him (24.3) and had his servant swear that he would carry out his mission in getting a wife for Isaac. But at Beersheba, Abraham asks Abimelech to swear not by Jehovah, but by God, אֱלֹהִים. Incidental references are made to Jehovah's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but here too, God is recorded as doing the destroying. It is Jehovah who plagues Pharaoh for having taken Sarah to wife, when Abraham had lied about her true relation to him (12.17). One can see various non-rational elements underlying these rationalized concepts used in connection with Jehovah: orge in the POWER concept; fascinans and creature feeling in the idea of MERCIFUL; fascinans in LOVING-KINDNESS; mysterium tremendum in TRUTH.

FROM THIS picture of Jehovah it may be gathered that although Abraham may not have known about him all that the Israelites who had crossed the Red Sea and heard the thunderings at Sinai may have known, what he did know was remarkable. He may not have grasped the full "eternal" aspects of the name Jehovah, but in 21.33 after the covenant with Abimelech he calls upon the name of Jehovah, the "Everlasting God", אֵל עוֹלָם. Brown, Driver and Briggs suggest that the tamarisk tree planted in this instance by

Abraham was a symbol of the ever-living God, it being of the evergreen variety, and that the author of this narrative is explaining both the tamarisk and Jehovah, when he calls him the "Everlasting God." אֵל עוֹלָם is the rationalization of the elements of creature feeling, orge and mysterium tremendum.

c. "GOD" (אֱלֹהִים)

GOD, אֱלֹהִים, is the supreme God, the Creator, the Upholder of the Moral Law, the Governor of the Universe. In this narrative אֱלֹהִים occurs only a little more than half as many times as does יְהוָה. El and Elohim are very primitive names for God. Long before Hebrew times El was recognized as a name for Deity. It is considered a generic or essential name rather than a personal name for God. The form of אֱלֹהִים is, of course, plural, but the construction is uniformly singular, i.e., it governs a singular verb or adjective. It is characteristic of Hebrew that "extension, magnitude, and dignity, as well as actual multiplicity, are expressed by the plural."[1]

The root or origin of the name is quite uncertain. אוּל has been suggested by Gesenius and Ewald as its

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[1]Edward Mack in ISBE, vol. 2, p. 1265

origin. אלה means "to be strong", from which are derived also אַיִל, ram, and אֵלָה, terebinth. Some trace its origin to the root אלל, "to terrify". Brown, Driver and Briggs regard אוּל, "to be strong", as the root, but since the origin is lost in the dim pre-historic past, this question of the derivation of אֱלֹהִים must always remain uncertain. Again, one can know the nature of אֱלֹהִים best by studying "the order of His activity."

IN THE ABRAHAM Narrative one finds אֱלֹהִים acting prominently in chapters 17, 20, 21 and 22. He appears incidentally in chapters 19 and 23. In chapter 17 it is a question as to whether he is simply אֱלֹהִים or אֵל שַׁדַּי. And now the scenes in which Elohim appears will be examined.

1. Elohim is Personal. "I will establish my covenant...to be a God unto thee and unto thy seed after thee." (17.7) This personal aspect of the Supreme God is an outstanding part of Abraham's God-consciousness. As another indication of this personal nature of God, He it is who changes the names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah (17.5,15). He also names Isaac before he is born (17.19). Here it may be recalled that יְהוָה was supposed to be the personal name for Deity and אֱלֹהִים only a generic term. But Abraham's God, by whatever

name he was addressed, was a personal God, an indication that in the patriarch's religious experiences there was an abundance of the personality element in its non-rational form.

2. Elohim Is The God of Circumcision. This rite, of course, is a symbol of the keeping of the covenant on the part of Abraham and his family. It is אֱלֹהִים who institutes the practice (17.10-14), and when Isaac is born the account tells us that "Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God (אֱלֹהִים) had commanded him" (21.4) This God is faithful, but He demands faithfulness on the part of his children. This supreme God is exacting. He wants loyal and obedient subjects. There is an underlying sense of mysterium tremendum here as well as creature feeling.

3. Elohim Asks the Sacrifice of Isaac. "God did prove Abraham, and said, Take now thy son...into the land of Moriah...and offer him there for a burnt-offering." (22.1,2) It is difficult to determine just how God communicated this desire on his part to Abraham. It appears that this passage is not productive of the highest God concept, although through the horror of its possibilities there emerges the most significant insight into God's own nature, and it is possible that Abraham caught glimpses of it. It seems more appropriate to the writer that

אֱלֹהִים rather than יְהוָה makes the request for Isaac's sacrifice. That God could not only make such a request, but have it actually met is an indication both of Abraham's great faith and the greatness of the God who could inspire such faith and trust, since the request seemed to repudiate all the great promises and make as nothing all his high hopes for the future. There is mysterium tremendum behind the conviction that God had ordained such a terrible sacrifice. There is fascinans in Abraham's determination to meet with destiny at Mount Moriah. There is orge in his faith that God would provide the sacrifice (22.1,8). The personality element runs throughout chapter 22. Here is a true theistic experience, one that could scarcely happen in our religious life, but which most certainly is a page out of the life of Abraham.

TO BE NOTED now are some of the incidents in which אֱלֹהִים and יְהוָה are made to appear within the same frame of reference:

1) In chapter 21 it is God and the Angel of God that respond to the cries of Hagar and Ishmael (verses 17,19,20). It was stated previously that in 16.11 and 13 Jehovah also showed his concern.

2) God appears to a foreigner and is recognized (chapt. 20). In verse 3 of this chapter it says that "God came to Abimelech in a dream" in the matter of Sarah, but in the

chapter's concluding verse it appears that not אֱלֹהִים but יְהוָה had "fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah. In the similar incident in Egypt, where Pharaoh is an innocent dupe, it is יְהוָה rather than אֱלֹהִים who sets things straight. (chapter 12)

3) Reference was made before to the fact that in the midst of a chapter where Jehovah is in the center of the stage and rains brimstone and fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah, אֱלֹהִים appears (19.29) to "destroy the cities of the Plain."

4) Again, it was mentioned that although Abraham's servant was made to swear by יְהוָה (24.3), Abraham asked Abimelech at Beersheba to swear by אֱלֹהִים (21.23).

5) In the Mount Moriah scene there is an interesting interchange of names for Deity. אֱלֹהִים seems to be the instigator, and Abraham trusts him to see to the provision of the sacrifice (22.1,8). Once they are about to do what אֱלֹהִים has told them, the angel of יְהוָה calls out of heaven and says something about knowing that Abraham truly feared אֱלֹהִים (verses 9,11,12). This same angel of יְהוָה then quotes the oath of יְהוָה , who renews the covenant. Dr. Whitelaw in the Pulpit Commentary in commenting on this passage says it was the "divine intention to characterize the patriarch as a God-fearing (אֱלֹהִים) man and not simply a worshipper of Jehovah....

In this verse (the 11th) the angel of Jehovah identifies himself with Elohim."[1]

IF TRULY the nature of a thing is known by the order of its activity, then in the five instances quoted above the one acting must have one and the same nature and אֱלֹהִים and יְהוָה must be one. It appears that in Abraham's mind there was no distinction in these experiences between God and Jehovah. It is for this reason that the writer feels that Abraham was very close to monotheism, if not an actual monotheist. אֱלֹהִים might be the Covenant God, the God of Circumcision; and יְהוָה might be the one who called him from Ur to the Land of Promise, the Revealing One, the One to Whom he sacrificed, Whom he worshipped, but in His wider aspects Abraham's God seems to oscillate between יְהוָה and אֱלֹהִים, or rather He appears to be one and the same. If the authors of "J" and "E" did not place these two names in the narrative (if there are multiple authors) then Abraham did, but there still is only one God.

D. "LORD" (אֲדֹנָי)

LORD, OR אֲדֹנָי appears only ten times in the Abraham narrative. The name emphasizes the sovereignty

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[1]Pulpit Commentary, vol. 1, p. 284

of the Deity. It was originally an attributive name, which in prehistoric Hebrew had already passed over into a generic name of God.

IN GENERAL, אֲדֹנָי is used in addressing the Deity. The two references in chapter 15 are in connection with Jehovah as follows: יְהוִה אֲדֹנָי. Abraham is here addressing his God. Again, in chapter 18 one finds five instances of the use of אֲדֹנָי. In this chapter of anthropomorphisms, Jehovah seems to appear as "three men" (vs. 2), but Abraham addresses them (Him?) as אֲדֹנָי. In the great intercessory prayer for Lot and the Cities in the latter part of the chapter he also uses the word אֲדֹנָי. (vs. 27, 30, 31, 32). Lot in pleading to be allowed to remain in Zoar also uses the title אֲדֹנָי (19.18) although he is addressing the two men (angels? Jehovah?). Abimelech, after his warning in a dream addresses God as אֲדֹנָי (20.4).

Basic in the use of אֲדֹנָי seem to be the non-rational elements of creature feeling, orge and fascinans.

E. Attributive or Qualifying Names

THE FOLLOWING are some special names for Deity which are the outgrowth of some unusual and critical experiences in the lives of Abraham's household.

