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# A History of the Research of Exodus 18:1-12 with a Critical Evaluation and Suggestions for Further Progress

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# A HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH OF EXODUS 18:1-12

## With a Critical Evaluation and Suggestions for Further Progress

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

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by

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May 1973

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I dedicate this work to my wife and children who allowed me to leave them behind in Hong Kong to begin my graduate studies in 1965-1967, and again to work on this dissertation since July, 1971.

May all honour, glory and thanks be to God our gracious Father who saved us from sin in Jesus Christ and brought us to have faith in Him!

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### The Contents and Problems of Exodus 18

Major commentators did not pay much attention to Exodus 18 until 1862 when a new theory called the Kenite hypothesis was proposed. What is the Kenite hypothesis? Why are scholars interested in studying Exodus 18 after the proposal of this new theory? What is this chapter talking about and what kinds of problems does it involve which would validate it for research?

Exodus 18 is distinctly divided into two sections. The first section, verses 1-12, depicts Jethro bringing Moses' wife and two sons to visit Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped. After hearing of Moses' report in regard to all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, Jethro himself praised Yahweh. A burnt offering and sacrifices were offered to God and a communion meal was held also. The second section, verses 13-27, is a record of how Moses took the advice of his father-in-law, selected able men of Israel and made them heads over the people. They were to judge the people at all times, bringing only difficult cases to Moses.

The essential problems in this chapter on which scholars disagree are the origin of the cult and of the judicial

system of Israel. The cult problem is mainly connected with the appellation of God and the origin of the worship of Yahweh. In His revelation to Moses in Ex. 6:3, God says that He appeared to the fathers as El Shaddai, and He did not make Himself known to them by the name Yahweh. In an earlier passage, in chapter 3, Moses was commissioned through the theophany of Yahweh in the burning bush while he was keeping the flock of his father-in-law. Since his father-in-law was a priest of Midian (3:1), and in other places he was called a Kenite (Judg. 1:16; 4:11),[1] scholars suggest that the Kenites worshipped Yahweh before the Israelites and that it was from them that Moses learned the name Yahweh. This idea--with many variations--is called the Kenite hypothesis.[2] Therefore, the proponents of the Kenite hypothesis consider it highly significant for the origin of Yahwism when Jethro offered sacrifices to God after he had confessed, "Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods." (verse 11). The opponents of this theory, however, either suggest that Jethro merely identified his God with Yahweh, the God of Israel,[3] or simply say that Jethro, the gentile priest, was converted

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[1]The Biblical record implies that Cain is the ancestor of the Kenites, and he is said to have borne the mark of Yahweh (Gen. 4:15); in the Hebrew text, in Judg. 4:11, the Kenites are called Cain just as the Israelites are called Israel.

[2]Infra, Chapter II.

[3]Cf. Martin Buber, Moses (Oxford and London: East and West Library, 1944), pp. 96-98.

here to the worship of Yahweh.[4] Who is right? Or, are there other possible solutions? These questions have stimulated many discussions.

The judicial system presents another kind of problem. Since Moses was adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter and she brought him up as her own son (Exodus 2), and since he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (confer Acts 7:20-22), why did he need a bedouin priest to tell him what to do? On the other hand, King Jehoshaphat's judicial reform (2 Chron. 19:4-11) records almost the same requirements for the judges as Jethro suggested to Moses; is, then, Exodus 18 aetiological, attributing the rationale for reform to Moses? Or, since Chronicles is a late source, and the judicial reform of Jehoshaphat is not recorded in Kings, would the Chronicler have used Deut. 17:8-13 as a basis for a fictitious report concerning Jehoshaphat in regard to his judiciary reform?

The origin of the judicial system of Israel, though it is an interesting and an important topic, will have to be left out here; its very scope, significance, and size is more than sufficient reason for suggesting that it should be a topic of another complete study. Since the interest which aroused scholars to make studies on Exodus 18 is centered on the Kenite hypothesis, the objective of this dissertation is

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[4]Cf. Theophile J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 88.

1. to make a historical study of the research of Exodus 18, especially verses 1-12;

2. to search out the validity or error of the Kenite hypothesis as based on Ex. 18:1-12; and

3. to observe the new dimensions of the study of Ex. 18:1-12 growing out of the study of the Kenite hypothesis.

## The Method of the Research

After the Kenite hypothesis was proposed in Germany in 1862, immense energy has been spent and a vast amount of material has been published in connection with the pros and cons of this theory based on the text in question. To familiarize himself with the problem, the first step the present writer took was to do research on the name Yahweh, the God of Israel, in regard to its etymology, its form, its meaning and its pronunciation. Much has been said about them but nothing seems to have certainty except for the pronunciation as Yahweh. The second step this writer took was to compile a bibliography of advocates and opponents of the Kenite hypothesis. Since the materials produced in the last one hundred and ten years are quite numerous, only selected items can be treated in detail. Authors are selected for this study, either because they have distinct points to speak for or against the Kenite hypothesis, or because they allude to some new dimension of the study beside the pros and cons of this theory.

In order to capture an over-all view of the research of Ex. 18:1-12, the study will proceed from a historical

perspective, stating and critically evaluating in chronological order the theses of major scholars both for and against the Kenite hypothesis. Then the research will turn to a new dimension of the study of this pericope. Finally, the dissertation will present a critical scrutiny of the text itself. By way of textual criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, and historical analysis of the text, the study will make an attempt to search out what the text meant in its original writer's mind.

## Technical Notations

As stated in the foregoing, the research centered its study on the origin of the Yahweh cult in Israel; and the cult problem rests mainly on the appellation of God, the Tetragrammaton of the personal name of the God of Israel. For the sake of convenience and consistency, this dissertation will use the spelling "Yahweh" without underlining since it is considered a proper noun in English. Even in the direct quotations, the different transliterations will be arbitrarily changed to "Yahweh" except when it is used to illustrate the original writer's point of view or for distinguishing the differentiations. Whenever it is necessary to render the letters of the Tetragrammaton, this will appear as "YHWH" except when the Hebrew יהוה is used.

Quotations from the Bible will be the writer's own translation from the original Hebrew text, except when the

wording of the Revised Standard Version is more appropriate. Any other versions will be specified. When the numeral of the chapter or verse in Hebrew text differs from English, the numbers of the latter will be inserted in a bracket immediately following the former.

## CHAPTER II

## EXODUS 18 AND THE PROPONENTS OF THE KENITE HYPOTHESIS

The reason C. H. W. Brekelmans made a special study on Exodus 18, is that, as he himself says, "This chapter is one of the main sources for the Kenite theory."[1] H. Holzinger,[2] G. A. Barton,[3] T. J. Meek,[4] and others all acknowledge that the Kenite hypothesis was first suggested in 1862 by Fr. W. Ghillany, writing under the pseudonym of Richard von der Alm.[5] M. L. Newman,[6] however, attests that the Kenite hypothesis of the origin of Yahweh worship, was first popularized by Karl Budde; and recently, it has been

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[1]C. H. W. Brekelmans, Exodus xviii and the Origins of Yahwism in Israel," Oudtestamentische Studiën, X (1954), 215.

[2]H. Holzinger, Exodus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1900), p. 13.

[3]G. A. Barton, A Sketch of Semitic Origins: Social and Religious (New York: The McMillan Company, 1902), p. 275.

[4]T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 86.

[5]See Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1862), pp. 216, 321, and 480. Cf. Meek, Ibid.; H. H. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran: Studies in the Old Testament (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 51; M. Buber, Kingship of God (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), p. 27, n. 3. However, Buber mistakenly dates it in 1863.

[6]M. L. Newman, The People of the Covenant: A Study of Israel from Moses to the Monarchy (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 25-26.

vigorously espoused by H. H. Rowley. It is true that Bernhard Stade[7] adopted this theory earlier than Budde, yet what Stade has said about it is very simple and limited.[8]

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theses of major proponents of the Kenite hypothesis such as Budde, Köhler, Rowley, Plastaras, and Hyatt, to try to determine the significance of the Kenite theory today.

## A Review of the Major Proponents of the Hypothesis

### Karl Budde

In his 1898-1899 American Lectures on the History of Religions, Karl Ferdinand Reinhardt Budde (1850-1935) devoted his first of six lectures to "The Origin of the Yahweh-Religion."[9] Through these lectures which were subsequently published, he became known as an ardent supporter of the Kenite hypothesis.

To understand Budde's view of the Kenite theory, one must become acquainted with his approach to the themes of the Exodus, the Sinaitic Covenant, and the Conquest. He attests

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[7]As early as 1887, B. Stade in his book entitled Geschichte des Volkes Israel (Berlin: G. Grote, 1887, pp. 130-131) already espoused the Kenite hypothesis as H. H. Rowley states (From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology [London: The British Academy, 1950], pp. 149-150, n.).

[8]Cf. Bernhard Stade, Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, Vol. I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1905), 42.

[9]Karl Budde, Religion of Israel to the Exile (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), pp. 1-38.

that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Ramses II (c.1290-1224 B.C.), and his son Marniptah I (c.1224-1216 B.C.), the Pharaoh of the Exodus.[10] The Sinaitic Covenant, as Budde contends, "is nothing else than an alliance of Israel with the nomadic tribe of the Kenites at Sinai, which has as its self-evident condition the adoption of their religion, Yahweh-worship."[11] He says further, "However, this alliance is rightly called in the Old Testament tradition a covenant of Israel, not with the Kenites, but with Yahweh."[12] In regard to the Conquest, Budde holds a "fragmentary theory." Namely, there were then several groups of people infiltrating Canaan,[13] and the House of Joseph alone was the kernel of the Israelites rescued from Egyptian bondage.[14]

Budde avers that "the origin of the Yahweh-religion as the religion of Israel coincides with the origin of the

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[10]Ibid., p. 5. It seems Budde is not sure of the dates of these Pharaohs, he simply says that the Exodus is "somewhere about 1250" (p. 4).

[11]Ibid., p. 24.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Cf. Ibid., pp. 48-54. Budde indicates that the Northern group of tribes were Issachar, Zebulon, Naphtali and Asher; the House of Joseph, consisting of Ephraim, Manasseh and the young tribe of Benjamin, settled down in the hill-country of Ephraim; and the tribe of Judah, with Simeon and their non-Israelite allies, the Kenizzites, Kenites, and Jerachmeelites, conquered a seat for themselves in the mountain country and in the steppe land of the Negeb.

[14]Ibid., pp. 10, 49.

nation itself."[15] With its exodus from Egypt and the beginning of its history as a distinct nation, Israel "turned to a new religion, the worship of Yahweh, the mountain-God of the Kenites, at Sinai."[16] His contention, based on the Biblical traditions, is first of all, that Yahweh is a mountain-God who dwells at Sinai, or Horeb. In the burning bush when Yahweh appears to Moses in the mountain of God, He asks Moses to take off his shoes from his feet because the place where he stands is "holy ground" (Ex. 3:4-5) which implies Yahweh dwells there. It is this mountain of God on which Yahweh sits enthroned in thick clouds at the giving of the Law and on which Moses was with Him alone for forty days and forty nights in order to receive His commandments (Exodus 19; 34). When the Israelites were about to depart from Sinai, they asked whether their new God would accompany them. The result of the long negotiation was that the Angel of Yahweh will go with them but Yahweh Himself will remain in His home at Sinai (Ex. 23:20; 32:34; 33:1-3). In the Song of Deborah, Budde contends that because Yahweh dwells at Sinai, "Yahweh must come through the air from His abode on Mount Sinai to give His people the victory (Judg. 5:4-5)."[17] Several centuries later, Elijah had to go to the mountain of God, Horeb, in order to seek Yahweh (1 Kings 19).

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[15] Ibid., p. 1.

[16] Ibid., p. 25.

[17] Ibid., p. 18.

Since Moses encountered Yahweh who dwells at Sinai, Yahweh must have been worshipped by the people who resided there, Budde reasons. Who, then, are these people? Budde's answer is the Kenites. For the tribe with which Moses found refuge and into which he married bears the name Kenite (Judg. 1:16) although in other places it is Midianite (Ex. 3:1, and others). But Budde says bluntly that "the Kenites were a tribe of the Midianites."[18] Since the Kenites were residing in that area, this is why Moses begged his father-in-law to accompany the Israelites and guide them through the wilderness (Num. 10:29-32). So the Kenites entered Canaan with Israel, and, in company with Judah, the Kenites conquered for themselves an area in the extreme south, where they continued to lead a nomadic life (Judg. 1:16). Because the Kenites were Yahweh-worshippers as the Israelites were, in the Song of Deborah the Kenite woman Jael is praised for her bravery in the fight for Yahweh (Judg. 5:24-27; confer 4:17-24); their kindness toward Israel was remembered by Saul (1 Sam. 15:6); David united them with Judah (1 Sam. 30:29; confer 27:10); Jonadab, the son of Rechab, a zealot Yahweh-worshipper, helped Jehu overthrow and extirpate the royal house of Ahab which had devoted itself to the worship of Baal (2 Kings 10:15-16). According to the genealogy of 1 Chron. 2:55, Rechab was a Kenite. His descendants, the Rechabites, at the siege of Jerusalem by

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[18] Ibid., p. 19.

the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, indicated to Jeremiah that they drank no wine, they had no vineyard or field or seed, they built no houses but lived in tents (Jeremiah 35). They have practiced the command of their ancestor Jonadab, to live in conformity with the will of Yahweh, the God of the desert. Through these facts, Budde says that the Kenites were "far beyond a mere participation in the Yahweh religion. On the contrary, everything indicates that they did not adopt the worship of Yahweh from others, but were conscious of being the proper, the genuine, the original worshippers of Yahweh."[19]

The reason the Biblical accounts recorded the origin of the Yahweh religion differently, according to Budde's conception is that the oldest Israelite document, J, that is, the Yahwist,

> makes use quite naïvely of the name Yahweh as the name of the true God from the creation of the world, and, accordingly, puts it in the mouth of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is to be explained from the home of the document. For . . . it comes from the land of Judah, the land with which the Kenites had closely associated themselves. This is the narrative which knows most about the Kenites, and in fact it is this which relates the Kenite traditions of the olden time. And just because the Kenites did not, like Israel, adopt Yahweh first under Moses, but had worshipped Him as their God from time immemorial, this Judaic history knows nothing different. It sees in the call of Moses only a new revelation of the old God.[20]

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[19] Ibid., p. 21.

[20] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

However, the other ancient document E,

> which is derived from the Joseph tribes of the Northern Kingdom, just because Joseph was the real captive in Egypt, cannot forget how events really came to pass. It knows, and therefore bears witness to the fact, that Yahweh was for Israel a new God. It testifies, further, that Moses' alien relatives had worshipped this God before Israel itself.[21]

E and the late document P show that when Moses was called to go back to his brethren in Egypt, he did not know the name of the God who sent him. So in E (Ex. 3:13-15), Moses asked directly what His name was. P, on the other hand, "does not think it proper that questions should be addressed by men to the Deity, and substitutes simple revelation (Ex. 6:2ff.)."[22] Therefore, for E and P, Budde argues, "the people of Israel who are languishing in Egypt, have not known Yahweh at all up to this time."[23] As a matter of fact, to Israel of the Exodus, Yahweh is a new name and a new God.

How can Israel accept a new God whom they have not known at all? To this Budde replies,

> The Israel of that time had but one desire and one aim, deliverance from bondage in Egypt. If it became converted to the new God, Yahweh, it took this step because it gave credence to Moses' preaching that this God was able and willing to grant its wish. . . . Moses and the people which believed him attributed to the mountain God of Sinai the power to perform great and warlike deeds, and at the same time the will to make use of this power in Israel's behalf.[24]

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[21] Ibid., p. 22.

[22] Ibid., p. 14.

[23] Ibid., p. 15.

[24] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

Truly, Israel found the God they wanted. Yahweh not only delivered them from the Egyptian slavery, He also proved to be a war-god as the Biblical traditions show. Moses' prayer to Yahweh at the beginning of each journey is significant: "Arise, Yahweh, and let your enemies be scattered, and let them that hate you flee before your face." (Num. 10:35). He prayed at the Ark of Yahweh which the people believed was Yahweh's dwelling place and which they took with them in all their travels. Through faith in this new God, Israel defeated its enemies, and conquered the land of Canaan. Later, when Israel was defeated by the Philistines, they brought the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh into the camp. So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "Their God has come into the camp. Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians." (1 Sam. 4:7-8). Even in David's time, the Ark of the Covenant was still brought to the field as the best ally (2 Sam. 11:11; 15:24-29). Budde continues by saying, "The armies of Israel are Yahweh's armies (1 Sam. 17:26 et al.). In short, Yahweh remains for centuries a war-god above all else for ancient Israel."[25]

> Yahweh is a war-god. Budde contends further that
>
> Yahweh wields the most terrible of weapons, the lightning. He appears in the storm at the giving of the law on Sinai (Exodus 19). He rides on the storm to the Deborah battle (Judg. 5:4f.). He reveals Himself in the storm to Elijah on Horeb (I Ki. 19:11ff.) after

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[25] Ibid., p. 27.

> having consumed by His lightning Elijah's sacrifice on Carmel (I Ki. 18:38). Poetic descriptions also picture Him as revealing Himself in the storm (for example, Ps. 18 and Hab. 3). Akin to these are the representations of the burning bush seen by Moses at his call, and the pillar of fire and smoke which accompanied the march of Israel through the wilderness. The lightning is called the "fire of Yahweh" and "Yahweh's arrow"; the thunder "Yahweh's voice." The rain-bow in the clouds is Yahweh's bow, with which He has shot His arrows, the lightning-flashes, and which He now lays mercifully aside. Yahweh's rule over the storm is explained by his dwelling on Sinai. For the storms gather round the peaks of the mountains south of Palestine. They are at home there, whereas Palestine itself is a land where storms are few. What wonder, then, that the joyful conviction dawned on Moses, when a fugitive in the desert, that the mountain God who sat there enthroned over the storm-clouds was the one to deliver his people out of the power of the Egyptians!
>
> What Israel's transition to Yahweh-worship signified at that time is, therefore, apparent. Israel needed a God mighty in war, and found Him here. So Yahweh remained henceforth, after the entrance into Canaan as well as before, the national God of united Israel, from whom martial aid, above all, was expected in national crises.[26]

When he comes to Exodus 18, Budde considers this chapter to be the fundamental evidence of the Kenite theory. For when Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, heard that Yahweh had brought Israel safely out of Egypt, he went to "the mountain of God" to meet Moses. When Moses told him how everything took place, he praised Yahweh with joy. This, Budde contends, should not be interpreted that Jethro, the heathen, now recognized the true God in Yahweh, the God of Israel, and did Him homage. On the contrary, Jethro expressed "his proud joy that <u>his</u> God, Yahweh, the God of the Kenites, had proved

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[26]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 27-28.

Himself mightier than all other gods."[27] Budde's view of Ex. 18:12 is that the sacrifice was not performed by Aaron, nor by Moses, but by Jethro, the priest of the God Yahweh. And to Budde, the saying of this verse, "offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God," there are three important significances: First, the "God" here is Yahweh. The representatives of Israel simply could not worship with Jethro if it had not been Yahweh. The use of "God" instead of "Yahweh" is this document's habitual usage. Secondly, it is not Jethro who turns to a new God here, but Israel, in the persons of Aaron and the elders, "for the first time take part in a solemn Yahweh sacrifice."[28] Thirdly, the name of Moses is wanting here, because he is

> related to the Kenites, enjoying the privileges of their tribe, he has long shared in the Yahweh worship, and no longer needs to be taken into its fellowship. But Aaron and the elders of Israel need this initiation as representative of the redeemed nation which has vowed its service to Yahweh.[29]

Although Israel accepted Yahweh, the God of the Kenites, the Yahweh-religion of the Kenites and of the Israelites was not the same. Not only did the primitive worshippers of Yahweh, the Kenite Rechabites, continue to lead a nomadic

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[27] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., p. 24.

life, considering a settled agricultural life to be incompatible with their religion, while the Israelites went on to develop a more highly civilized life; but there were also more important ethical elements involved. For the Kenites,

> like numberless other tribes and peoples, had had their god from time immemorial. But Israel had turned to Him of its own will, and chosen Him as its God. The Kenites served their god because they knew no better; because he was of their blood-kindred, and had grown up in inseparable union with them; because his worship belonged to the necessary and almost unconscious expression of the life of the people. This was still the case with their remote descendants, the Rechabites of the time of Jeremiah. But Israel served Yahweh because He had kept His word; because He had won Israel as His possession by an inestimable benefit; because it owed Him gratitude and fidelity in return for this boon, and could ensure its further prosperity only by evidences of such fidelity.
>
> Thus, in the very transition to this new religion, virtues were both awakened in the heart of the people and maintained in continuous watchfulness. If Yahweh-worship itself had no ethical character, this relation to Him had such character, and all future development could spring therefrom.[30]

And so, Budde concludes,

> Israel's religion became ethical because it was a religion of choice and not of nature, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time.[31]

Summing up Budde's position on the Kenite theory, we find that he attests that Yahweh was a mountain God who dwells at Sinai. The people who then worshipped Yahweh in the Sinai wilderness were the Kenites. The Kenites did not adopt Yahweh from others. Biblical traditions show that to

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[30] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[31] Ibid., p. 38.

Israel in Exodus, Yahweh is a new name and a new God. The reason the Israelites accepted this new God was because of their need of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. And Yahweh, the war-god, served their need. Ex. 18:1-12 proved Budde's claim because when Jethro heard what Yahweh had done for Moses and Israel, he went to the mountain of God where Yahweh dwelt to meet Moses; after hearing Yahweh had delivered them, Jethro rejoiced because his God, Yahweh, proved to be greater than all gods. As the priest of Yahweh, he made an offering and sacrifice to God.

Ludwig Köhler

In his book, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Ludwig Hugo Köhler (1880-1956)[32] mentions that there are two contradictory statements in the Bible concerning the origin of the name Yahweh. According to the one recorded in Gen. 4:26, the name Yahweh was known already from the time of Enosh. According to the other, in Ex. 3:13-14 and 6:2-3, the name Yahweh was first learned in the days of Moses.[33] If one assumes that the name Yahweh was always known, then there are three very difficult questions which just cannot be answered: (1) How could the assertion be made that the name

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[32]First published in 1935 by J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen. The work used in this dissertation is the English translation based on the 3rd revised edition of 1953, translated by A. S. Todd, published in 1957 by The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

[33]Ibid., p. 44.

first became current in the days of Moses? (2) How did it happen that Yahweh became the God only of Israel? (3) Why is it that no traces remain of the knowledge of this name before Moses' day? If one asserts that the name Yahweh was first known in Israel at the time of Moses, then all these three questions disappear.[34]

Köhler states that the assertion that the worship of Yahweh begins with Moses is in accordance with the general view of the Old Testament. For it is in Moses' time that the personal names compounded with the divine name Yahweh begin to appear. The only exception is Jochebed, the name of Moses' mother. Köhler, in answering this "Jochebed" problem, not only mentions that Martin Noth doubts the equation of Jo and Yahweh,[35] and that Hans Bauer connects the name with the God YW from Ras Schamra,[36] but he also considers Ex. 6:20 and Num. 26:59 which record the name of Moses' mother, as late priestly writings. He holds that the first name which certainly contains the element of Yahweh is Joshua, the helper of Moses; from the period of the Judges there are only

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Cf. Martin Noth, Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966), p. 111.

[36]Hans Bauer, "Die Gottheiten von Ras Schamra," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LI (1933), pp. 92-93.

five such theophoric names;[37] and they become gradually more frequent in the time of the kings.[38] The divergence from this assertion of Gen. 4:26 that men began to call upon the name of Yahweh, Köhler says, "is to be explained as a naïve application of a later usage to earliest times by an author who is not concerned with questions of history and theology."[39] Concerning Ex. 3:13-14, "Two things are clear," Köhler states, "that God designates himself to Moses as the God who was worshipped by the fathers of Israel, and that God brings to light for Moses the name Yahweh as a name hitherto unknown."[40] In regard to Ex. 6:2-3, when God says to Moses, "I am Yahweh, and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh, I did not make myself known to them," Köhler finds it a statement of historical character. For he says,

> What we have here is progressive revelation. At the first and preparatory stage, God makes Himself known to Abraham, from whom stems not only Israel but also Ishmael, as El Shaddai. At the second and final stage where Moses plays the chief role, Moses, who through the Exodus founded the people of the Old Covenant, the same God makes Himself known as Yahweh; and this name remains for all time.[41]

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[37]Joash (Judg. 6:11), Jotham (9:5), Micayahu (abbreviated to Micah (17:1), Jonathan (18:30) and Joel (1 Sam. 8:2). Cf. Noth, p. 107.

[38]Köhler, p. 242.

[39]Ibid., p. 44.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid., p. 43.

Köhler asserts that the following points are therefore established:

> 1. Yahweh is a proper name. 2. The Old Testament does not know what this proper name means. 3. This not knowing is a no longer knowing, since the name Yahweh cannot be meaningless. 4. It follows that the name Yahweh as a name with a meaning that is known belongs outside the Old Testament and before it in time. 5. Since it was through Moses that Israel came to knowledge of the name Yahweh, it must be Moses who learned the name outside Israel. Then in all probability Moses learned it either from the Egyptians or from the Midianites, and the Egyptians are immediately ruled out because the word Yahweh is not Egyptian but Semitic. The most probable account of the matter is therefore that the name was borrowed from the Midianites.[42]

He says further,

> One might object that Moses did not learn the name Yahweh from men but by direct revelation, but the objection cannot be sustained because the text runs "I am Yahweh" and not "You should call me Yahweh, should use the word Yahweh as my name."[43]

Why? Köhler argues,

> The meaning of the name would not in that case be included in the revelation; the name would be merely a sound serving as a name. That clearly contradicts Ex. 6:2, however, and from the days of Masorah and the Septuagint until the present day the attempt has been made to understand the word Yahweh not as a sound but as a meaningful name. The sentence "I am Yahweh" is meaningful only when it can be interpreted "I am the God whose name, Yahweh, you have already heard."[44]

Then, a big question is, where had Moses heard the name Yahweh? To answer this question, Köhler offers the

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[42] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[43] Ibid., p. 45.