1. EL ROI אֵל רֳאִי . This has been translated "God-that-Seeth" (16.14). Perhaps more accurately it is "God of Sight". It is the only occurence of this title or name in the Bible. This may not be directly tied up with Abraham's personal experience, but he certainly must have been familiar with it. When the angel of the Lord found Hagar in the wilderness of Shur following her flight from the petty meanness of Sarah, he makes a great promise for her and her son Ishamel. Hagar called "the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth" (El Roi) "for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?". This experience may well have affected a type of belief in God's omniscience and omnipresence. The context reveals the presence of mysterium tremendum and creature feeling as well as personality as the basis for the rationalization "El Roi".

2. EL ELYON אֵל עֶלְיוֹן . "God Most High" (14.18-24) After Abraham by the help of God defeated the captors of Lot he returned to find Melchizedek, King of Salem, who was " כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן ", and who addressed Abraham as being blessed by " אֵל עֶלְיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ ". This "most high God" was greater than all the kings of the earth, whom He had defeated in battle. Abraham feels indebted to pay a tithe to the priest of El Elyon. The עֶלְיוֹן is from the root עָלָה , which means to "go up". The

rationalization here is primarily of creature feeling and personality. Dr. Mack says that this early use of אֵל עֶלְיוֹן in Genesis 14.18ff "points to a high conception of Deity, an unquestioned monotheism in the beginnings of Hebrew history."[1]

3. EL SHADDAI אֵל שַׁדַּי . Generally speaking, God in the special sense of El Shaddai is regarded as the God of the Covenant. El Shaddai is interpreted widely as the One with violent Power, hence "God Almighty". He is the One in whom the Jews found their present strength and their hope for future happy existence. Some have interpreted this name for God as the "One Who is Sufficient."[2] He is the covenant God in whom lay Abraham's strength and his hope for the future. "El Shaddai" is a rationalization of the orge element and also the mysterium tremendum and creature feeling Abraham knew in the presence of the covenanting God. Chapter 17 is regarded as the fullest expression of the inauguration of the Covenant between God and Abraham and eventually with his descendants, and throughout, the name אֱלֹהִים or אֵל שַׁדַּי is used. As has already been noted "Jehovah" too makes a covenant with Abraham (chapters 15 and 22). From this it might seem that there were elements of personality and perhaps fascinans also in the experience of the Covenant. It appears as

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[2] Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, p. 163
[1] Edward Mack in ISBE, vol. 2., p. 1265

though Abraham was somewhat careless in his use of exact terms for his God, just as we often use various names for the Deity interchangably. Other passages have already been noted where אֱלֹהִים and יְהוָה appear side by side.

4. JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH, שֹׁפֵט כָּל הָאָרֶץ, (18.25) It is out of his great intercessory prayer experience, when Abraham seeks the salvation of Lot, that he comes to call his God "Judge of all the Earth". Such a God will be just, he will not spread death and destruction indiscriminately. When Abraham sends his servant to Nahor he calls his God יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וֵאלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ. Here are some of the universal aspects of Abraham's God. No mere tribal deity this. And the experiences are too real for these names to have been inserted by a late redactor. Mysterium tremendum is here and orge.

5. JEHOVAH-JIREH יְהוָה יִרְאֶה "Jehovah-will-see" or "Jehovah-will-provide" (22.14). This name grows out of the near-sacrifice of Isaac. When the boy had asked him the whereabouts of the sacrifice, Abraham had said that God would provide or "see for himself", and God did. Forever afterward Moriah would be the place where Jehovah provided. Here orge and creature feeling are rationalized.

6. EVERLASTING GOD אֵל עוֹלָם (21.33). This name has already been touched upon.[1] Suffice it to say that this name for Deity grew out of the covenant agreement made in Jehovah's name between Abraham and Abimelech and was intended to be "everlasting", i.e., permanent.

7. NOTE THESE derivatives of the name "Jehovah":

1) Lord Jehovah, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה. (See page 78) References: 15.2,8.

2) Name of Jehovah, בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה. (See page 69) References: 12.8, 13.4.

3) Word of Jehovah, דְּבַר־יְהוָה. In chapter 15, verses 1 and 4, in the midst of Abraham's vision the "Word of Jehovah" comes to him.

4) Angel of Jehovah, מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה. As regards this name the following quotation by Dr. T. Rees has relevence:

The Angel of Jehovah is

> "a frequent mode of God's manifestation of himself in human form, and for occasional purposes. It is a primitive conception and its exact relation to God, or its likeness to man, is nowhere fixed. In many passages it is assumed that God and his angel are the same being, and the names are used synonymously (as in Genesis 16.7ff; 22.15.16.) In other passages the idea blurs into varying degrees of

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[1] Ante, p. 71, 72

differentiation (Genesis 18; 24.40). But everywhere it fully represents God as speaking or acting for the time being; and it is to be distinguished from the subordinate and intermediate beings of later angelology."[1]

F. Conclusion

A NUMBER of conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the above data:

1. Abraham's God is theistic. By whatever name He is called, He is not untouched by Abraham's needs. He is available and interested. He has a plan and purpose to be fulfilled in Abraham. He acts in human history. In his presence one experiences the non-rational elements of Otto--creature feeling, mysterium tremendum, fascinans and orge, but also personality.

2. The many names, both generic and attributive, give a remarkable well developed picture of God. Abraham was certainly a man far ahead of his day in the field of religion.

3. The multiple document theory can very well find substantiating data in the Abraham narrative, but belief in such a theory is by no means absolutely necessary, since

   a) the same qualities are often found in Elohim as in Jehovah;

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[1]ISBE, vol. 2, p. 1253

b) the same event may employ several names for God, often within a single verse.

c) it is not likely that Abraham was overly careful in designating the exact name for his God, any more than do worshipers today.

4. Generally, the names used for Deity reflect personal experiences.

5. There is a unity in Abraham's God concept which transcends the many names he gives to Deity.

The following chapter will continue the study of the rationalization of Abraham's religious consciousness, looking at the religious patriarch in his various religious roles.

CHAPTER V

THE RATIONALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS: RELIGIOUS ROLES

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THE RATIONALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS: RELIGIOUS ROLES

A. INTRODUCTION

In chapter four the names for God found in the Abraham narrative were studied as rationalizations of the non-rational basic elements present in the patriarch's religious consciousness. The very names of Abraham's God were seen to be reflections, rationalizations, of the creature feeling, the mysterium tremendum, the fascinans, the orge, and the pre-rational personality element that underlay Abraham's experience with his God.

This rationalization is now studied in a somewhat wider context. Abraham will be viewed in his various religious roles. Here is a religious man acting religiously in a number of interesting situations. Acting is used here not in the sense of playing a part, but rather of reacting in a more or less fixed pattern on the basis of past experience. It is the thesis of the writer that Abraham the religionist acts as he does because the basic, underlying awareness he has of Deity is qualitatively different from that of a non-theist. His contacts with God have been on the theistic level; in his experience the five non-rational elements have been present.

Abraham will be looked at in turn as 1) Mystic and Visionary, 2) Obedient Servant, 3) Pioneer of Faith, 4) Worshiper, 5) Covenantor, and 6) Friend of God. In each role a theist is reacting toward a God who inspires within his consciousness the five non-

rational elements basic to a theistic religious experience.

B. ABRAHAM: MYSTIC AND VISIONARY

William James in his Gifford Lectures of 1901 and 1902 devoted his attention to a study of mysticism. He listed the following traits as characteristic of the mystical experience: 1) ineffability (not capable of translation into words), 2) noetic quality (insight or illumination), 3) transciency, and 4) passivity (the mystic feels grasped by a superior power.[1] Samuel Hamilton, head of the department of religious education at New York University, lists immediacy, ineffability, authoritativeness, and dynamic as the characteristics of a mystical experience.[2] There is abundant data in the Abraham narrative to show that the patriarch was something of a mystic. The mystical experience in religion is by no means the private monopoly of the theist, but is should be no surprise that a man who has creature feeling, mysterium tremendum, fascinans, orge, and a sense of personal contact with his God underlying his religious consciousness would be something of a mystic. Basic to "immediacy" is the non-rational element of personality; basic to "ineffability" are mysterium tremendum and fascinans; basic to the "authoritative" aspect is the element of creature feeling; and underlying the "dynamic" aspect of a mystical experience is the non-rational element of orge.

In Genesis 12.1ff, where Abraham gets his call to leave Haran for the land of promise, there is evidence of the mystical experience. God takes the initiative. There is immediacy and authority exhibited. Abraham seems not to question even in the

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[1]William James: Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 379-382
[2]Samuel Hamilton: unpublished lectures in Philosophy of Religion classes.

slightest that God has spoken, and obedience is the natural thing. A non-mystic might not have heard the call, or if he did hear it would have discounted it as a mere dream or hallucination. But Abraham went "as Jehovah had spoken unto him."

The first recorded theophany for Abraham is in 12.7, where "Jehovah appeared unto Abram." The Old Testament theophanies were

> "transient manifestations and became permanent localization. They were temporary manifestations to the patriarchs, and became abiding in the Shekinah. The theophanies which were granted to the patriarchs may have been unsubstantial manifestations, incorporeal and merely the appearance of human form."[1]

Whatever this appearance of Jehovah really was, there seems to have been in the patriarchs experience an immediate awareness of the actual presence of Deity. He gives expression to his conviction by the construction of an altar in this instance. Sacrifices also seem linked to these appearances of Jehovah. Other references to Jehovah's appearance to Abraham are 17.1, where Jehovah comes to renew the covenant, and 18.1, where "Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. . . and lo, three men stood over against him."