[44] Ibid.

Kenite hypothesis. He holds that

> When Moses comes to the holy place where God reveals Himself, Ex. 3:5, he is on Midianite territory. Who regards the place as a holy place? Obviously the Midianites are the people who so regard it, and it is therefore the Midianites who knew and worshipped God as Yahweh before Moses. This is confirmed by the fact that Jethro, the priest of Midian (Ex. 3:1) when he visits Moses immediately offers a sacrifice for Yahweh, Ex. 18:12. One section of the Midianites is the Kenites.[45]

Then Köhler traces the historical relationship between the Kenites and the Israelites in a way similar to Budde's explanation.[46] After recalling that one tradition asserts Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite (Judg. 4:11), to show Moses' close connection with the Kenites, Köhler says,

> Finally the mark of Cain, which is a mark of protection, is evidence that the sons of Cain, the Kenites, though fugitives and wanderers are nevertheless under Yahweh's care, Gen. 4:13-15. There is therefore strong support for the theory that Moses took over the divine name Yahweh from the Kenites.[47]

H. H. Rowley

A casual reading of the works of Harold Henry Rowley (b. 1890), would find his view on the Kenite theory similar to that of Karl Budde but more elaborate. While both of them are agreed that the name and the worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel, come from the Kenites, the rest of their stance is different.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Supra, pp. 14-15.

[47] Ibid., p. 46.

Both Budde and Rowley consider the Israelites' occupation of Canaan accomplished by different groups moving in separate waves. However, by saying Moses' father-in-law yields to Moses' entreaty (Num. 10:29-32), "he and his tribe enter Canaan with Israel, and, in company with Judah, conquer for themselves a territory in the extreme south, where they continue their nomadic life (Judg. 1:16),"[48] Budde implies that the Southern group entered Canaan at the same time as the Northern group, or even later. Rowley, on the other hand, asserts that some Israelite tribes, that is, the Leah-tribes and the Concubine-tribes, pressed into Palestine from both north and south already in the Amarna age (c. 1400 B.C. and onwards). They gained a foothold in some parts of the country and then extended gradually; except for some of the Levite elements they did not go down to Egypt. Rowley says further,

> One group of these immigrants consisted of Judah, Simeon, Levi, and some associated Kenite and other elements. This group advanced northwards from Kadesh Barnea, where they had spent some time, and while the Judah group, together with the Kenites, got a foothold in the south,[49] Simeon and Levi pressed farther north to the Shechem district, where they were guilty of an act of treachery[50] which has echoes both in the Amarna

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[48]Budde, pp. 19-20.

[49]Concerning this, Rowley is referring to the episode of Judg. 1:16. Cf. his From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 101-102, especially, p. 101, n. 4.

[50]This treachery, as Rowley sees it, is the record of Genesis 34. Cf. Rowley, The Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 64; From Moses to Qumran, p. 56.

> letters and in the Old Testament. In consequence of this treachery they lost their hold on the Shechem district and were scattered.[51]

Since this group involved the Kenite elements--the Kenites have Cain as their eponymous ancestor,[52] and Cain is said to have borne the mark of Yahweh upon him,[53] it is highly probable that they are the original Yahweh worshippers--the worship of Yahweh might have spread from the Kenites throughout the group of associated tribes by infiltration. Rowley holds that Joseph was carried down into Egypt in the same age where in the reign of Ikhnaton (c. 1370-1353 B.C.) he rose to a position of eminence and power. Since the Biblical traditions mention that Joseph was sent from Hebron to Shechem to visit his brothers (Gen. 37:14), his journey to Egypt is represented "as taking place at a time when the Israelites were in two groups, in Judah and in the Shechem district, and it was from the latter group that he was carried away."[54] When Simeon and Levi failed to maintain themselves in Shechem as Genesis 34 has shown, they returned to Judah. Simeon became gradually absorbed in Judah as Judges 1 indicates; some Levite elements stayed with Judah,

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[51]Rowley, Re-discovery, p. 112. Cf. also From Moses to Qumran, p. 56.

[52]Cf. Judg. 4:11, where the Kenites are called Cain in the Hebrew, just as the Israelites are often called Israel.

[53]Gen. 4:15. Cf. B. Stade, "Das Kainszeichen," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, XIV (1894), 250-253, and Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, p. 53.

[54]Rowley, Re-discovery, p. 113.

while some of them, perhaps with others, went to Egypt in the search for food. They were recognized by Joseph since he was carried down from the same Shechem district. Later, some others were sent to join them. The group which Moses led out of Egypt to Sinai in about 1230 B.C., and thence by way of the Jordan River to the central highlands of Palestine, consisted principally of the Joseph tribes, with some Levite elements. However, Rowley affirms, "At this stage they were not in contact with the groups to the north and south of them who had come in in the Amarna age. Belts of Canaanite cities separated them for some considerable time."[55]

Rowley asserts that Moses was the descendant of both the Levite and the Kenite. Since the Yahweh-worshipping Kenites associated with the Israelites who entered Canaan from the south in the pre-Mosaic age, it was quite natural to have intermarriage among these associated tribes. "Such intermarriage," Rowley says, "could bring a Levite family into association with a Kenite family, and so bring a Kenite name into a Levite home."[56] After the Shechem treachery, Rowley states,

> Some of the Levites then appear to have gone into Egypt, and amongst them the ancestor of Moses' mother, who had married a Kenite woman. It is well known that names tend to recur in families, and this Kenite name might

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[55]Ibid., p. 115.

[56]Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, p. 56.

> have been passed down to become the name of Moses' mother, without involving any worship of Yahweh.[57]

Here Rowley not only deviates from Budde, he also approaches this so-called Achilles' heel of the Kenite theory--the name of Moses' mother--differently from Köhler. For Köhler goes along with Powis Smith,[58] in considering that Jochebed, the name of Moses' mother, came from the late source P, and it therefore need not be taken seriously.[59] By saying there was some Kenite blood in Moses, it seems that Rowley not only solves the problem of the name of Moses' mother just as the Biblical traditions recorded, and consider it as a theophorous name; he also reasons that this is why Moses fled to the Kenites' territory when he was forced to flee from Egypt. When Jacob feared his brother Esau's anger, he left home and fled to his mother's kindred (Gen. 27:43-45). So, it was natural for Moses to do the same. Further, if Moses did have some Kenite blood and the Kenites were the original Yahweh-worshipping people, then, "the name Yahweh might be known amongst the Israelites in Egypt, even though Yahweh was not the God whom they worshipped."[60] This, again, differs from Budde, for the latter considers Yahweh as a new name and

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Cf. J. M. Powis Smith, "Southern Influence upon Hebrew Prophecy," American Journal of Semitic Language and Literature, XXXV (1918-19), 15.

[59] Supra, p. 19.

[60] Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, p. 160.

a new God to the Israelites when they left Egypt and began their history as a nation.[61]

When did Yahweh become God of all Israel? As described in the foregoing, the Israelite tribes pressed into Palestine from the north and south in the Amarna age; in the last quarter of the thirteenth century B.C. the Joseph tribes, together with some Levite elements led by Moses, occupied the central highlands, but were separated from other kindred tribes. Therefore, Rowley says,

> The northern tribes whose settlement took place in the Amarna age seem to have had no associated Yahweh-worshipping Kenites with them, nor yet to have shared in the experience of Sinai. Hence there is no reason to suppose that they were Yahweh-worshippers at all when they first came into the land. When Deborah gathered together the kindred Israelite tribes from north and south of the Vale of Esdraelon, she did so in the name of Yahweh, whose prophetess she was, and Yahweh, who had once delivered some of these tribes from Egypt, now delivered them all from Sisera and took them all for His people. It may well be that this great occasion, which brought so many tribes into a common action for the first time, extended the recognition of Yahweh as the God of all the confederate tribes.[62]

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the traditions of Yahwism in these tribes differ from each other. After all the Israelite tribes reached a political unity in the period of Saul and David, attempts were made to incorporate the traditions of the tribes, especially of the north and south, into a single corpus. However, the reflection of the special standpoint of the southern school

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[61] Supra, pp. 13, 17.

[62] Rowley, Re-discovery, pp. 126-127.

and the northern school is apparent. The southern tribes, mainly Judah, because they were permeated with the Kenite's Yahwism from the very beginning of their organization, did not experience any drastic change in their religion; therefore, in their tradition (J) Yahweh was worshipped by them from time immemorial. However, in the tradition of the northern tribes, the Joseph tribes (E), the name Yahweh was first introduced to them by Moses at the time of the Exodus, although they identified Yahweh as the God of their fathers.

Rowley holds that this theory, however, does not mean that Moses merely transferred the Yahwism of his father-in-law to the northern Israelites without change. It certainly recognizes the supreme importance of the work of Moses. Further, Rowley shows that although the Kenites and the Israelites worshipped the same God, Yahweh, their religion was not the same. The Kenite worship of Yahweh was not based on any historical experience of Yahweh's choice of the Kenites, confirmed in a great deliverance achieved before the Kenites had begun to worship Him, nor was it based on the solemn and willing pledge of the Kenites to choose and to serve Him who had first chosen and notably served them.[63] The Israelites, on the other hand, through the marvelous deliverance from Egypt experienced the love of Yahweh and were conscious that they were chosen people as Moses had declared to them

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[63] Ibid., p. 119.

(confer Deut. 4:37; 7:7-8; 9:5-6; 10:15).[64] Because Yahweh had delivered them, the Israelites pledged themselves in gratitude to serve Him; they entered the covenant with Yahweh at Sinai not because of searching for protection but out of thankfulness and therefore committed themselves to serve the God who revealed Himself in mighty acts. This is unlike the Hittite suzerainty treaties where the ruler imposes his conditions upon the vassals and they pledge their loyalty to him. Rowley says,

> Whereas the suzerainty treaties were imposed and were born of the fear of the suzerain on the part of the lesser powers, Israel's Covenant was born of gratitude and was freely entered into. God's claim upon Israel was established by his deliverance of her, not by his conquest of her. It was therefore a moral obligation, which it would have been dishonourable of her to resist.[65]

Rowley also states,

> Beyond this Moses gave a further new quality of her Yahwism. He who had been sensitive to the message of God to the enslaved Israelites, and who had been the instrument in God's hands for their deliverance, was also sufficiently en rapport with the spirit of God to establish Yahwism in Israel on a higher level than it had yet known amongst the Kenites. For from the days of Moses Yahwism in Israel was an ethical religion.[66]

This, again, makes Rowley's concept different from that of Budde. For Budde, the religion of Israel is ethical because it was a religion of choice and not nature like the Kenites had.

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[64]H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 38.

[65]Ibid., p. 39.

[66]Rowley, Re-discovery, pp. 119-120.

The Israelites chose Yahweh, because they owed Him gratitude and fidelity in return for all the great things He had wrought for their sake, and could ensure further prosperity for them only by evidence of such fidelity; but Budde considers this ethical character in Israel's religion to be still a seed, the full growth of which awaits future development in the age of the later prophets.[67] Rowley on the other hand, points out the existence of the ethical character of Israel's religion already prior to the Israelite slaves' acceptance of Yahweh, and credits it to Moses. For

> when Moses was in Egypt and saw his brethren suffering under the oppression of the Egyptians, his soul was as deeply stirred as Amos', and with an emotion which was as truly ethical. But at that stage there was nothing religious about his emotion, and it expressed itself in a fruitless murder. In the experience of his call the divine seal was set on the burning sympathy of Moses' heart, and a religious quality was added to it.[68]

And he says further,

> That Moses must have brooded long and often on the sufferings of his kinsmen may be reasonably presumed, since his exile was due to that sympathy of his heart for them. It was therefore by no accident that Moses was chosen by Yahweh for the task of leading Israel out of Egypt. He was chosen because he was serviceable, and he was serviceable because of that sympathy of his heart, which was now taken up into the purpose of God, reinforced with a power greater than the merely ethical, and made the vehicle of God's will.[69]

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[67]Cf. Budde, pp. 34-38.

[68]Rowley, Re-discovery, p. 121.

[69]Ibid., pp. 121-122.

Therefore, Rowley's conclusion is,

> Whatever Yahweh may have meant to the Kenites, He meant something different to Israel. For Israel saw Him through the experience of the Exodus, and His will was interpreted to her through the great and divinely inspired personality of Moses.[70]

James Plastaras

To present his view of the Kenite hypothesis, James Plastaras (b. 1931) demonstrates in his book, The God of Exodus,[71] that he has taken over some of the testimonies of both the advocates and the opponents of this theory to form his thesis.

Similar to Budde's fragmentary theory of the Conquest[72] and Rowley's theory concerning different waves of the Israelites' occupation of Canaan,[73] Plastaras says,

> Judah and the southern tribes must have learned some form of Yahwism from the Kenites long before Moses came to them preaching about the mighty deeds of Yahweh revealed to the slaves of the exodus. It is admittedly difficult to reconstruct with precision the early history of the southern tribes, but it would seem that Judah and Simeon were not among the tribes which actually came out of Egypt together with Moses. At the time of the exodus they were probably living a precarious nomadic existence in the Promised Land.[74]

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[70] Ibid., p. 122.

[71] James Plastaras, The God of Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Narratives (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1966).

[72] Supra, pp. 8-9.

[73] Supra, p. 23.

[74] Plastaras, p. 92.

However, Plastaras goes along with M. L. Newman's opinion[75] that the Judahites, Simeonites, and Levites at Kadesh in the thirteenth century B.C. may have represented remnants of a six-tribe amphictyony which flourished for a time in Palestine during the previous century. This amphictyony would have been comprised of the six Leah tribes: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Shechem was probably the cult center of this confederation. Sometime in the fourteenth century B.C. this Leah amphictyony was broken up because of the treachery of Simeon and Levi as can be seen in Genesis 34. Thereupon, Simeon, Levi, and Judah were pushed far southward to the arid Negeb and resumed a nomadic existence after a period of seminomadic life in Palestine. While in the south, they came into friendly association with other nomadic groups such as the Calebites, Othnielites, and Kenites. Here they probably formed a new six-tribe amphictyony of Judah, Simeon, Levi, Othniel, Caleb and the Kenites. And Plastaras says,

> It is more than likely that the whole six-tribe group observed some form of Yahwism, which had been learned from the Kenites. Therefore, Judah and the southern tribes were not complete strangers to Yahwism when Moses, a kinsman of the Levites, came to them leading the Joseph tribes whom he had brought out of Egypt. Moses did not come to them preaching a new God (for they already knew Yahweh), but he did bring them a new faith. The profession of faith made by Jethro in Exodus 18 probably represented the profession of faith made by Judah and other tribes who joined Moses in the desert.[76]

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[75]Cf. Newman, pp. 78-80.

[76]Plastaras, p. 93.

Plastaras considers Jethro's religion to have been closely related to the religion of the fathers. He asserts that Moses fled from Egypt into the desert, to the land of Midian, where he was destined to meet the God of the fathers.[77] He says that here in the desert Moses would learn about the God of the fathers, whom the Israelites during their sedentary existence in Egypt, had all but forgotten.[78] Plastaras does not give evidence or the source of his reason concerning the "forgotten" religion of the patriarchs among the Israelites in Egyptian bondage. Based on quite different presuppositions J. A. Motyer echoes a similar opinion regarding the "forgotten" religion of the patriarchs. In his Tyndale Old Testament Lecture, 1956, Motyer indicates,

> The occurrence and distribution of the name Yahweh between Genesis xii. 1 and Exodus iii. 12 are as follows. The name is found on a total of one hundred and sixteen occasions. They are not, of course, all of equal evidential value for patriarchal knowledge. The largest group--sixty occurrences--can be classed as the historican's use: that is, by themselves they would tell us no more than the writer of these chapters knew the name Yahweh, and attributed certain actions and words to Him. There are forty-five cases which undoubtedly display patriarchal knowledge of the name, either because they themselves use it, or because it is used by God or man in addressing them. The remaining eleven cases may belong to either of these

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[77] Ibid., p. 46.

[78] Ibid., p. 47. Cf. also p. 92 where Plastaras states, "It is possible and even probable, that during his stay among the Kenites (Midianites), Moses not only came into his first contact with the forgotten religion [underline is the present writer's] of the patriarchs, but that he also came to his first knowledge of the divine name Yahweh."

> classes: they consist of references to the building of an altar to Yahweh, the calling on the name of Yahweh, the worshipping, entreating, or enquiring of Yahweh. In all probability they show patriarchal knowledge of the name, but they could conceivably illustrate nothing more than the historian's knowledge.
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> The distribution of the name is interesting. In the stories of Abraham it occurs seventy-three times, as compared with fourteen times in Isaac and fifteen in Jacob. The decrease from Abraham to Jacob is significant. In fact, apart from a few instances of historian's use and one occurrence in the "blessing of Jacob," the name disappears from the time when Jacob returned to Canaan from Paddan Aram until it is specially declared to Moses. This suggests that when the patriarchal clans began to mingle more freely in the society of their day, and especially when they settled in Egypt, the less known and private name of their God was allowed to lapse in favour of such designations as were more likely to be understood by their contemporaries. Thus, for example, Joseph in Egypt constantly uses "God" both when talking to Egyptians and later when talking to his own brothers.[79]

From whom would Moses learn the forgotten name of God and the religion of the fathers, then? Plastaras' answer is from Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite (Judg. 4:11). For in later times the Kenites appear as fierce traditionalists in the cause of Yahweh; and Genesis 4 contains a number of hints that the Kenites had been worshippers of Yahweh from time immemorial. However, Plastaras recognizes that Yahwism may have existed among the Kenites, but it was by no means identical with the Yahwism which Moses would preach to Israel.[80]

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[79]J. A. Motyer, The Revelation of the Divine Name (London: The Tyndale Press, 1959), pp. 25-26. However, the purpose of the whole lecture seems to be designated to oppose the Kenite hypothesis as can be seen in pp. 1-24.

[80]Plastaras, pp. 91-92.

Thus, in the contradictory narratives of J, E, and P, concerning the origin of the name Yahweh, Plastaras chooses the "complementary view" of Bernhard Anderson. For Anderson states,

> There is a sense in which the writer of J is theologically right. He wants to affirm that Yahweh, the God of Israel, is actually the Lord of all history and creation; hence, he traces the worship of Yahweh back to the remote beginning. But the writers of E and P are truer to the actual situation when they suggest that the name became commonly accepted during the time of Moses. It is worth noticing that parents began to give their children names compounded with an abbreviated form of the name Yahweh (such as Joshua, which means "Yahweh is salvation") during and after the time of Moses, whereas in the pre-Mosaic period names of this type are lacking. This evidence suggests that the name Yahweh was introduced at the time of the Exodus.[81]

Therefore, Plastaras says that the author of J was not simply guilty of a naïve anachronism in projecting the worship of Yahweh back into the pre-Mosaic period. The Yahwist was attempting to present a true picture of the continuity of salvation history; he wanted to convey that it was Yahweh who guided the patriarchs, and the patriarchs have been worshipping Yahweh no matter what divine titles they have used. The Elohist tradition, on the other hand, was more interested in stressing the newness of the revelation given through Moses.[82]

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[81]B. W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. 36 (2nd edition, 1966, p. 41). Cf. Plastaras, p. 90.

[82]Plastaras, pp. 90-91. Concerning Plastaras' view on the J, E, and P accounts, they can be seen from his illustration chart, which is entitled, "The Promise to Save and the Mission of Moses: A Synoptic Table of the Parallel Accounts."

Through this revelation, the salvation history was accomplished; and this is why to the Israelites, the name Yahweh was not just a sacred sound or a magic incantation. It was a proclamation of Israel's faith.[83]

J. P. Hyatt

It seems improper to classify J. Philip Hyatt (b. 1909) as one of the major supporters of the Kenite hypothesis. For what Hyatt advocates is simply that Yahweh was originally the patron deity of one of Moses' ancestors. This ancestor was not necessarily Moses' own father, but his grandfather or a more remote ancestor; and possibly traced through the line of his mother, Jochebed, whose name contains the Yahweh element. Later, this deity became a god of the clan or tribe of that ancestor of Moses and eventually, through the leadership of Moses, the deity of the group of clans or tribes that composed the Israelite people.[84]

Hyatt may have borrowed the evolution theory of T. J. Meek who asserts that Yahweh had his origin in nature, was first adopted by Judah as a tribal god, then grew in

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[83] Ibid., p. 87.

[84] J. P. Hyatt, "Yahweh as 'the God of my Father,'" Vetus Testamentum, V (1955), 135-136; "The Origin of Mosaic Yahwism," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trantham (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1964), pp. 88-90; "Was Yahweh Originally a Creator Deity?," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVI (1967), 376-377; Exodus (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Ltd., 1971), pp. 72, 78-83.

prestige as the Judah tribe grew, and eventually became the national God after David unified the whole country.[85] However, except for the similarity of progress in their theories, Hyatt deviates from Meek entirely. Meek severely opposed the Kenite hypothesis;[86] Hyatt, on the other hand, believes that his own proposal is "a new theory."[87] John Bright, however, disagrees with Hyatt's assertion that it is a new theory, for in the final analysis, the cult of Yahweh in Hyatt's proposal would have been of Kenite origin, though "Yahweh would have been known to Moses long before he met Jethro, as the God of his mother's clan."[88] Or, as Rowley puts it, that Hyatt's theory

> connects Moses through his mother with the tribe to which Jethro belonged no less than the Kenite hypothesis does, and traces the origin of the worship of Yahweh to that tribe just as much, but to an obscure element of the tribe instead of to the whole of the group to which Jethro belonged.[89]

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[85]Meek, pp. 105-107. It seems quite sure that both Hyatt and Meek know Julius Wellhausen's opinion that Yahweh "is to be regarded as having originally been a family or tribal god, either of the family to which Moses belonged or of the tribe of Joseph"; and that Yahweh "was only a special name of El which had become current within a powerful circle, and which on that account was all the more fitted to become the designation of a national god" (Julius Wellhausen, "Israel," reprinted in Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel New York: Meridian Books, 1957 , p. 433, n. 1).

[86]Cf. Infra, p. 64.

[87]Hyatt, Vetus Testamentum, V, 130.

[88]John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 116.

[89]Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, p. 57.

It is true that Hyatt has somewhat changed the tone of his argument since he first proposed it in 1955. However, the foundation of his theory is still based in part upon the view of Albrecht Alt concerning patriarchal religion,[90] and in part upon his own assumption of Ex. 3:6; 15:2; 18:4, "the God of my (your) father," following the studies made by H. G. May[91] and C. H. Gordon.[92] He has vacillated in regard to the meaning of the name Yahweh. When he first proposed his theory, he said, "It is <u>best</u> to explain the name [Yahweh] as a causative form of the verb 'to be, to exist,' with the meaning 'Sustainer of X'--X being the name of the ancestor of Moses."[93] Although he cited Julian Obermann,[94] it seems Hyatt did agree with W. F. Albright's exposition on the

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[90]Cf. Albrecht Alt, "The God of the Fathers," reprinted in <u>Essays on Old Testament History and Religion</u> (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 1-100.

[91]H. G. May, "The God of My Father--a Study of Patriarchal Religion," <u>Journal of Bible and Religion</u>, IX (1941), 155-158,200.

[92]C. H. Gordon, "The Patriarchal Age," <u>Journal of Bible and Religion</u>, XXI (1953), 238-243.

[93]Hyatt, <u>Vetus Testamentum</u>, V, 136. The underline under "best" is added.

[94]See Julian Obermann, "The Divine Name YHWH in the Light of Recent Discoveries," <u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>, LXVIII (1949), 301-323.

meaning of the name Yahweh.[95] In 1964, in his article, "The Origin of Mosaic Yahwism," however, Hyatt says,

> Since we do not know for certain that the name Yahweh was originally causative in form, and since this explanation labors under the difficulty that the causative of hayâ is not employed in Hebrew, an alternative explanation is possible. The name may have originally been yahweh ʿim X, "he is with X." Thus the divine name would have originally emphasized the presence of Yahweh with Moses' ancestor, as his patron protective deity.[96]

In the article "Was Yahweh Originally a Creator Deity?" published in 1967, then, Hyatt indicates,

> Albright and Cross have insisted that the form is causative, corresponding to Hebrew hifil, on the assumption that the so-called Barth-Ginsberg law was operative in Amorite at this time. Huffmon, however, denies that this law was operative in Amorite, for he finds very clear examples of a yaqtal form that is G rather than causative.[97]

However, in his commentary on Exodus, which was published in 1971, Hyatt returns to his view of causative and states,

> Yahweh (whose name is of Amorite origin) was in the first instance the patron deity of one of the ancestors of Moses; then he became the deity of the clan or tribe of Moses; and finally, through the mediation of

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[95]W. F. Albright holds since 1924 that Yahweh is causative of hayah, "to be." Cf. Journal of Biblical Literature, XLIII (1924), 370-378; XLIV (1925), 158-162; XLVI (1927), 175-178; LXVII (1948), 378-381; and From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pp. 258-261.

[96]Hyatt, The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trantham, p. 92.

[97]Hyatt, Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVI, 371. Cf. Albright, Journal of Biblical Literature, LXVII, 380; F. M. Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 252; H. B. Huffmon, Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 64.

> Moses himself, the deity of the Hebrew people whom Moses led out of Egypt to the border of the land of Canaan. He was at first the god of an individual, and his cult was especially suited to the needs of a nomadic or semi-nomadic people. Following the analogy of the patriarchal deities mentioned above, and using the Amorite meaning of the verbal form, we may conjecture that the name of the patron deity of Moses' unknown ancestor (whom we symbolize by the letter N) was "Yahweh-N," meaning "He causes N to live," or simply, "the Sustainer of N." When this deity ceased to be the patron deity of an individual and became the deity of a clan and then a people, the name of the ancestor was dropped and he was known as "Yahweh."[98]

Since Hyatt does not think that Mosaic Yahwism came from Jethro, nor that Jethro was converted in Exodus 18, he goes along with C. H. W. Brekelmans,[99] F. C. Fensham,[100] and A. Cody[101] and maintains, "The best interpretation, in our opinion, is that this is the record of the making of a covenant between equals."[102]

The reason Hyatt is presented here is to serve as a prelude to the further progress of the Kenite hypothesis connected with the text for research which will be fully discussed in Chapters IV and V.