One of the interesting means of God's manifestations to the patriarch was his appearance as the angel of Jehovah and the angel of God, the former in what many regard as the J source and the latter in the E document. In chapters 18 and 19 it is difficult to follow the switch from men to angels to Jehovah as the vehicles for divine manifestation. Taking the Abraham narrative as a whole, it seems that the angel of Jehovah or God is a self-manifestation of Deity, who

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[1]Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, pp.600-601.

identifies himself with Jehovah;[1] speaks and acts with Jehovah's authority (Genesis 16.10, 21.18-19, 22.12, etc.); but is also distinguished from Jehovah, as in 16.11: "And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction," and also 19.13,34. A. B. Davidson concludes that the only real "distinction implied is that between Jehovah and Jehovah in manifestation."[2]

Whether or not Jehovah actually appeared as the angel of Jehovah or the angel of God, there seems to be no doubt in Abraham's mind that he was dealing with his God, a God discernible to the senses.[3] This is certainly a characteristic of the mystical experience. The apparent (to us) confusion of angels and men and actual Deity may be simply an indication of the ineffable aspect of the mystic's encounter with the Divine. Modern mystics feel the same bankruptcy of words to express what happens when they experience an immediate awareness of God.

Chapter 15 is a very unusual one from the standpoint of the mystic. Verses 1 and 4 declare that "the word of Jehovah came unto Abraham" (הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל אַבְרָם). This is a technical expression in the Old Testament for a divine revelation to a prophet. It occurs nowhere else in the Penteteuch, and it is quite likely an indication of the prophetic character of Abraham.[4] All the prophets were mystics in their sense of the immediate presence of God, their conviction of the fact that God was speaking directly to and through them. It is to be noted in this chapter that the word

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[1]Cf. Exodus 3.6
[2]Quoted by S.R.Driver:Book of Genesis, Westminster Commentaries,p.184
[3]C.F.Keil and F. Delitzsch:Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 1, pp.181-191.
[4]Herbert Ryle: The Book of Genesis, Cambridge Bible, p. 185

of Jehovah came to Abram "in a vision", which Keil and Delitzsch feel applies to the entire chapter.[1] Any other explanation would seem to make it impossible to reconcile the various references to time sequence. "A vision wrought by God was not a mere fancy, or a subjective play of the thoughts, but a spiritual fact."[2] Since this is another passage where God renews the covenant, it is significant that through the vehicle of a vision the covenant is given a spiritual content. The expressions "he brought him forth abroad", verse 5; "sun was going down", "deep sleep", "horror of great darkness", verse 12; "it was dark", "smoking furnace", "flaming torch", verse 17---these are all indicative of the mystical experience.

Still another mystical appearance of God in the Abraham narrative is his coming to Abimelech in a dream (20.3,6). Although this is not properly an experience of Abraham's, the patriarch must nevertheless have passed on the story now recorded in the book of Genesis, and to him it must have been a real manifestation of God.

Keil and Delitzsch have made a discerning division of the life of Abraham into four stages, each marked in its beginning by a divine revelation: 1) chapters 12-14, begun with Abraham's call and his removal to Canaan; 2) chapters 15-16, begun with the vision noted above, where the heir is promised and the covenant concluded; 3) chapters 17-21, inaugurated with the appearance of Jehovah to establish the covenant and announce the rite of circumcision; and 4) chapters 22-25, opening with God's proving of Abraham, the command to sacrifice

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[1]Keil and Delitzsch; op. cit., p. 209.
[2]Ibid., p. 210.

Isaac apparently coming in a dream (verse 3a).[1]

Thus from the data so abundant in the Abraham narrative, the patriarch is seen to be a true mystic, in whose experience are to be found traces of all the non-rational elements basic to theism.

C. ABRAHAM: OBEDIENT SERVANT

One of the most remarkable characteristics of this great man is his immediate response, his unquestioning obedience to the direction of his God. To give just a few examples of his obedience, consider the following:

1) "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country. . . So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him." (12.1a,4a)

2) "Arise, walk through the land (Jehovah is speaking). . . And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre." (13.17a, 18a)

3) "Every male among you shall be circumcised. . . And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him." (17.10b,23)

4) When God tells Abraham to hearken unto Sarah in the unhappy misunderstanding over Ishmael and Hagar, the following passage shows his obedience: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away." (21.14)

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[1] Keil and Delitzsch; op. cit., p. 192

5) When God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (22.2), the patriarch "rose early in the morning. . . and took. . .Isaac his son. . . and went unto the place of which God had told him" (22.3).

In no instance is it recorded that Abraham ever argued with God or questioned the wisdom of his demands, even when it seemed as though he asked the impossible, and usually it must have seemed that God did ask the impossible. The original call to leave Ur[1] must have seemed strange. Calvin feels that the divine commandment was the only motive for Abraham's going,[2] although, as was indicated in chapter two, the political unrest of the times may have been an additional factor in influencing the patriarch's migration.[3] But at best, this was an unusual demand and an unusual response; so much so, that Hastings makes the observation that "only a God whom Abraham already knew, loved, and honored could have made such a demand."[4] The call of God and Abraham's response constitute a clear-cut example of election in the Old Testament. Ryle has an interesting analysis of the election of Abraham: It originates in God's call, its sphere is in the service of men, its ratification is in the covenant relation, its sacrament is circumcision, and its reward is the revelation of the Divine will.[5] God picked a man and that man responded in magnificent obedience.

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[1]John Calvin: Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, p. 338ff

[2]Ibid., p. 341

[3]Ante., p. 29

[4]James Hastings: The Greater Men and Women of the Bible, p. 135

[5]Ryle: op. cit., p. xlix.

Calvin sees another example of unquestioning obedience in the matter of the rite of circumcision (chapter 17). The response to God's command was immediate: "in the self-same day", and the painful operation was performed on a great household, for Abraham was chieftan over a large clan. Calvin marvels at this instance, regarding it as "scarcely credible that so many men would have suffered themselves to be wounded. . . to be made a laughingstock"[1], as they must have been to their neighbors.

It must be borne in mind that circumcision was not peculiar to the Jews, and it did not originate with Abraham. Herodotus and Philo write of its being quite common in ancient Egypt, and Joshua 5.9 has been interpreted by some as indicating its practice there. According to Herodotus, the practice spread to Ethiopia, Phoenicia and the Syrians of Palestine (Hebrews) from Egypt. The pointed reference in 2 Samuel 1.20 to the Philistines as the "uncircumcised may indicate that most of Israel's neighbors were circumcised. It is interesting that circumcision was not common among the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians, and consequently must have been new to Abraham when he came to Canaan.[2] Circumcision, as introduced by God to Abraham, introduced two distinctive characteristics to the practice: first, it is to be performed in infancy (at eight days of age), and second, religious connotation is given to it. For the Hebrew, membership in the nation is through consecration and dedication to Jehovah, and circumcision is the sign of that dedication. The religious aspect of circumcision was always more important than the civil or political implications.

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[1]Calvin; op. cit., p. 464.

[2]For a good discussion of circumcision see S.R.Driver: Book of Genesis, Westminster Commentaries, pp. 188-190.

Often overlooked is the cost of obedience on Abraham's part in the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael in order to keep peace in the patriarchal household (chapter 21). That Abraham loved Ishmael dearly, as his own son, is indicated by the father's plea to God, when the true child of promise is announced, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" (17.18b); and also the statement that Sarah's demand for the removal of Hagar and Ishmael "was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son." (21.11) But when God tells the unhappy father that he should comply with Sarah's jealous wish, he rises up "early in the morning" to perform the deed that must have broken his heart. To the patriarch, obedience to God was more important than personal feelings.

The high point of Abraham's role as obedient servant comes in the high tragedy and tremendous victory of Mount Moriah (chapter 22). Hastings feels that the sacrifice of Isaac was not a matter of conscience with Abraham, for in his day and culture a son belonged to his father. The patriarch's neighbors sacrificed their sons to unworthy gods. True devotion to Jehovah demanded the greatest sacrifice.[1] When one recalls numerous references in the Old Testament that indicate the practice of child sacrifice[2], it becomes evident that God's command was not the shock, ethically speaking, to the patriarch that it is to us with a more advanced ethical system.[3] The command to offer Isaac was a three-fold test of Abraham's obedience and faith, as Ryle has pointed out: 1) Did Abraham love and obey God as sincerely as his heathen neighbors loved and obeyed their gods? 2) Did he love God more than he loved Isaac? 3) Could

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., pp. 272-273
[2]Cf. Lev.18.21, Deut.12.31, Judges 11.39, I K 16.34, II K 3.27.
[3]Ante., p. 39.

he obey a command of God which was in direct conflict with that same God's promises concerning Isaac?[1]

In a profoundly moving sermon (unpublished) which he has titled "His Only Begotten Son", E. W. Praetorius clearly pictures the remarkable obedience of Abraham. The patriarch's early rising and prompt beginning of the three day journey, as though if he had reflected on the matter he could not have carried through; the loneliness of his terrible three days of testing, since apparently he did not and could not share God's command with Sarah, she having failed three times before in the altercation with Hagar, her laughter at the promise of Isaac, and her insistence on the driving out of Ishmael; Isaac's knife-thrust of a query, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering", and the father's evasive answer, wiser than he knew, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son"; and the breath-taking climax when God stays the hand uplifted to strike Isaac the death-blow by calling "Abraham, Abraham" and the man who always answers instantly (how good a thing it was that Abraham had the habit of answering God immediately) replies, with what must have been a great heaving sigh of relief, "Here am I", to hear words of salvation for Isaac and for all his hopes---in all this the obedient servant of God passes his sternest test, and, Praetorius thinks, enters into the meaning of Christ's oblation. He makes another interesting observation to the effect that Sodom had tested Lot, but it is God who here tests Abraham; what one is tested by is either a compliment or a reproach, for one is tested at his strong point.[2] Obedience and faith were certainly Abraham's strong points.