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[98]Hyatt, Exodus, p. 80. The underline in "we may conjecture" is added.

[99]Brekelmans, X, 215-224.

[100]F. C. Fensham, "Did a Treaty Between the Israelites and the Kenites Exist?," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, CLXXV (October 1964), 51-54.

[101]A. Cody, "Exodus 18,12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites," Biblica, XLIX (1968), 153-166.

[102]Hyatt, p. 187.

## Evidence for the Kenite Hypothesis

The examples above have exhibited that for scholars to hold the Kenite hypothesis does not presuppose agreement in all details. There are many other eminent authorities who affirm this theory or indicate the possibility of the proposition, who have not been mentioned in the foregoing section at all. The main purpose of this section is an attempt to make a synopsis of the evidence concerning the Kenite hypothesis by utilizing the reasons which have been given by the scholars mentioned in the preceding section and some others wherever applicable. In order to present the points which are maintained by the proponents of this theory accurately, the present writer tries to think as they thought when unfolding their propositions. However, in some cases, the study also reflects his own understanding of the Biblical traditions.

### The Kenites

Among the scholars, there are different opinions concerning the ethnic origin of the Kenites. Some consider them as a clan of the Midianites,[103] others, of the Amalekites.[104]

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[103]Cf. Budde, p. 19; Köhler, p. 45; Newman, p. 83; Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 152-153, n. 5; and R. K. Harrison, The Archaeology of the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 43.

[104]A. Kuenen, for example, following T. Nöldeke's study, says that "part of the Kenites had attached themselves to the Midianites, and in speaking loosely, were reckoned among

G. A. Barton, however, asserts that the Kenites were "a clan whose origin was more directly Arabian,"[105] or "a Semitic tribe resident upon the confines of Arabia."[106] Although in a footnote he admits that "the Kenites seem to have been a part of the Midianites. The latter was the broader term."[107] B. D. Eerdmans on the other hand, literally translates the Hebrew word קֵינִים as "smiths" and maintains,

> They were itinerant craftsmen living near a nomad tribe for some time. When there their work was finished they camped near another tribe. They had some sheep and goats, but being held in contempt by the tribesmen could not water the sheep before all other shepherds had left. Therefore Reuel was surprised that, one day, his daughters came home at an early hour [Ex. 2:18]. They were called sons of Kain (meaning smith Gen. 4:22) or Kenites.[108]

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the Midianites. But it is more probable that the writers in Exodus and Numbers mention Midian erroneously instead of Kaïn (= the Kenites); there is no trace anywhere else of such a connection between these two nations. The Old Testament rather connects the Kenites with Amalek. This happens especially in 1 Sam. 15:6, where we read that Saul, before attacking the Amalekites, warned the Kenites, who were among them, in order that they might take timely steps to place themselves in safety; and also in Balaam's parables, where the Kenites immediately follow the Amalekites (Num. 24:20, 21)." (The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State, translated from the Dutch by Alfred Heath May. [London: Williams and Norgate, 1874], p. 180). However, the present writer could not find other supporters of this assertion in the twentieth century. The Biblical traditions on the other hand, imply that the Kenites were not the Amalekites. For the latter were enemies of Israel (cf. Ex. 17:8-16; Deut. 25:19; 1 Sam. 15:2-3) and the former, apparently, the friends of the Israelites (cf. Judg. 1:16; 1 Sam. 15:6; 30:26-29).

[105]Barton, p. 272.

[106]Ibid., p. 280.

[107]Ibid., p. 277, n. 10.

[108]B. D. Eerdmans, The Religion of Israel (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1947), p. 15.

Similarly, Hyatt states, "The Kenites were a subdivision of the Midianites, or a clan (probably of metal-workers) associated in some manner with the Midianites."[109] As Hyatt indicates, "the Old Testament represents them [the Midianites] as nomads who ranged over a wide territory to the south and east of Palestine; therefore we should not seek to locate them precisely to a specific territory."[110] Yet, that the Kenites were living or roaming in the Sinai Peninsula south of Palestine when Moses led the Israelite groups out from Egypt seems to have been agreed upon by all concerned.

Further, the Biblical traditions as well as the opinions of various scholars show that the Kenites were distinct from the Midianites and the Amalekites. They may have come from not only one ethnic group but an occupational group attached to different tribes. In his book, Biblical Archaeology, G. E. Wright notes that

> Specialists in the metallurgical crafts were to be found in every community large enough to sustain them, and in the Old Testament we learn of one group of wandering smiths, the Kenites, who early attached themselves to Israel (Judg. 1:16; 4:11; cf. Num. 10:29). . . . The working of copper began as early as 4000 B.C., inaugurating the period which archaeologists call the "Chalcolithic."[111]

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[109]Hyatt, Exodus, p. 67.

[110]Ibid., p. 66. Cf. also Köhler, p. 242, n. 42.

[111]G. E. Wright, Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 198.

And he also indicates,

> Copper mines have also been found in the Arabah, the valley leading south from the Dead Sea, as well as in the area of the traditional Mt. Sinai. These mines were worked far more intensively in ancient times than they are today, so we may assume that apart from pastoral pursuits a chief source of livelihood for the inhabitants of Midian and Sinai was the profitable copper business. By 1500 B.C. these semi-nomadic smiths, in the employ of the Egyptian government at the Sinai mines, were using the earliest known alphabet. This was the alphabet which was invented and developed by the Canaanites in Syria, from whom it was subsequently borrowed by both Israelites and Greeks. The smiths of Sinai and Midian, therefore, are not to be considered as a poor and ill-fed people like most of the modern inhabitants of Sinai. They were certainly more prosperous and in closer commercial contact with Egypt and Palestine.[112]

Since the Kenites are called Cain (Judg. 4:11, in the Hebrew text), one of the Biblical traditions considers Cain, who bore the mark of Yahweh (Gen. 4:15), as the ancestor of the Kenites. One of Cain's descendants, Lamech, had three sons whose names seem to refer to the early situation of the Kenites: Jabal, the ancestor of the tent-dwellers and owners of livestock; Jubal, the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the flute; Tubal-cain, the ancestor of all metal-workers, in bronze or iron.[113] This is also illustrated by Albright, who says,

> The travelling smiths or tinkers of modern Arab Asia, whether Ṣleib or Nawar (Gipsies), follow more or less regular trade-routes. With their asses and their tools these groups depend for their livelihood on their craftsmanship, supplemented by music and divination, in

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[112] Ibid., p. 65.

[113] Cf. Gen. 4:20-22. Following The Jerusalem Bible's rendering.

> which the women excel. It is probable that the Kenites of the Bible, with a name derived from gain, "smith," resembled these groups somewhat in their mode of living. It can scarcely be accidental that Cain's descendant Lamech had three sons, each of whom is credited with originating one of the three occupational specialties of this form of society: tents and herds, musical instruments, copper and iron working.[114]

The God of the Kenites

It is true there is no Biblical statement that Yahweh is the God of the Kenites. However, as the study has shown, the Kenites had an eponymous ancestor, Cain, who bore the mark of Yahweh, and later history unfolds that the Kenites were zealous for Yahweh's cause, all indicating that they were Yahweh worshippers. It is also true that there is no Biblical tradition alluding to how the God of the Kenites revealed himself to them. Yet, as E. O. James mentions,

> If a process of revelation is discernible at all, it must be sought in human personalities and the movements of history initiated and directed to specific ends, though, of course, this is not to deny that the ways of God may be manifest in Nature and purposive activity expressed in the physical universe.[115]

Accordingly, Yahweh would have been the God of the Kenites, a fact which could be traced by their occupation and the manner in which the Kenites lived besides the indications which have been given above.

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[114]W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 98. Cf. also his "Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXV (1963), 7-9.

[115]E. O. James, Comparative Religion (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1961), pp. 16-17.

For not only was Moses' father-in-law called "a priest because of his handicraft, applying the mysterious forces of fire,"[116] the Bible actually pictures Yahweh as a God of fire which fits well the occupation of the Kenites.[117] Later traditions are full of this imagery: He appeared to Moses in a flame of fire (Ex. 3:2-4); He spoke to the Israelites out of the midst of fire (Deut. 4:12,33; 5:4,22,23; 18:16); and Yahweh descended on Mt. Sinai in fire (Ex. 19:18). It is interesting to note that Nadab, Abihu and the 250 elders who rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron were killed by fire coming out of the tent where the glory of Yahweh was (Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 16:15-35). In the later Prophets, too, Yahweh is pictured as a great fire and a devouring fire (Is. 29:6; 30:27,30; Zeph. 1:18; confer

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[116]Eerdmans, p. 15.

[117]Cf. Ibid., pp. 18-19. However, Eerdmans seems to consider the religion of the Kenites as a mere natural religion. For he says that like many other natural phenomena fire was taken as a divine power. He who knew how to make it useful, to keep it up, living always near to it, was priest of that fire (p. 15). He also mentions that the priests had to see that the fire did not go out; and if they wanted fire for use in another place they should take it from the mother-fire and not make a "strange fire," for Yahweh was a jealous God. This is why Nadab and Abihu were killed because they put strange fire into their censers. (See Lev. 10:1-2, A.V.). Like Morgenstern and Rowley, Eerdmans also asserts that the observance of the sabbath came from the Kenites. He says that one day every week the priests did not pursue their trade. Every seventh day no smithwork was done, for on that day they were not allowed to kindle a fire (Ex. 35:1-3). "Whoever does any work on that day shall be put to death" was originally a Kenite commandment (p. 19; Cf. J. Morgenstern, "The Oldest Document of the Hexateuch," Hebrew Union College Annual, IV [1927], 54-56; Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, 1967, pp. 45-46).

Ex. 24:17; Deut. 4:24; 9:3). When Elijah was contesting against the worship of Baal, he took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of Israel and built an altar in the name of Yahweh; after three times pouring water on the burnt offering and the wood, he called fire from heaven which consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and all therein and thereby testified that Yahweh is God in Israel (1 Kings 18:30-39). In the Psalter too, the thunder is the voice of Yahweh, the lightning which is the fire in heaven descending from the heavens like arrows (Ps. 18:13-14; 29:3-5; 144:5-6; 2 Sam. 22:14-15; and confer Zech. 9:14). Although thunder, lightning, storm and wind imageries may have been borrowed from other peoples,[118] they fit the general locale where the Kenites originated.

> Yahweh's rule over the storm is explained by his dwelling on Sinai. For the storms gather round the peaks of the mountains south of Palestine. They are at home there, whereas Palestine itself is a land where storms are few.[119]

As Budde has attested, all these imageries picture Yahweh as a war-god who was needed by the Israelites.[120]

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[118]Cf. N. C. Habel, Yahweh versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures (New York: Bookman Association, 1964), pp. 80-82.

[119]Budde, p. 28. Cf. also K. Marti, translated by G. A. Bienemann, The Religion of the Old Testament: Its Place Among the Nearer East (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), pp. 61-62.

[120]Supra, pp. 14-15.

Since the Kenites were living or roaming in the Sinai Peninsula during the Israelites' Exodus and the Wanderings in the Desert, Yahweh, the "God of Sinai" or a "Mountain God" is also a reminiscence of the original living place of the Kenites. For the Biblical traditions clearly indicate Mt. Sinai, or Horeb, as the abode of Yahweh (Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:4-5; 1 Kings 19:8-18; confer Hab. 3:3; Ps. 68:8); and on this mountain God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 3:12). One tradition even hinted that Yahweh will remain in His mountain while sending an angel to go before the people which came out from Egypt (Ex. 33:1-3). And later traditions, too, alleged that the divine revelation and covenant were received and established here at Sinai (Ex. 19:24; 24:3-8; 34:6-28).

The Kenites' association with Israel

It is hard and, to some extent, impossible to reconstruct the earliest relationship between the Kenites and the Israelites. According to Rowley, the Kenites associated themselves with some of the proto-Israel groups, the Southern tribes, already more than a century prior to the Exodus of the Joseph tribes led by Moses.[121] He maintains that it

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[121]Cf. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 161-165. Other scholars, such as Albright, for example (cf. "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," Journal of Biblical Literature, XXXVII [1918], 138-143; "Archaeology and the Date of the Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, LVIII [April 1935], 15, 17-18), consider Joseph tribes entered

could well be that Moses introduced the group he led to the worship of God under the name Yahweh, while the group he did not lead, that is, the Southern tribes, reached its Yahwism independently of him.[122] In accord with his theory, the most important evidence Rowley gives is the two Decalogues recorded in the book of Exodus. The Ritual Decalogue (Ex. 34:14-26) is assigned to the J document which means from the Southern school. Concerning the origin of this Decalogue, however, Rowley agrees with Morgenstern that it came from the Kenites.[123] To this, Rowley states,

> The southern tribes, that entered the land in the Amarna age and that gradually took over their Yahwism from their Kenite associates, would naturally take it over at the level it then had. Their Decalogue might be adapted to their new conditions in Palestine, and related to agricultural festivals, without being ethically exalted, and it might continue for long at the same level as an essentially ritual Decalogue.[124]

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Canaan first, then Judah with Moses entered the country from the north and Southern Judah was settled by Calebites and related tribes coming from the south; while the combined Biblical traditions give the impression that the whole Israel, the twelve tribes, migrated into Palestine at the same time.