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[1]Ryle: op. cit., p. 242

[2]E.W. Praetorius is bishop of the Northwestern Area of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

What kind of a religious consciousness must one have to be so obedient to his God? Or even to hear such words of direction from the Deity? Surely, in the patriarch's obedience, without any questioning or argument, there is a basic creature feeling. Jehovah knew best, even when all outward appearances called for a contrary appraisal. There must also be mysterium tremendum here to result in such promptness, but fascinans is present also, since Abraham is not repelled by God's impossible demands, even the slaying of Isaac. The patriarch sticks by his God. Most important, perhaps, is the basic personal relationship between God and Abraham. If this personal contact had been lost in that terrible moment of dark grief and apparent loss when Isaac lay bound, the knife would have pierced the young man's heart, Abraham in his blind emotion would neither have seen God's provision nor heard his voice. His would have been the same hopeless, misguided kind of pagan sacrifice his neighbors were making and which some pagans make even today. It is the combination of all the non-rational elements, with special emphasis on the personality aspect, that becomes rationalized in the Obedient Servant of Jehovah. Abraham's was not a blind, unreasoning obedience to an unknown and terrible God. Rather, all his experience led him to trust the direction of a God who always led aright, who was knowable because he was personal.

The patriarch will next be seen in the role of Pioneer of Faith, a part made easy by one who is also the Obedient Servant of Jehovah.

D. ABRAHAM: PIONEER OF FAITH

Hastings defines faith as "that act of prophetic anticipation which risks everything on a venture which nothing but the results can ever justify."[1] Truly, Abraham made that kind of faith venture throughout his whole life from the time of his leaving Ur. The great patriarch is here considered to be the pioneer of faith. Progress of the race depends on individuals. Even if one could prove Abraham to be a mythical abstraction or a tribal personification, as Hastings points out, "it would yet be reasonable and indeed necessary to assume that at a certain point in history an individual man appeared, capable of so entering into communion with God as to be the true father of the faithful."[2] From Abraham men have learned that those of great faith can not be defeated in their faith.

It can not be maintained that only theists have faith, but the theist Abraham is for all time the great example of one who lived by faith in his God. What is the basis for his faith? The following data will reveal that underlying Abraham's faith are the same non-rational elements that crop out elsewhere in the study of his religious consciousness. Faith as Abraham exhibits it is a complex rationalization, but behind it is the awareness that he is dealing with a personal God, not a force alone, not an absentee landlord Deity. Persons react in the Abraham narrative. Orge is here, for such magnificent faith as Abraham's is seen to be cannot survive weakness and lack of power in the object of its faith.

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 139

[2]Ibid., p. 147

And of course there is fascinans--God draws faith from Abraham even as he gives him opportunities to increase the measure of his faith. Nor can creature feeling and mysterium tremendum be omitted from the study of the bases of the patriarch's faith. Many centuries later some disciples were to exclaim to their Lord and Saviour, "To whom shall we go--thou hast the words of eternal life!" The creature must have faith in his Creator, especially one as awe-inspiring as the God who rained fire and brimstone upon the Cities of the Plain.

The data for the affirmation that Abraham was a pioneer of faith is now called for, and it will be noted that there is some repetition of material. As a matter of fact, Abraham plays most of his various roles simultaneously. His spiritual life cannot be successfully compartmentalized. Serving God was his whole life. Every act, it can almost be said, was an act of faith and worship, an expression of his dedication to Jehovah.

To respond to the call of God to leave Ur and the old idol-worship was an act of faith. The old gods were familiar and were worshiped for centuries,[1] but what did Abraham know of this new God, Jehovah, who asked such difficult things? Joshua, in his farewell address, puts these words into Jehovah's mouth: "Your fathers dwelt of old times beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods."[2] It also took faith to leave his family, his friends, his old way of life.

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[1] Ante., p. 25ff
[2] Joshua 24.2

Calvin sees in the fact that Abraham was made to pass through the land of Canaan (12.6) another act of faith. Although this was the land of promise, it was only promised. Others were living there. It afforded no fixed place of abode for the patriarch and his family. To dwell as an outsider among the Canaanites, pagan and hostile, was an added test of faith,[1]

The famine recorded in 12.10 called for faith on Abraham's part. One might have thought he would return to Haran, but his fqith helps him to see that there has been a clean break with the old life, so he turns to Egypt instead. Although the turning to Egypt seems to be an exercise of faith, his conduct there is rather faithless. God's goodness, not Abraham's merit, saves Sarah from an unsavory and wholly unnecessary situation.[2] Abraham is not yet the full-fledged Pioneer of Faith.

His unselfish treatment of Lot in allowing the young man to choose the richest part of the country for his dwelling (13.8ff) is the work of a man of faith. Abraham might be left alone on the bleak central highlands, but he was alone with God, a God who inspired faith and who came at once to comfort him with a renewal of all the promises (13.14-17).

It must have been more than family loyalty that sent the patriarch chieftan out after the four kings who had captured Lot (14.14). So daring an undertaking must have been possible only because the great man of faith was trusting in El Elyon, Possessor of Heaven and Earth (14.22). He refuses any of the spoils of war,

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[1]Calvin: op. cit., p. 352

[2]Ryle: op. cit., p. 159

rightfully his according to the rules of war; his riches are in his God, the possessor of all things.

In 15.1, where Jehovah tells Abraham not to fear, that he will be the patriarch's shield and exceeding great reward, it is implied that his faith needed strengthening, for reasons outlined earlier.[1] In this vision God stoops to his weakness and bolsters his faith. The great man's response to God, "Lord Jehovah" (15.2), indicates that he really had not lost his faith, although the following chapter where Sarah's unhappy expedient in getting a son by Hagar is described, there is further indication that their faith was not steady. However, in verse 6 of this fifteenth chapter is the glorious statement, "And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness."[2] Abraham believed, he had faith in his God, but his question was "How?" The longer God waited the greater was the miracle required. Chapter 16 may be the story of how Sarah and Abraham tried to help God out of performing a tremendous miracle, which the birth of Isaac truly was.

Between chapters 16 and 17 is a lapse of 13 years. From the birth of Ishmael to the next renewal of the promise of a son from Sarah there is thus a long period of waiting. Calvin seems to imply that Abraham stopped praying for seed, having relied on Ishmael[3], and this may indeed have been the case. Thirteen years is a long time to reflect on an occurrence which even at its first announcement had seemed impossible. But Abraham's God always comes through in time to renew his faith. Only a theist's God does this.

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[1] Ante., p. 49
[2] Cf., Romans 4.3
[3] Calvin: op. cit., pp. 441-442

Chapter 20 is a repetition of the unfortunate Egyptian incident. Here is no pioneer of faith, but a coward. The similarities in these two incidents and their likeness to an incident in Isaac's life (26.6-11) lead Driver to suggest that they have a common origin.[1] Be that as it may, once God stepped into the picture to save Sarah from Abimelech, Abraham recovers sufficiently to give a good witness for his God and prays in faith to him to heal the women of the King of Gerar's household (verse 17). It should be noted that the patriarch never has a complete lapse of faith. His weak moments are what one might expect of any man, however great in his over-all perspective.

A great vindication of Abraham's faith comes in the opening verse of chapter 21: "And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken." When Abraham was a hundred years old (verse 5) the child of promise was born to Sarah; his God had kept his promises; he did not forget.

Just as chapter 22 with its account of the offering of Isaac is the high point to illustrate Abraham's obedience, so too it is the record of the incident which has forever made the patriarch the Father of the Faithful. He obeyed the terrifying command of God because of his faith, and his faith was tremendously vindicated because he was completely obedient. Here in conflict were the command and the promise of God[2], but out of the seeming paradox faith emerges in victory. At Moriah God put Abraham "to the test"[3]. It must not be thought that God expected the patriarch to fail. To

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[1]Driver: op. cit., p. 205
[2]Calvin: op. cit., pp.563-569
[3]S. Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling, p. xiii
See also Genesis 22.1, Moffatt's translation

test is not to reveal weakness, but to show strength, and the test for Abraham certainly revealed his strength of faith.

It ought to be mentioned in passing that the brilliant Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, used the sacrifice of Isaac as a symbol of his own sacrifice of the dearest thing he had on earth, his Regina, in the small book "Fear and Trembling".[1] The following quotation from the book reveals not only the depth and flow of his passionate writing, but also his profound regard for the patriarch's faith:

> "If Abraham had not believed, Sarah surely would have been dead of sorrow, and Abraham, dulled by grief, would not have understood the fulfilment but would have smiled at it as at a dream of youth. But Abraham believed, therefore he was young. . . The miracle of faith consists in the fact that Abraham and Sarah were young enough to wish, and that faith had preserved their wish and therewith their youth. . .Then there was joy in Abraham's house when Sarah became a bride on the day of their golden wedding. But it was not to remain thus. . . God tempted Abraham and said unto him, Take Isaac. . . and offer him. . for a burnt-offering. . . So all was lost--more dreadfully than if it had never come to pass! So the Lord was only making sport of Abraham! He made miraculously the preposterous actual, and now in turn he would annihilate it. It was indeed foolishness, but Abraham did not laugh. . . Who then is he that plucks away the old man's staff, who is it that requires that he himself shall break it?. . It was God who tried Abraham. . . But Abraham believed. . . and rose early in the morning--as though it were to a festival, so he hastened. . . He knew that no sacrifice was too hard when God required it--and he drew the knife. . .Venerable Father Abraham!--forgive him who would speak in praise of thee. . . he will never forget that thou didst need a hundred years to obtain a son of old age against expectation, that thou didst have to draw a knife before retaining Isaac; he will never forget that in a hundred and thirty years thou didst not get further than to faith."[2]

Here is a scene that has captivated the imagination of men's hearts, and Kierkegaard has given beautiful expression to the thoughts of most devout Bible scholars as they marvel at Abraham, Pioneer of Faith.

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[1]Kierkegaard: op. cit., p. xiii
[2]Ibid., pp. 22-30

5. ABRAHAM: WORSHIPER

Here again, there must necessarily be some repetition of data to show that Abraham the worshiper exhibits the same familiar rationalization of the non-rational elements of creature feeling, mysterium tremendum, fascinans, orge and personality.

Abraham was an altar-builder. In patriarchal times altars were erected wherever the tents were pitched or wherever some special manifestation of God occurred. Twice in the first eight verses of chapter twelve (verses 7 and 8) Abraham is recorded as having built altars "unto Jehovah". Other references to his altar-building are 13.18 and 22.9, where he built the altar to sacrifice his own son. It seems quite evident that creature feeling is basic in the altar-building rationalization. Only one who is conscious of his creature-hood would build an altar as a place to meet and worship his Creator. "The altar", says Calvin, "is the external form of divine worship; but invocation is its substance and truth."[1] He also feels that God ordained Abraham's use of the altar as a witness to his neighbors: "Abraham bare an altar in his heart; but seeing that the land was full of profane altars. . . Abraham publicly professed that he worshiped the true God; and that, not at random, but according to the method revealed to him by the word."[2] With Abraham the personality element is also involved in his building of altars. He meets his God in his worship; the altar was erected in the place where Jehovah "appeared unto him." (12.7)

The patriarch's actions when he meets Melchizedek, one of the most unusual and shadowy personages in the entire Old Testament,

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[1]Calvin: op. cit., p. 354
[2]Ibid., p. 377

are very interesting (14.17-24). Hastings comments that nothing known about the religions of Canaan would prepare the student of Scriptures for a person like Melchizedek. "Even in the simple prose of Genesis, the incident reads as though it meant more than meets the ear."[1] Whoever he was, Abraham seems to have recognized him to be a priest of Jehovah (El Elyon), and on the basis of that recognition he pays tithes to him. Payment of tithes to the priesthood seems to have been common in ancient times in places like Assyria, Babylonia and among the Greeks,[2] but in Abraham's case, it seems to have meant something special, an acknowledgement of stewardship, a holy offering given as a pledge and proof of gratitude.[3] The tithe is paid not to Melchizedek as a man, but to him as representing Jehovah, "possessor of heaven and earth"(14.22). Here again is a rationalization of creature feeling, together with some evidences of fascinans and the personality element.

Another fruitful aspect of Abraham's role as a worshiper is his prayer life. Invocation was a prominent part of his praying.[4] The general expression that he "called upon the name of Jehovah" is used in connection with his building of an altar near later Bethel (12.8). In Abraham's vision as recorded in chapter 15 (verse2), he addresses his God as "O Lord Jehovah"(אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה). This usage, together with the identical one in verse 8 is the only occurrence with the exception of two in Deuteronomy in the entire Pentateuch. Perhaps the personality element is most basic to the ration-

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 186
[2]Ryle: op. cit., p. 177
[3]Calvin: op. cit., p. 393
[4]Keil and Delitzsch: op. cit., pp.119-120

alization involved in invocation, but creature feeling and fascinans are also present.

Prayer as talking to God is another interesting rationalization found in the Abraham narrative. At the conclusion of a revealing passage in which "God said to Abraham. . ." and "Abraham said unto God. ." (chapter 17), these words appear, "And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham" (verse 22). There are other passages that indicate this personal relationship between the patriarch and his God in prayer. Personality as a non-rational element is the most important element rationalized in Abraham's worship experiences.

Abraham is at his best in praying as an intercessor. He intercedes in behalf of the women of Abimelech's household (chapter 20), but, of course, his greatest scene as an intercessor is his praying for Sodom and Gomorrah, in whose midst lived the thoughtless Lot (18.22-33). Here is a lonely and persevering prayer effort. He is mediating in behalf of one who had forfeited all right to special consideration by his selfishness. Hastings sees justice rather than mercy as being the keynote of this great intercession. Abraham was concerned about God's justice--he must not punish the innocent with the guilty.[1] Driver agrees with this view, finding the incident to be a "witness to the deeply-planted human instinct which requires justice in God."[2] Abraham says in his prayer, "Will not the judge of all the earth do judgment?" (verse 25). If this view be correct, and it does seem so, then Abraham's prayer was

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 239

[2]Driver: op. cit., p. 196

answered, for God's justice meant the destruction of all except Lot and his daughters. What rationalization did the patriarch make to pray thusly? Belief in God's justice is a rationalization of orge and mysterium tremendum. One stands in awe before the power and judgment of God, but not so awe-stricken as to fail to dare to in a sense "deal" with God. Fascinans is also present, for Abraham's God is personal. He is the God of Abraham as well as the judge of all the earth.

An interesting sidelight on Abraham in prayer is his posture as he encounters God. He "fell on his face" before God in the great covenant chapter (17.3,17), an indication of the presence of creature feeling, mysterium tremendum and orge. But in 18.22 he stood "yet before Jehovah", the attitude of intercession, according to Driver.[1]

It ought not to be forgotten that when Abraham obeyed the call of God to sacrifice Isaac he was performing an act of worship. He was specifically told to offer his son as a "burnt-offering"(22.2), which was a whole burnt-offering, a complete dedication to God. Such an offering was wholly consumed in fire, and according to Leviticus 14 it was propitiatory in nature. Of course, Abraham need not have been aware of the technicalities of the use of various types of offerings which were developed long after his times. But he was worshiping in giving to God his best; God had emphasized that point with such searching insistence: "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac" (22.2)--it sounds almost cruel and brutal. There is less of the personality and fascinans underlying the rationalization of sacrifice. Dominant is creature feeling, for the creature

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[1]Driver: op. cit., p. 196

must be made at-one with his Creator. In addition there is the element of mysterium tremendum.

The above data, taken in connection with that introduced in the section on Abraham as a mystic and visionary (Intra., pp. 87-91), show that Abraham for his day and age compares favorably with theists today in the rationalization of worship feelings.

E. ABRAHAM: COVENANT-MAKER

It might be more correct to speak of God: Covenant-Maker, for it is God who takes the initiative in the making of the covenant. Abraham is never allowed to forget that he is in covenant relation with his God. A covenant is simply an agreement between persons, but when one of the covenanting parties is God, as in this instance, its significane is immeasurably heightened. The belief on Abraham's part that Almighty God would condescend to enter such relationship with a man is clearly a rationalization of the non-rational peronality element. Here is a supreme example of the theists' religious consciousness: God is close, He is personal, He undertakes to act in Man's behalf. The acceptance by faith of the great promises God makes in the Covenant is a rationalization of the orge element, for God must have great power to perform what becomes, in the case of the birth of Isaac, an outstanding miracle.

Almost from the first moment of his call to leave Haran Abraham hears God outline the main points of the covenant. Abraham's part was: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (12.1). God's part was: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless

them that bless the, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (12.2-3). Calvin sees the latter provision as the "accustomed form of covenants between kings and others, that they mutually promise to have the same enemies and the same friends."[1]

After Lot's separation, Jehovah renews the covenant promises (13.14ff). He promises to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed, which shall be as the dust of the earth, "for ever". Keil and Delitzsch observe that the revelations of God to Abraham in the covenant consist "almost exclusively of promises"[2]. And it was necessarily so. Since the "Canaanite was then in the land"[3] the patriarch could not take over immediately.