[122]Rowley, p. 149.

[123]Cf. Morgenstern, IV, 98-119; "Amos Studies III," Hebrew Union College Annual, XV (1940), 236-246; "The Chanukkah Festival and the Calendar of Ancient Israel," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXI (1948), 378; Rowley, pp. 157-158.

[124]Rowley, p. 158.

Unlike R. H. Pfeiffer who contends that the Decalogue of Ex. 20:2-17 belongs to the second half of the fifth century,[125] Rowley asserts that this Ethical Decalogue came from Moses himself. For he argues,

> The tribes that were with Moses, and that embraced Yahwism in a historical moment of decision as the expression of their gratitude for their deliverance from Egypt, might more naturally be given a new and higher Decalogue by their great leader, Moses. Gratitude is itself ethical emotion, as fear, for instance, is not, and there is nothing surprising in a religion which is ethically based having an ethical character. Hence Moses could well give the higher Decalogue to the northern tribes that he led, as they declare in their traditions, at a time when the southern tribes that had already adopted Yahwism at an earlier date were still at the more primitive level.[126]

Rowley's analysis may be proper. For according to Geo. Widengren's study,[127] Moses' name is absent in the pre-exilic Prophets and Psalms. Because the Prophets, with the exception of Hosea, belonged to Judah,[128] and the Psalms too are mainly of Southern, that is, Jerusalemite, origin, though some Northern psalms have been incorporated in the Biblical

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[125]R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York & London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), p. 228.

[126]Rowley, pp. 158-159.

[127]Geo. Widengren, "What do we know about Moses?," Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davis (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1971), pp. 21-47.

[128]It is true that Micah 6:4 and Jer. 15:1 mention the name of Moses. Widengren, however, considers the former to be "a later prosaic addition (Ibid., p. 23) and the latter to be strongly influenced by the Deuteronomic traditions which are from the Northern Kingdom" (Ibid., pp. 45-46).

Psalter, nevertheless, the whole collection has been transmitted in a Jerusalemite redaction. Moses' name was taken into the Southern Kingdom, according to Widengren, chiefly by the Deuteronomic circles, through whom also Moses found his way into the historical books of Deuteronomic inspiration.

If the above contentions are sound, then the Kenites' association with the Southern tribes in the Biblical records of Judg. 1:4-21, would be about 1400 B.C. and onwards; and their contact with the Northern tribes would begin with Jethro's sacrificial meal with the elders of the Israelites in Exodus 18. Jael's episode in Judg. 4:11-22 (confer 5: 24-30) is only an individual action to help the Israelites; however, it may have been, as Rowley holds, that the occasion extended the recognition of Yahweh as the God of all Israelite tribes.[129] Saul's notification to the Kenites to leave the Amalekites lest they be destroyed with the latter--for the former had shown their kindness to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt (1 Sam. 15:6)--probably is an indication of the Northern tribes' remembrance of the Kenites' association with them; while the accounts in 1 Sam. 27:8-12 and 30:26-29 concerning David's friendship with the Kenites is a Southern record of their association. Actually, according to a late source, the Chronicles, which records

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[129] Supra, p. 27. F. C. Fensham, however, holds that Jael felt obliged to kill the enemy of the Israelites because they had a treaty with the Kenites (CLXXV, 53).

the genealogy of the Bethlehemites in 1 Chron. 2:50-55, David himself came from a family of the Kenites.

Evidence in Exodus 18

What has been said so far concerning the evidence for the Kenite hypothesis is that when the Israelite groups led by Moses came out from Egypt, they met a group of wandering people in the wilderness of Sinai whose occupation was copper and iron smiths, and therefore they were called the Kenites, that is, the blacksmiths. The Kenites' God was most probably Yahweh, God of fire, a mountain God, a storm God, and a war-god who fits the Kenites' occupation and the general situation of the locale. This God was willing and able to satisfy the needs of the Israelites, for prior to their exodus Moses had gained this conviction and was commissioned by Him while he was keeping the flock of his father-in-law at the mountain of God.

After the Israelites' deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, they encamped at the wilderness, presumably the Sinai Wilderness. There the leader of the Kenites, Moses' father-in-law, came to visit him. Exodus 18 contains the central argument for the Kenite hypothesis of the origin of Yahweh worship in Israel. The next few paragraphs will be a synopsis of scholars who take this chapter as evidence for their theory and the ostensible narrative of the text. The present writer's view on the text is reserved until Chapter V of this dissertation.

Jethro came to Moses with a dual purpose: to return Zipporah and her two sons to Moses, and to seek the welfare of both of their peoples. The first purpose is important for Moses' family but insignificant in comparison with the second purpose. Therefore, the text does not mention Moses' wife and children again.

"Jethro was a priest" (verse 1) is considered to mean a priest of Yahweh. "The priest of Midian," signifies the general locale where Jethro and his people roamed, or, Jethro may have been a Midianite ethnically and a Kenite occupationally. For the Kenites may have come from a variety of tribes.

The incident occurred in the place where Moses was encamped in the mountain of God (verse 5). Although it does not necessarily mean the traditional Mt. Sinai, the general view is that it was the place where Moses was commissioned. For Moses was told to serve God on this mountain after he had brought forth the people out of Egypt (3:12). This "mountain of God" is considered as the holy place for the Kenites where Jethro probably made his burnt offerings to his God, Yahweh.

The "tent" in verse 7 is regarded by some scholars as "the tent of meeting," (confer 33:7-11),[130] for Moses needed to make oracular decisions from Yahweh for the people (confer 18:15-16,19).

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[130]Cf. Morgenstern, Hebrew Union College Annual, IV, 130.

Jethro "rejoiced" (verse 8) with a proud joy, for Yahweh, the God he served, proved Himself to be "greater than all gods, because he delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians, when they dealt arrogantly with them." (verse 11) So he offered a burnt offering and sacrifice to God; and ate the communion meal with Aaron and the elders of Israel (verse 12). This last incident, however, has different interpretations among the proponents of the Kenite theory. In general, they all agree that the divine designation, "God," used in this verse, as well as in other verses of this chapter, is an habitual usage of the narrator for it is a Northern tradition. And it is unthinkable that after Yahweh had demonstrated His power in the mighty acts of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, they would make sacrifice to some other god at this point. To some scholars, the rites here are initiating the Israelite tribes who have just come out from Egypt to the worship of Yahweh.[131] Others, Hyatt[132] for instance, consider the occasion to be a covenant between the Israelites and the Kenites.

Finally, in verses 13-26, Jethro gave instruction and advice to Moses concerning the administration of justice

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[131]Barton not only asserts that Jethro initiated Moses and Aaron to the cult of Yahweh, but that this was also a kind of ordination service (see his A History of the Hebrew People [New York: The Century Co., 1930], p. 62).

[132]Supra, p. 40.

which is regarded as a religious rather than a civil function.[133] The episode clearly suggests that Jethro was acting not merely as Moses' father-in-law, but as the priest of Yahweh as Rowley indicates.[134] And he says further,

> For Moses is not represented as a youth, needing riper experience to guide him in managing the people. The man who had stood before Pharaoh and who had led Israel out of Egypt was not lacking in personality or natural wisdom. On that side there was little that he needed from Jethro. But of technical knowledge pertaining to the priestly duties Jethro could speak.[135]

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[133] Cf. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, p. 52.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

## EXODUS 18 AND THE OPPONENTS OF THE KENITE HYPOTHESIS

Although Chapter II presents considerable evidence to support the validity of the Kenite hypothesis, the claims of those who oppose it appear equally impressive. The main task of this chapter is an examination of the theses held by the major opponents of this theory. The research will proceed in the order of the publication dates to present the distinctive points of the opponents. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### A Review of the Major Opponents of the Theory

#### A. R. Gordon

Alexander Reid Gordon (1872-1930) admitted that the traditions which introduced the origin of the world (Gen. 2:5-14), the line of the patriarchs (Gen. 4:1,17-22), and the beginnings of the civilization were from the Kenites,[1] but held that the attempt of scholars who trace the name of Israel's God to an alien source from Babylonia is entirely misguided. He states that there is much more probability in the view of Stade, Budde, and several subsequent scholars

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[1]A. R. Gordon, The Early Traditions of Genesis (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1907), pp. 74-75, 188.

concerning the Kenite hypothesis. However, he also maintains that the arguments of the Kenite hypothesis are not conclusive.[2]

Gordon asserts[3] that Yahweh was the God of Israel and not the God of the Kenites, for there is no indication from the Bible that the Kenites were the original worshippers of Yahweh. The connection of Yahweh with Sinai or Horeb is not necessarily to be explained from a more primitive Yahweh-cult on the sacred mount. Yahweh was the God of the fathers. But this faith of the Israelites had sunk low through the influence of the heathen surroundings and the sensual attractions of the fleshpots of Egypt. After the God of their fathers had revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 3:16-17) in the "holy place," the people of Israel under Moses were buoyed up by a great religious enthusiasm which carried them out of Egypt to seek a new home for themselves and their worship. Gordon affirms that the name Yahweh was known before the days of Moses and He was not the God of any people but Israel, or the "fathers" of Israel. He says that "this is the universal assumption of the most authoritative Hebrew document (J). And it seems most in accordance with the

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[2]Ibid., pp. 106-107.

[3]Cf. Ibid., pp. 107-119.

historical probabilities."[4] Had Moses proclaimed a new God,[5] he would not have rallied the tribes of Israel around His standard.

Gordon states that it seems obvious that Jethro now for the first time recognized the might of Israel's God according to Ex. 18:9-11. The sacrificial meal in verse 12 is not necessarily the rite of the initiation of Moses and the Israelites into the Yahweh-cult. The eating together of the Israelites and the Kenites "before God" implied a recognition of each other's God. If the chapter really describes the initiation of new members into the cult of Yahweh, Gordon asserts, the Kenites seem rather to play the role. Hence he says, "In our judgment, it was not Israel that joined them and their God, but rather they that joined Israel and Yahweh."[6]

A. B. Davidson

Andrew Bruce Davidson (1831-1902) did not oppose the Kenite hypothesis severely. However, his explanation of Gen. 4:26, Ex. 3:13-15 and 6:2-9 explicitly shows that he is against the theory. Davidson's reason is that among the Hebrews, the name was never a mere sign whereby one person

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[4] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[5] Gordon maintains that the ancient people regarded a new name of a god as a new god.

[6] Ibid., pp. 108-109.

could be distinguished from another. It always remained descriptive; it expressed the meaning of the person or thing designated. Therefore, when a person acquired a new significance, began to play a new role, or entered into new relationships, or was in some sense a new man, he received a new name. This was why Abram became Abraham (Gen. 17:5), Jacob became Israel (Gen. 32:28), and Nathan called Solomon, Jedidiah--"beloved of Yahweh" (2 Sam. 12:25). Davidson asserts that this holds true with reference to the names of God also. Hence he indicates, "When a new or higher side of the Being of God is revealed to men there arises a new name of God."[7]

There are many divine names in the Old Testament. Relevant to this topic, however, the discussion will confine itself to Elohim, Yahweh, and El-Shaddai. These names, as Davidson states, "appear all to be prehistoric."[8] He holds that Elohim is a general name of God, that is, an appellative expressing the conception God, and therefore having no special significance. Yahweh is the personal name of the God of Israel. El-Shaddai, according to P, was the name of God that was used by the patriarchs (Gen. 17:1; Ex. 6:3). Davidson says, "Neither Elohim nor El is a revealed name,"

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[7]A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 37.

[8]Ibid., p. 39.

but "the name Shaddai may be an element of revelation."[9] However, the reason he gives seems very odd. He indicates,

> The statement given there [Ex. 6:2-3] as to God appearing to the fathers of the Hebrew race as El-Shaddai, is made by the writer who is usually known as the Elohist [underline added]. There is every reason to regard the statement as historical.[10]

Davidson recognizes that Israel was a numerous people. Its past history had made it not a homogeneous, but a composite nation. It had elements of the Egyptians and the Kenites.[11] However, he objects to the idea that the name and the cult of Yahweh were learned by Moses from the Kenites who lived at Sinai at that time. The reason Moses led the people to Sinai, according to Davidson, was because Yahweh manifested Himself there in the bush. Elijah fled Jezebel and went to the same mount of God. Davidson states,

> The prophet, who said: "If Yahweh be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Ki. 18:21), would scarcely fancy that Yahweh had any particular seat. His seeking the mount of God is sufficiently explained by the historical manifestation at the giving of the Law.[12]

And in the description of the theophany of Yahweh on Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law, it is said that Yahweh came

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[9] Ibid., p. 45.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[12] Ibid., p. 51.

down upon Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:20). To this, Davidson maintains that it is a method of speaking which does not imply that He had His permanent seat there.[13]

Although the Kenites had attached themselves to the Israelites, Davidson affirms that the Hebrew tradition nowhere shows any trace of the idea that Yahweh was worshipped by any tribe except Israel itself.

It is true that both Ex. 3:13-15 and 6:2-9 seem to suggest that the name Yahweh was first introduced at Moses' time. However, Davidson argues that not only is Yahweh the God the fathers worshipped, but history declares expressly of the time of Enosh, "men began to call upon the name of Yahweh." (Gen. 4:26). Further, Davidson points out that the name appears already in a contracted form in the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:2), which implies some considerable term of existence; and that it enters also into composition in the name Jochebed, the mother of Moses. Furthermore, when God said to Moses, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh, I did not make myself known to them" (Ex. 6:3), Davidson holds that this can hardly mean that the name was unknown, but only that its real significance had never yet been experienced by the patriarchs. Now God would manifest Himself fully in the character expressed by this name, which from henceforth became His name as God of Israel. For he explains that the

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[13]Ibid., p. 52.

words are not "My name Yahweh was not known to them" but "in or as to My name Yahweh, I was not known by them."[14] This interpretation, then, admits the view that the name was old; therefore, Davidson says,

> Looking at these facts, it is certainly more probable that the author of Ex. vi does not mean to deny that the name Yahweh was older than Moses, or unknown before his day. He denies rather that it had Divine sanction before his day, and regards it as appropriated by God now and authorized as part of His manifestation of Himself,--as that which He revealed of Himself at this new turning-point in the history of redemption.[15]

Hence, Davidson asserts that Ex. 6:2-9 introduces no discrepancy into the various narratives in Genesis; and it is in harmony with Exodus 3. For the latter, he suggests that it has given an etymology of the name. When God appeared to Moses while he was keeping his father-in-law's flocks, He said to Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This, Davidson maintains, means that the God who now appeared to Moses was the same God who had appeared to the fathers, and led them. The Being is the same, but as yet there is no reference to His peculiar name. The cause of His theophany now lies in His relation to the descendants of Abraham; for He said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them

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[14] Ibid., p. 68.

[15] Ibid.

out of the hand of the Egyptians," (Ex. 3:7-8), in which great operation Moses must serve Him. When Moses shrank from the great task with which Yahweh entrusted him, and pleaded his unfitness, Davidson points out that the reply of Yahweh is significant, and the phraseology of it of great importance: "But I will be (היה) with you" (verse 12). In token of this great promise of His presence with him, Yahweh proposed to Moses a sign. Yet, Moses was still reluctant to undertake what seemed to him so hazardous an enterprise; he was also wondering what the Hebrews in Egypt would say. Hence he asked, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (verse 13). To answer this question, in the subsequent two verses, the name of God appears in three forms: אהיה אשר אהיה (verse 14a), the simple אהיה (verse 14b), and יהוה (verse 15). Davidson indicates that the last form, Yahweh, is merely the third person, the first two forms--Ehyeh, are first. He affirms the name Ehyeh or Ehyeh asher Ehyeh cannot be translated differently from the expression in verse 12: "Certainly I will be with you"; "that it is nothing else but that promise raised into a title, and that we must render I will be, and I will be that I will be, and in the

third person, He will be."[16] The reason it must be translated in this way is that

> the phrase lies in the circumstances of misery and bondage on the part of the people in which it was spoken, in the very vagueness of the promise of interference and presence, and in the continuousness of that presence which is suggested. The name is a circumference the contents of which cannot be expressed. He who relies on the same has the assurance of One, the God of his fathers, who will be with him. What He shall be to him when with him the memory of what He has been to those that have gone before him may suggest; or his own needs and circumstances in every stage and peril of his life will tell him.[17]

Therefore, Davidson asserts that the name Yahweh does not reveal a God who was not known, and the cult of Yahweh was not originated by the Kenites either; they are peculiar to the people of Israel.

T. J. Meek

Among the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis, Theophile James Meek (b. 1881) is the first one to write a complete statement against the proposed theory and has been often referred to by both the proponents and opponents of the hypothesis.

Meek asserts that there is no absolute evidence that Yahweh was a new name to the Hebrews, first revealed to Moses.

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[16] Ibid., p. 70.

[17] Ibid., p. 70-71.

This is the view of E and P, but it is contradicted by J, who is the earliest, and probably most reliable source.[18] And in Ex. 18:12, although the exponents of the Kenite hypothesis interpret the burnt offering and sacrifice made by Jethro as the rite which initiated the Hebrews into the new Yahweh cult, Meek contends, "But this is not so certain."[19] For he mentions that Jethro is called "the priest of Midian" (Ex. 18:1) and nowhere in the Bible is he called the priest of Yahweh; Exodus 18 does not represent him explicitly as performing priestly functions because the text says he "took" (לקח) a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and the "God" here is the generic term Elohim, and not the specific name Yahweh. Further, Meek argues that Jethro was originally a worshipper of El, and in Exodus 18 he recognizes for the first time the god Yahweh (verses 8-12). Although verse 12 does suggest that he also made a sacrifice to Yahweh in which, "Aaron and all the elders of Israel" participated, it is however, a convert's thanksgiving; for to Meek, the Kenites "were converts to the Yahweh cult."[20] Furthermore, Meek contends,

> If Jethro had been a priest of Yahweh and the one who initiated the Hebrews into his cult, it would surely have been on that ground that Moses would have invited him to join them on their journey. On the contrary, he

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[18]T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 87.

[19]Ibid., p. 88.

[20]Ibid., p. 108.

> invited him solely on the ground that he knew the desert and its camping places, and so would prove an efficient guide (Num. 10:29ff.).
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> The whole narrative in Exod. 18 is much better interpreted at its face value, as a record of the occasion when Moses was reunited with his family and father-in-law, on which occasion there was naturally great rejoicing, mutual recognition of the might of Yahweh, and kindly advice from the more experienced Jethro to his young son-in-law. The Old Testament, it is true, represents some of Jethro's tribesmen, the Rechabites, as strong supporters of the Yahweh cult (II Kings 10:15-28; Jer. 35:6ff.), but there is nothing to indicate anywhere that the cult originated with them.[21]

Since "the name of Moses' mother, Jochebed, is unquestionably a Yahweh name,"[22] Meek further infers that Moses' family were Yahweh worshippers. Although Jochebed's name occurs only in P, Meek argues that P would not have coined such a name for anyone earlier than Moses if he did not have some ground to base it on. If P's record (Ex. 6:20; Num. 26:59) is right, then Yahweh was already early known to the Hebrews. However, Meek admits, "The complete absence of Yahweh names with the early Hebrews would indicate quite clearly that there was no general worship of Yahweh among them."[23]

Concerning the origin of Yahweh, Meek's assertion is that the earliest form of the religion of the Hebrews, like other ancient peoples, was naturism; hence, "Yahweh, like

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[21] Ibid., pp. 88-89.

[22] Ibid., p. 91.

[23] Ibid.

most gods, undoubtedly had his origin in nature."[24] The exact name of the Hebrew god is uncertain (Yah, Yahu and Yahweh). The reason for this uncertainty is, "because the name was of foreign origin and the Hebrews had accordingly no proper derivation of it in their own language."[25] Meek affirms that the name originated in South Arabia and was derived from the Arabic hawā, "to blow," or "to befall." The root indicates Yahweh was originally a storm god. Unfortunately, when the Hebrews attempted to explain the name, they connected it with the Hebrew word hāyāh "to be," just as the Greeks who did not know the origin and exact meaning of "Zeus," connected it with ζῶ, "to live," whereas it is derived ultimately from Indo-European dyu, "to shine."

Meek lists[26] some Old Testament passages such as Judg. 5:4-5, Deut. 33:2 to show that this storm god's early habitat was in the southern desert, the Negeb; his earliest title was El Shaddai, a "mountain god"; his theophanies were in thunder, lightning and cloud (Ex. 19:16-18; 24:15-18). As a storm god he continued to be remembered throughout the whole

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[24] Ibid., p. 92.

[25] Ibid., p. 102.

[26] Ibid., pp. 93-95.

course of Hebrew history[27] and by the poets.[28] Like most early gods Yahweh was a god of war, but it was as a storm god that he displayed his warlike capacities: by a blast of his nostrils and the blowing of his breath the sea accomplished his will (Ex. 15:8,10); with great hailstones he killed Israel's enemies at Beth-horon (Joshua 10:11); and with thunder he confounded the Philistines at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7:10).

How did this storm god, a personification of one of the powers of nature, become the God of Israel? Meek reasons that Yahweh was first adopted by some particular tribe as its tribal god. Then he became a personal god and was thought of in human terms, with form, voice, thoughts, emotions, and everything else after the manner of man. Those who adopted him were nomads, hence he also moved about with the tribe and lived in the tent. All nomadic tribes have some focal point, and that focal point for the followers of Yahweh varied from time to time--Sinai or Horeb, Kadesh, or some other holy place. When the tribe which adopted Yahweh expanded its political power, the tribal god also grew in prestige.

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[27]Cf., e.g. 1 Kings 8:11; Is. 4:5; 30:30; 66:15; Jer. 51:16; Ezek. 1:4-6; Joel 3:16; Nah. 1:3-6; Zech. 9:14; 10:1.

[28]Cf., e.g. Job 36:26-37:13; 38:1; 40:6; Ps. 7:12-13; 11:6; 18:6-15; 29:3-10; 48:7; 50:3; 65:5-13; 68:7-17,33; 81:7; 83:15; 93:1-4; 97:3-5; 104:1-13,32; 147:15-18.

Which tribe first adopted Yahweh? Four prerequisites must be met before the answer can be found: (1) Since Yahweh originated in the south, the tribe that adopted him must have been for some time resident in the south; (2) the tribe that first adopted him would be found to have more Yahweh-compounded personal names as evidence of his worship; (3) the tribe which first adopted Yahweh must later have become a leading tribe of the southern confederacy, so that its god could grow in prestige; (4) the tribe which first adopted Yahweh must have extended its influence into the north and finally dominated the north so that Yahweh became the God of the whole nation. Meek maintains that the only tribe that can meet all these conditions is the tribe of Judah.

Judah was a tribe long resident in the south. Among the first six Yahweh-element personal names, Joshua (Ex. 17:9, and others) has to be deleted because it was a later modification, his original name was Hoshea; Joash (Judg. 6:11) and Micajahu (Judg. 17:1,4, abbreviated to Micah, Judg. 17:4-6) are converts to Yahweh; Jotham (Judg. 9:5-7) is a descendant of Joash; Jonathan (Judg. 18:30) was the son of Gershom, son of Moses, but Judg. 17:7 explicitly identifies him as "a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite." Undoubtedly, Levites, Simeonites, Kenites, Calebites, Jerahmeelites, and others in the south had amalgamated with Judah early so that the family of Jonathan was somewhat confused. This would hold true for

Jochebed (Ex. 6:20) if her name was not coined by P. Therefore, the only earliest name that definitely can be said to have the Yahweh element is Jonathan, a Judean. Further, Meek states,

> If we were to admit as genuine the names that the Chronicler gives in his genealogies of the various tribes (1 Chron. 2ff.), we would find a goodly number of Yahweh names among all the tribes, but more particularly among the Judeans. Scholars, however, are adverse to admitting the genuineness of these lists. The fact that we have so few Yahweh names from the early period may be surprising, but after all we do not have many clearly attested names of any kind from that period.
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> The paucity of Yahweh names before the time of Samuel and their decided increase from the time of David onward are evidences that Yahwism spread very slowly among the Hebrew tribes and only became prominent in the time of David, and this extension of Yahwism exactly parallels the growth of the power of Judah.[29]

Again, Meek says,

> But Judah was not content simply to dominate the south. It proceeded presently to extend its sphere of influence and its Yahweh cult into the north, until in the time of David it conquered the north and Yahweh was made the national god of the united state. From being a god of nature Yahweh had become a tribal god, then a confederate god, and now a national god. As Judah grew in power, so likewise did Yahweh.[30]

Furthermore, Meek also indicates the possibility of the name "Judah" as a compound of Yahu and some verbal form. He recognizes the suggestion of Albright, following Eduard Meyer,

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[29]Meek, p. 107.

[30]Ibid., pp. 108-109.

to make the name "Judah" a hypocoristicon of an original Yĕhûdeh-'ēl, "Let El be praised."[31] But Meek contends,

> However, the original could just as well have been Yĕhûdeh-yāh, "Let Yah (Yahweh) be praised," and this has the advantage of being supported by the Old Testament explanation of the name in Gen. 29:35. If correct, that would definitely connect Yahweh with Judah.[32]

Y. Kaufmann

Following the main stream of the tradition of Israel, Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889-1963)[33] asserts that the Torah divides mankind into two realms: The Israelites who are obliged to worship Yahweh, and the nations who have no part in Yahweh.[34] Kaufmann does admit that Israel is an ethnic mixture of Hebrew, Aramaic, Canaanite, and Egyptian elements.[35] In the same way, he admits that the culture of

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[31]W. F. Albright, "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah' with an Excursus on the Etymology of Todah and Torah," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVI (1927), 170-185.

[32]Meek, p. 109.

[33]In some books, יחזקאל קויפמן is transliterated as "Jecheskel Kaufmann." His eight-volume work, History of Israelite Religion, written in Hebrew, was published consecutively from 1937 to 1956. The present résumé concerning his opposition to the Kenite hypothesis is based on The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

[34]Cf. Ibid., pp. 163-164.