Chapter 15 is another revealing "covenant chapter". Here in a vision or dream, Jehovah comes to Abraham and renews the promises, and they both carry out the symbolism used in the "cutting of a covenant" (כָּרַת בְּרִית).[4] Although it was a dream, yet it was most real to the patriarch. Each animal used in the ceremony is mentioned, the heifer, the she-goat and the ram, all three years old and all cut in halves, each half laid over against the other; the turtle dove and the pigeon (15.9-10), not divided, but likely placed one on either side. Now the parties to the covenant must pass between the divided animals to make it binding, a sort of oath to the effect that if they kept not the provisions they would be as the animals, cut in two. "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces"

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[1]Calvin: op. cit., p. 347
[2]Keil and Delitzsch: op. cit., p.182
[3]Genesis 12.6, 13.7
[4]See Jeremiah 34.18

(verse 17). The "smoking furnace" was simply a portable earthenware stove such as is still used in the East for baking bread, about three feet high and shaped like a truncated cone. Together with the "flaming torch" it was a symbol of God himself, who had come to confirm his promises in the covenant. It is to be noted that the animals used in thecovenant ritual are not used as a sacrifice. No blood is sprinkled, no pieces burned.[1] As for God's promises, Isaac is again promised and God reaffirms that Palestine has been given to Abraham's seed, who will be like the stars in number. So far, the covenant has been pretty much one-sided. God is doing all the promising. Abraham's role seems to be simply that of a man of faith to believe the promises.

In chapter 17 is the clearest revelation of the covenant. Now a reciprocal relationship is implied. One significant addition is made by God on his part. He is to be "their God" (verse 8), and thus the covenant becomes spiritual in nature. On Abraham's part, he is to "keep" the covenant, symbolizing his acceptance of it by the rite of circumcision: "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (verse 13).

A far-fetched apology is made by Calvin to explain Abraham's cowardly and selfish action in Pharaoh's court and before Abimelech. His explanation is that the patriarch was concerned lest the covenant fail because of his untimely death.[2] It is true that Abraham was quite covenant-conscious, but in these two instances his motivation must certainly have had other derivation.

He makes covenants not only with God but with his neighbor Abimelech. The covenant grew out of the matter of a disputed well

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[1]Keil and Delitzsch: op. cit., pp.213,214
[2]Calvin: Op. cit., pp. 359, 521ff

or wells at Beer-Sheba. The symbolism here seems to have been somewhat different (21.27-34). To swear (שָׁבַע) means literally "to seven one's self" (the niphal form, a reflexive, is used). In other words, it meant to pledge one's self by seven sacred things; hence the seven ewe lambs (verse 30) that Abimelech accepted from Abraham as a pledge of his agreement that the well was dug by Abraham. Driver refers to a passage in Herodotus where he describes the Arabs as concluding a solemn oath by smearing seven stones with blood drawn from the hands of the contracting parties.[1] It is evident that to Abraham every covenant had some religious significance.

After the great test at Moriah, God again affirms his promises of the covenant (22.16-18), using the strongest language possible, concluding with the familiar, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Thus it is seen that Abraham the Covenant-Maker is also Abraham the Obedient Servant and Abraham the Pioneer of Faith. In each rationalization are present all the non-rational elements basic to a theistic religious experience. Consideration must now be given briefly to the patriarch's role as Friend of God.

C. ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD

There are two names by which Abraham is best known in the Eastern tradition, Father of the Faithful and Friend of God. Among Mohammedans he is Khalil 'Allah or El-Kalil, The Friend; not as an ancestor of some pagan mythology, a demi-god or a son of a god, but just a friend, nothing more, nothing less. He is the Friend of God,

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[1]Driver: op. cit., p. 215

and as such enjoys communion with the Eternal.[1] Certainly, the Genesis account bears vivid witness to the truth of this picture of the patriarch. Although there is mysterium tremendum and a sense of orge in the presence of his God, and although worship practices are evidence of his creature feeling, the personality element is what is most striking in the patriarch's religious consciousness. His God is so close that they can be friends. Consider the following data.

12.7: "Jehovah appeared unto Abraham" (also 17.1 and 18.1).

15.1: "The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward."

17.3: "God talked with him."

17.5: God changes Abram's name to Abraham.

17.22: "And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham."

18.1-21: In this charmingly anthropomorphic account of Abraham's playing host to God is the high point of his role as Friend of God. It seems quite obvious that when the three men appeared before the patriarch as he sat in his tent door at noonday, he was not immediately aware that he was to play host to Deity. He greets one of them, who is apparently the leader,with "My Lord", as though he were a man. Driver points out that Abraham would scarcely have offered food and drink (verse 8) to one whom he recognized as Jehovah. The identity of these men must have been revealed gradually.[2] But the fact that flesh was served to them, a rare occurrence in the East, indicates that Abraham regarded them as guests of distinction. Before long Abraham knows he is being host to Jehovah, for his guest

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 326
[2]Driver: op. cit., pp. 192-195

renews the promise of the heir. It appears that two of the three went on toward Sodom, while Jehovah remained behind to converse with Abraham (18.22, 19.1). How close this man is to God, that God should take him into his confidence concerning the fate of the Cities of the Plain! Jehovah says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?" (verse 17). Such confidence is not shown except toward close friends, friends who understand. Driver feels that God intended that his friend Abraham should see the difference between God's treatment of righteousness and unrighteousness, and verse 19 might seem to bear out this view.[1]

There follows Abraham's intimate conversation with God, the great intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. He had Lot in mind, of course, but he was concerned, as was noted previously, about God's justice also. He is praying to the "Judge of all the earth" (verse 25). God must not give way to caprice.[2] But justice demanded the destruction of the cities. However, in the midst the holocaust, "God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow" (19.29). Calvin feels Lot's salvation was a favour to Abraham, and his view is not without justification.[3] Similarly, his friendship for the patriarch is the determining factor in God's intervening to save Ishmael and Hagar in the desert (21.17).[4]

In 20.17 God, speaking to Abimelech in a dream, says, "Restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live." Abraham is so important to God that he makes special intervention for his wife. There is something intimate and appealing here. A theist, especially one who is something of a mystic, as Abraham

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[1]Driver: op. cit., pp. 192-195
[2]Davidson: Theology of the Old Testament, p. 130
[3]Calvin: op. cit., pp. 516, 517
[4]Ibid., p. 549

was seen to be, has this same kind of personal contact with his God.

21.22: Abimelech and Phicol come to Abraham with the high compliment: "God is with thee in all that thou doest." Abraham's friendship with God was no secret.

23.6: The children of Heth have also seen God's friendship with the patriarch, for they say, "Thou art a prince of God among us." There seems to be a demonstrable difference in a man with a true theistic religious consciousness.

Chapter 24 is the story of the betrothal of Isaac and Rebekah, and a personal, interested God is very much in evidence throughout. A typical passage is the exclamation of Abraham's servant when he meets Rebekah and is convinced that she is Jehovah's choice for Isaac' wife: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his lovingkindness and his truth toward my master; as for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren" (verse 27).

The above quotations from the Abraham narrative should make it clear that the patriarch, having such personal contact with his God, is well called the "Friend of God". Every true theist knows God as a friend. There is a basic underlying non-rational personality content to the theistic religious consciousness, and Abraham certainly seems to have had it; at least the rationalization "Friend of God" would point to that conclusion.

H. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that the purpose of the chapter was to study the various religious roles of Abraham to see if they were rationalizations of the basic non-rational elements underlying the theistic religious experience. The patriarch was viewed as Mystic and Visionary, Obedient Servant, Pioneer of Faith, Worshiper, Covenant-Maker, and Friend of God. In each portrait it was possible to detect Otto's mysterium tremendum, creature feeling, fascinans and orge, and also the non-rational personality element, which we have added to complete the bases for a theistic consciousness. These various elements were not equally prominent in each role, but taken together they account for the kind of rationalizations a theist such as Abraham makes as a consciously religious person.

There remains, for the next chapter, to study the socialization of Abraham's religious experience, for to be a true theist is to affect other people. The patriarch's experience of God is shared. He has become for all time the Father of the Faithful.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

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A. INTRODUCTION

A man's religious consciousness or experience becomes socialized when his religious life and experience influence the lives of others. Jehovah himself prophesied the extensive socialization of the patriarch's religious life when in the call to leave Haran he promised Abraham, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (12.3). Hastings bears a similar testimony to the wide socialization of Abraham's religious consciousness when he says,

> "The secret of Jewish survival is their faith in a Divine purpose, in a divine call, in a divine mission for the race. . . It was the breath of their national life. The Spirit of Abraham never al together left his children."[1]

Following the patriarchal tradition, two factors gave Israel's religion distinctiveness: first, belief in a personal redemptive God operating in history, and second, response to such a God in simple human faith. Abraham is largely responsible for the genesis of these two factors, ever after present in Israel's religious thinking.

The present chapter will briefly survey the socialization of Abraham's religious experience, first of all as revealed in the Abraham narrative, secondly, as evidenced in Old Testament references to the patriarch, and thirdly, in New Testament allusions to the Father of the Faithful.

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[1]Hastings: op. cit., p. 326

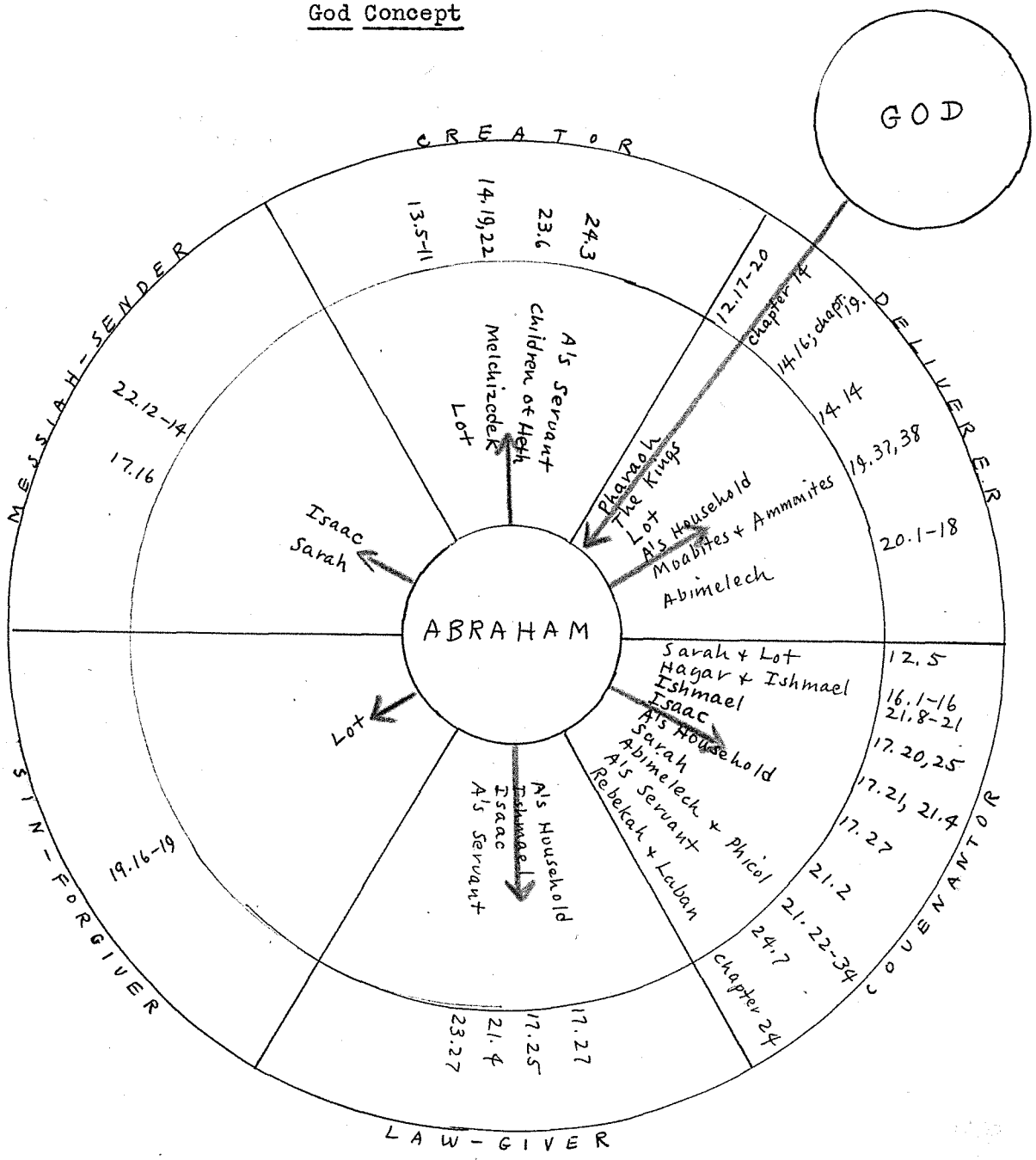
B. SOCIALIZATION IN THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVE

Running throughout the Old Testament and on in to the New are at least six distinct socialized concepts of God, concepts that are purely theistic in nature and demonstrably rationalizations of the basic non-rational elements present in the theistic experience. These are 1) Messiah-Sender, 2) Creator, 3) Deliverer, 4) Covenantor, 5) Law-Giver, and 6) Sin-Forgiver. God in these various roles acted in a personal, individual sense in Abraham's experience, but God became through Abraham and other great religious leaders of Israel all these things to the entire Jewish race, and eventually "all the nations of the earth" are blessed through this man's grasp of the true nature of God. The chart on the following page is intended to show the socialization of the patriarch's theistic encounter with God as revealed in the Abraham narrative.

Since the narrative has been discussed so minutely in the preceding chapters, the chart will be permitted to speak for itself, the data involved being indicated on the chart itself, data which by now should be well in mind. Attention might be called, however, to the fact that more people were affected by Abraham's concept of God as Covenant-Maker than by any of the other socialized concepts. Second in importance seems to be the concept of God as Deliverer.

From the Abraham narrative attention is now directed to some of the outstanding passages in the Old Testament outside that narrative to picture what effect Abraham had on Jewish thinking in Old Testament times.

A Chart to Show the Socialization of Abraham's God Concept



C. SOCIALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OUTSIDE THE ABRAHAM NARRATIVE

In an attempt to organize the various passages in which reference is made to Abraham, certain basic concepts centering in the patriarch's experience with Jehovah have been chosen for consideration. They are as follows:

1. The Oath Which Jehovah Sware Unto Abraham

Genesis 26.3: Jehovah has told Isaac not to go down into Egypt because of the famine for "I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham your father" (וְהֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־הַשְּׁבֻעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ).

Deuteronomy 9.5: Moses tells the Israelites that they are not going into the Land of Promise because of their own rightouesness, but because the Canaanites are wicked and because Jehovah wishes to establish "the word" which he "sware unto their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob"(וּלְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־הַדָּבָר).

Deuteronomy 29.13: Moses tells the Israelites that they are gathered on the plains of Moab that God might covenant with them as his own people, "That he may establish thee. . . as he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham. ."

Exodus 32.13: Moses prays to Jehovah to be merciful to the Israelites after they had made the golden calf. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest בָּךְ (by thine own self)."

2. The Land Which Jehovah Sware Unto Abraham

Genesis 50.24: Jospeh tells his brethren that God will bring them אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

Exodus 6.8: God tells Moses that he is to inform the Israelites that God will bring them to the land which he lifted up his hand (i.e., to swear) to give (נָשָׂאתִי אֶת־יָדִי לָתֵת) to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

Numbers 32.11: Moses quotes Jehovah as saying that none of those who came up out of Egypt "shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham."

3. Jehovah, the God of Abraham

Genesis 26.24: Jehovah tells Isaac in a dream,

אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ

Genesis 28.13: Jehovah says to Jacob in his vision at Bethel,

אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ

Genesis 31.42: Jacob tells Laban in somewhat bitter tones,

לוּלֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם . . . had been with me, surely now thou hadst sent me away empty."

Genesis 32.9 (verse 10 in the Hebrew text): At Peniel Jacob prays in desperation, "O God of my father Abraham. ."

Genesis 48.15: Jacob in blessing Jospeh's sons invokes the blessing of הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְּכוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם (the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk).

Exodus 3,6: God, speaking to Moses out of the burning bush, identifies himself as "The God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The same self-identification is made in verses 15 and 16. In verse 15 God tells Moses that "this is my name for ever." It is quite generally agreed that the success of Moses in getting the Israelites to follow him was dependent on the fact that the same God he represented had

appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Only so was he accepted by them as their leader.[1]

I Kings 18.36: The prophet Elijah, indesperate contest with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, prays to Jehovah the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

II Chronicles 30.6: Hezekiah's letters, summoning the Israelites to keep the Passover, contain the admonition to "turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham. ."

4. God's Covenant With Abraham

Exodus 2.24: The suffering of Israel in Egypt causes God to remember

אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם

Leviticus 26.42: If Israel will repent and be humble then God will remember his covenant. . . with Abraham.

II Kings 13.23: Jehovah has compassion on Israel during the period of Hazael's oppression because of his covenant with Abraham.

I Chronicles 16.16 and Psalm 105.9: The psalm sung on the occasion of David's bringing the Ark to Jerusalem here mentions the covenant of God with Abraham.

5. Character Sketch

The following passages with reference to Abraham have been grouped together to give a sort of character sketch of the patriarch:

Genesis 26.5: God promises to bless Isaac because

שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרֹתָי

(Abraham heard my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws).

II Chronicles 20.7: Jehoshaphat in his prayer speaks of אַבְרָהָם אֹהֲבֶךָ (thy friend). In a similar designation in Isaiah 41.8 God calls Abraham "my friend".

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[1]Refer again to the prophecies in Genesis 15.

Nehemiah 9.7: In a public confession the Levites pray to Jehovah who chose Abram (בָּחַרְתָּ) and named his name Abraham (וְשַׂמְתָּ שְׁמוֹ אַבְרָהָם).

Deuteronomy 9. 27: Moses prays at Sinai that God will remember his servants (לְעַבָדֶיךָ) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Micah 7.20: "Thou wilt show thy faithfulness to Jacob and thy lovingkindness to Abraham (חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם)".

This picture of the patriarch shows one who hears God's voice, is obedient , a servant of God. More than a servant, he is God's friend, especially chosen by him and given a new name, the recipient of God's lovingkindness.

6. Special References to Abraham

Genesis 28.4: Isaac blesses Jacob, being sent to Paddan-Aram, with the בִּרְכַּת אַבְרָהָם (blessing of Abraham).

Exodus 6.3: God to Moses: וָאֵרָא אֶל-אַבְרָהָם (אֵל)...בְּאֵל שַׁדָּי

(I appeared unto Abraham. . . as El Shaddai)

Joshua 24.2,3: Terah, Abraham and Nahor וַיַּעַבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים

(served other gods). And "I took your father Abraham. . . and led him all through the land of Canaan."

Isaiah 51.2: The prophet is giving encouragement to the righteous by telling them to look to their past history, "unto Abraham your father. . "

On the following page are two small tables to indicate the frequency of occurrence of the name of Abraham in the Old Testament outside the Abraham narrative.

Table II. Frequency of Patriarchal Names in the Old Testament Outside the Abraham Narrative

Name	Frequency
"Abraham"	37
"Abraham and Isaac"	4
"Abraham and Jacob"	1
"Abraham, Isaac, and Israel"	4
"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"	21

Table III. References to Abraham By Books in the Old Testament Outside The Abraham Narrative

Book	Frequency
Genesis	23
Exodus	9
Leviticus	1
Numbers	1
Deuteronomy	7
Joshua	2
Kings	2
Chronicles	8
Nehemiah	1
Psalms	4
Isaiah	4
Jeremiah	1
Ezekiel	1
Micah	1

7. Observations and Conclusions

From the above data it is possible to make the following observations and conclusions:

a) Abraham is not widely mentioned outside the Torah.

b) Abraham is usually included in the general term "fathers" until the conquest of Canaan. After that the fathers usually mean those who left Egypt.

c) The covenant idea is firmly associated with Abraham.

d) The references to Abraham in the historical books and the prophets, though few, are nevertheless significant.

e) Abraham is widely used as a part of the formula or shibboleth, "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

f) The picture of Abraham outside the Abraham narrative compares quite favorably with that in the narrative. Abraham is important in the religious thinking of Israel.

Attention is now directed to New Testament passages where the name of Abraham is mentioned, this being another area of the socialization of the patriarch's religious consciousness.

D. SOCIALIZATION OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Abraham takes a prominent place in the teachings of the New Testament. Some of the more outstanding frames of reference in which he appears will now be considered, not necessarily in the order of their importance, since that would be difficult to determine, but simply as a means of organization of the available data.

1. Abraham as an Illustration of the Faith System

The fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans contains a clear picture of what the great missionary meant by the faith system. Using Abraham as an example he says that "if Abraham was justified by works he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." He is quoting Genesis 15.6 here, a verse which seems to have made a great impression on New Testament writers, for it is also quoted in Galations 3.6, James 2.23 and alluded to in many other instances. Paul in Romans 4 goes on to declare that Abraham's faith was prior to and not a result of circumcision. The promise to Abraham's seed was not through the law and its rites, but through the righteousness of faith. Abraham, the founder of the race, is its perfect example at this point. If anyone could have gained salvation through works it should have been he, but the scripture specifically states that his righteousness was through faith.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews also uses Abraham as an illustration of one who had proper faith (11.8,17). Jesus also seems to link Abraham with the kind of faith required to enter his Kingdom (Matthew 8.11).

2. Abraham's Children

The Jews in New Testament times especially prided themselves on being children of Abraham. They thought in genealogical terms, but New Testament writers invariably attached a spiritual connotation to the term. A child of Abraham was one who had his faith. John the Baptist makes this clear (Matthew 3.9, Luke 3.8).

The classic example of the New Testament teaching on Abraham's children is the passage John 8. 31-59. Jesus said to the Jews who were proud of their ancestry, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (verse 39). Verse 56 of the passage is interesting: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." Whatever Abraham saw of Christ's day was through faith, something which his seed in Jesus' day lacked.

Paul in Galatians 3 presents another outstanding discussion on true children of Abraham. "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." (verse 7). Abraham has become the very symbol of faith in the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

3. The God Of Abraham

Exodus 3.6 must have made a lasting impression on most of the New Testament writers. God's announcement to Moses in the burning bush that he was "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" is referred to by Jesus in refuting the Sadducees, (Matthew 22.32 and Mark 12.26). Stephen makes the same reference in his defense just before his martyrdom (Acts 7.32) In fact, Stephen makes at least five references to Abraham in order to appeal to his Jewish persecutors. The God of Abraham hadn't changed with the coming of Jesus, although He came to teach more about Abraham's God.

4. Miscellaneous References

a) In the genealogies of Jesus (Matthew 1.1,2 and Luke 3.34) Abraham takes an important place.

b) Mary in the Magnificat and Zecharias in the Benedictus (Luke 1. 55,73) mention Abraham. He is, in fact, the only person mentioned from the Old Testament period.

c) Luke 16.22ff: The beggar who dies at the rich man's gates gets carried to Abraham's bosom. Whatever that signifies, at least the righteous are going to be with Abraham in the after life.

d) Peter, in his sermon on Solomon's Porch, makes two references to Abraham (Acts 3.13,25).

e) Hebrews 7 has a fairly lengthy discussion on Melchizedek and his relation to Abraham (verses 1-10).

f) James 2.23: Abraham is here called the Friend of God.

g) I Peter 3.6: This rather amusing passage: "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."

5. Conclusions

On the strength of the foregoing passages the following conclusions might be drawn concerning the place of Abraham in the New Testament:

a) He is almost invariably connected with the idea of faith.

b) He is always set up as an example.

c) He is in the minds and hearts of almost all the New Testament writers. There are 33 references to him in the four Gospel accounts, 8 in the Acts., 19 in the Pauline epistles, 10 in Hebrews, 3 miscellaneous.

d) He is thought of as worshiping the same God as those who mention him.

e) He is very nearly the most important character in the Old Testament as far as the New Testament writers are concerned.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS BASED ON A STUDY OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS BASED ON A STUDY OF ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

The preceding six chapters have concluded what this thesis set out to do, namely, to examine carefully the religious consciousness of Abraham as found in the Abraham narrative to see whether or not it conformed to a theistic pattern, such patternbased on Otto's non-rational elements plus a pre-rational personality element.

All that remains for this brief concluding chapter is to make a concise summary of whatever valid conclusions may be drawn and to make suggestions for further study. Conclusions have been divided into those related directly to the patriarch's religious consciousness and those related to critical problems which found a partial answer or substantiation through this study.

A. CONCLUSIONS AS TO ABRAHAM'S RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

1. This study has established the fact that Abraham was a typical theist in his religion. All the non-rational elements that were assumed at the outset to be basic to the theistic experience, making such experience qualitatively different from other types of religious experience, were found in abundance in Abraham's religious awareness, his responses and rationalizations. It seems rather remarkable that so much data of the type sought could be found in so short a portion of the Genesis account.

2. This study has re-affirmed the fact that Abraham was a great religious genius, inclined to mysticism, with an unusual

sensitivity and awareness of God's presence and direction. He seems to be a man well in advance of his time, even of his family, spiritually; yet he is profoundly influenced by the culture of his day.

3. The wealth of detailed description of his religious life is of such a convincing nature as to indicate his historicity even though there were no external evidence to support it.

4. His best played religious roles are those of Mystic, Obedient Servant, and Pioneer of Faith, and he plays them all as a theist.

5. His use of several names for Deity does not seem necessarily to require acceptance of the multiple document theory, although such acceptance would not invalidate the statements just made concerning his religious consciousness. By whatever name he called his God, He was one God, who inspired deep in his soul the various elements basic to the theistic experience.

6. Abraham has exerted a tremendous influence on New Testament teaching, particularly with respect to the faith angle. Old Testament writers seem to have studied Abraham for the origins of the covenant and the promises to Israel without grasping the true spiritual stature of the man.

B. CONCLUSIONS ON CRITICAL PROBLEMS

1. The Multiple Document hypothesis can find good supporting data in the Abraham narrative, but it is not the final word in the explanation of the several names for Deity used here. The writer believes that there are several strands of tradition interwoven here,

without changing the significance of Abraham's basic religious consciousness.

2. The historicity of Abraham is as well established as is possible without his epitaph and tomb. That which Hastings calls "internal consistency"[1] in the story of the patriarchs is what is most conclusive proof. Historicity of the patriarchs fits all known facts and accounts for subsequent developments. Every recent archaeological discovery having a bearing on patriarchal times further validates the Abraham narrative.

3. Finegan's dating of Abraham as arriving in Canaan in 1935 B.C. (see page 29) seems best to fit all the facts.

C. PROBLEMS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. The writer would have liked to have found time to explore more carefully into apocryphal and later rabbinical estimates of Abraham, such traditions as his capturing Damascus, that he was the apostle of monotheism to Egyptians and Babylonians, that he was borne to heaven in a fiery chariot, etc.

2. Another related problem is to discover just what is the present day Jewish interpretation of Abraham, especially their appraisal of the treatment the patriarch has received in the New Testament.

3. What is the relation of the present Ishmael-Isaac

. . . . . .

[1] Hastings: op. cit., p. 115

struggle to the Old Testament Abraham? Originally the writer had planned to include this problem in a consideration of the socialization of Abraham's religious experience, but it later seemed as though he was too close to the struggle to interpret it adequately.

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