[35]The reason for this admission is because the Bible records that Aram is Abraham's home town, from which he and his descendants took wives for their sons; Judah and Simeon took Canaanite wives; Joseph married an Egyptian who bore him Ephraim and Manasseh. Cf. Ibid., p. 218.

Israel is influenced greatly by the Babylonian, Canaanite and Egyptian civilizations but not the religion of Israel. He says,

> Amidst this high cultural environment, Israelite religion was born. Its prehistory is not to be sought in primitive or Bedouin religion, but in the mellowed civilizations of the ancient Near East. Its initial level was not magical, totemistic, or demonistic; it originated among developed theistic religions. The gods of Babylonia, Egypt, and Canaan were world creators and rulers, founders of culture and society, guardians of justice and morality. Israel did not have to develop these concepts; it inherited them. Moreover, by the end of the second millenium B.C., the religions of the Near East had evolved far beyond mere ethnic or collective ideas. The individual and his fate were the subjects of constant speculation. Egyptian thought knew the idea of a judgment after death. A universalistic tendency is also evident in these religions. The great gods were cosmic and sustained all living things. Religious expression in psalms, laments, and prayers had reached a high artistic level. The wisdom literatures of Babylonia and Egypt give voice to lofty moral sentiments. On this soil Israelite religion sprang up.[36]

How did the Israelite religion spring up, then? Kaufmann attests, "It is a historical fact that while Israel, from its beginnings, regarded itself as the people of YHWH, this tie between people and YHWH did not exist in patriarchal times."[37] He holds that the beginning of the Israelite religion is also the beginning of monotheism. And he indicates,

> The Bible itself attests indirectly to the fact that Israel's monotheism is postpatriarchal. Historical monotheism is associated always with certain phenomena

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[36] Ibid., p. 221.

[37] Ibid., p. 224.

> which serve as its organic framework: apostolic prophecy, the battle with idolatry, and the name of YHWH.[38]

Accordingly, Kaufmann affirms, "The first prophet with a mission to a people was Moses";[39] "only with Moses does the contrast between the faith of YHWH and paganism appear";[40] and "finally, both JE (Exod. 3:13ff.) and P (6:2f.) preserve the tradition that the name YHWH was unknown to the patriarchal age, having been disclosed for the time to Moses at the burning bush."[41]

In asserting that Yahweh first revealed His name to Moses at the burning bush, Kaufmann is not only against Meek's evolutionary theory,[42] he also opposes the Kenite hypothesis. He maintains that the Biblical tradition distinguishes two territorial realms of sanctity: one prophetic alone; the other cultic and prophetic. The fixed boundary between them is Beersheba. South of Beersheba to Sinai lies the realm of prophecy, that is, revelation, alone; north of Beersheba extends the realm of cult and prophecy. Yahweh reveals Himself and appears to Israel in the south where He has no cultic sites at all. On the other hand, at the sites of later Israelite sanctuaries throughout

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[38] Ibid., p. 222.

[39] Ibid., p. 224.

[40] Ibid., p. 223.

[41] Ibid., p. 222.

[42] Supra, pp. 65-70.

Palestine, the patriarchs build altars and erect pillars, but no patriarch worships God anywhere south of Beersheba. He indicates that the reason Elijah went to Horeb was to hear the word of God; he did not build an altar nor make sacrifice there. The wandering Israelites did not seek special sites for worship, but carried their sacra--the ark and the tent--with them. It is true that they had worshipped one time at Sinai, but during the rest of their forty-year wandering, they had never gone back there again for worship. Kaufmann asserts that this is why "later prophets adduce it as an example of a cultless age (Amos 5:25; Jer. 7:22)."[43] His implication is, as he says,

> That the sanctity of the desert had no pre-Mosaic roots in Israel, and that this sanctity is limited to the domain of revelation and prophecy. This means that the religious movement that centered about Moses had no earlier cultic roots, and that it was not connected with any local sanctity, or linked with the cult of some god or other that was worshipped in the area of Moses' work.[44]

By this statement, Kaufmann means the name and the cult of Yahweh came from revelation and not from the Kenites or Midianites.

Further, he argues,

> Jethro is a priest "of Midian," not of YHWH. If he and the Midianites really were worshippers of YHWH, there is no reason why the biblical tradition should have obscured the fact. Biblical legends tell as much concerning Adam, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Balaam, Job and his companions, and Melchizedek. Yet the legend of

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[43]Kaufmann, p. 243.

[44]Ibid.

> Exodus 3 seems to indicate just the contrary. Moses comes unwittingly with his sheep to the "mountain of God"; he does not know it is holy ground. He has to ask the name of the deity who revealed himself there to him. None of these things were told to him by Jethro. Jethro's confession of the greatness of Israel's God is no more than the biblical stories tell of several other pagans (II Kings 5:15-17; Jonah 1:16; Dan. 2:47; 3:28-33; cf. Exod. 9:20; 14:25). And while other pagans are explicitly said to have offered sacrifice to Israel's God, the text of Exodus 18 does not hide Moses' obligation to Jethro with regard to judicial procedure, why should it have hidden other of his teachings to Moses if there were any? If the narrative does not explicitly refer Moses' knowledge of YHWH to Jethro, it can only be that it regards the revelation to Moses as an absolute beginning.[45]

For Kaufmann, Jethro and the Kenites were heathens. Hence, he avers, "Jethro acknowledges the greatness of YHWH (Exod. 18:11ff.), yet he returns to his land and his priesthood (v. 27, cf. v. 1)."[46]

Martin Buber

Closely following the rabbinical exegesis, Martin Buber (1878-1965) rejects the Kenite hypothesis concerning the origin of the cult of Yahweh in Israel. He states that the Kenite hypothesis dare not be regarded as exegetically justified.[47] To understand his point of view, first one should know that Buber does not accept the documentary theory which most of the advocates of the Kenite hypothesis

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[45] Ibid., p. 244.

[46] Ibid., p. 164. Cf. also p. 244.

[47] M. Buber, Kingship of God (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), p. 33.

assume. He says, "I regard the prevailing view of the Biblical text, namely, as largely composed of 'source documents' ('Yahwist,' 'Elohist,' etc.), as incorrect."[48]

Buber considers Yahweh as belonging originally to Israel. He admits that the name Yahweh is introduced only once in the Genesis narrative in the form of a direct revelatory speech placed in the mouth of God (Gen. 15:7), and in the identical form of phrase with which the revelation to the people begins (Ex. 20:2). Yet, he stresses the fact that Abraham proclaims Yahweh "when he comes to Canaan as might a herald, at one spot after the other."[49] Therefore, he indicates that the right exegesis of Ex. 6:2-3 should notice that God said to Moses "I am Yahweh" first, then follows, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh, I was not made known to them." The implication is that it is not that the deity neglected to make His name known to them, but that they had not acquired knowledge of the character of this name; they already "possessed" the name, but they knew only its sound and not its sense.[50] Similarly, in Ex. 3:13-15, when Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they

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[48]M. Buber, Moses (Oxford and London: East and West Library, 1946), p. 6.

[49]Ibid., p. 49.

[50]M. Buber, The Prophetic Faith (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 29.

ask me, 'What (māh) is his name?' what shall I say to them?" Buber says that the question here is not concerning sound but mystery. Moses expects the people to ask the meaning and character of a name of which they have been aware since the days of their fathers. For when one uses Biblical Hebrew to ask a person's name, he never says "What (māh) is your name?" but "Who (mī) are you?" or "Mī is your name?" The question introduced by "what" always asks about the nature of something; "what" coupled with the word "name" points either to a meaning suggested by the pronouncing of the answer, or to a mystery.[51] Further, Buber asserts,

> Moses supposes that the people will beg him to reveal and make accessible to them the divine name, in such a manner that they could call upon the God and conjure Him efficaciously. This is no evidence that they have not known the name but simply that they have not known it as a name by which the God might be addressed. The name which came easily to their lips, Yah or Yahu, was not made to be called upon, if reflected in it was the primitive Semitic pronoun "Ya," that is "he," as a "tabu-name" of the deity, with which one could, so to say, hint at the deity, but not address Him, or if it was an exclamation, a "numinous primal sound," with which also the deity could not be addressed--and this is the reason why it was never, or hardly ever, before this period combined with an individual name.[52]

Buber thus rejects that Yahweh is the God of the Kenites. He says that we know nothing of the Kenites' god, but we may assume him to have been a mountain and fire god who was associated with the tribe--some of whom were smiths

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[51]Cf. Buber, Moses, pp. 48-49; and Buber, The Prophetic Faith, pp. 27-28.

[52]Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 28.

by calling--which participated in the early Midianite exploitation of the copper mines of the Sinai district. However, he indicates further that the little that we know about the Kenites' god shows no resemblance to the characteristics of Yahweh. Yahweh does not reside on Mount Sinai, but from time to time "dwells" there as a temporary dwelling place. He went down to Egypt with Jacob (Gen. 46:4); but He shuns this unholy land, and only from time to time descends from heaven (Ex. 3:8); and He goes with His people to the promised land (Ex. 33:14-17).[53]

In the narrative of Exodus 18, Buber holds that Jethro came not as the priest of Midian but as Moses' father-in-law. For the priestly title never recurs after verse 1, but "father-in-law" is used more than ten times later. He indicates that it seems what the narrator stresses here is the family motive: the father-in-law of Moses came to visit his son-in-law and brought back the latter's wife and sons. They greeted each other and went into the tent. The son-in-law related to him the great things that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake; then Jethro rejoiced and praised Yahweh. After a burnt offering and sacrifices were offered to God, the next day Jethro advised his son-in-law concerning the administration of justice.[54]

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[53]Cf. Buber, Moses, p. 97; and Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 25.

[54]Buber, Moses, pp. 94-96.

When Jethro says, "Now I know Yahweh is greater than all gods," Buber maintains that it is odd for a priest to say that for the first time now he knows his god is the greatest.[55] Buber also holds that Jethro did not conduct the burnt offering and sacrifice in verse 12. He "fetched" it for Moses who conducted it (confer Lev. 12:8). The reason Moses is not mentioned here is that the place where the sacrifice was brought to God lies at the entrance to the leader's tent. This tent is the "tent of meeting"; its entrance is the place "before God," at which the communal offerings were brought. Buber says that the person making the communal offering was naturally the possessor of the tent and leader of the community, therefore, it has no need to mention him.[56]

After Jethro had acknowledged that Yahweh is greater than all gods (Elohim), Buber states that the word Elohim now becomes the motif. For it is repeated three times immediately and seven times later, which shows that the Kenites and the Israelites were then united only in the Elohim concept, which was common to the peoples. Jethro brought the offering "for Elohim" and then ate the meal with the elders of Israel "before Elohim," which indicates that

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[55]Cf. Buber, Kingship of God, p. 29; and Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 26.

[56]Cf. Buber, Moses, p. 96.

they were not as yet united under Yahweh.[57] Therefore, his conclusion is that there is no conversion on either side; what happens here is the "identification." And he makes use of the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham as an example. The answer of Abraham to the King of Sodom--originally an answer, presumably, to Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem--apparently identifies his God Yahweh with the el'elyon of Salem, the "creator of heaven and earth." (Gen. 14:22). Buber affirms that this is not a late theological construction, but a religio-historical genuine basic phenomenon of the "fusion of gods." One of the profound resistances in the fusion of gods, of course, is the reservation of the name. The way to overcome it is that, as Buber indicates, the mysteriously more powerful of the two names enters into the union as the name, the other only as epithet. This is what had happened in the declaration of Abraham. "It can also happen, however," Buber asserts, "in such a way that perhaps with the similarity of relatedness of the two names the one stronger in meaning absorbs the other; a process of this kind appears to me to be what stands behind Jethro's homages."[58]

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[57]Cf. Ibid., p. 95.

[58]Buber, Kingship of God, p. 34.

C. H. W. Brekelmans

Among the present day scholars, Christianus Henricus Wilhelmus Brekelmans (b. 1922) is the first one who asserts that Ex. 18:12 alludes to a treaty between two parties. He says that when Jethro confessed, "Yahweh certainly appears to be greater than all other gods" (verse 11), it could possibly concur with both the adherents of the Kenite hypothesis who say that the mighty deliverance from Egypt confirmed Jethro in the belief of his own God Yahweh, and the opponents of this theory who express that this is the conversion of Jethro to the religion of Yahweh.[59] Brekelmans demonstrates these possibilities by a comparison with two texts in the Books of Kings. In 1 Kings 17:24, the widow whose dead son Elijah had brought to life, says to the prophet, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God." Here from the context, Brekelmans holds that this woman already acknowledged Elijah as a prophet; that she experienced this in such an outstanding way by the resurrection of her own son has only been a strong confirmation of this conviction. On the other hand, in 2 Kings 5:15, Naaman who has been cured by Elisha of his leprosy exclaims, "In truth, I know there is no other God in all the world but in Israel." Here the context makes it clear that there is a real conversion to Yahweh. Therefore, Brekelmans holds, "It is only from

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[59]C. H. W. Brekelmans, "Exodus xviii and the Origins of Yahwism in Israel," Oudtestamentische Studiën, X (1954), 215-217.

the context that the precise meaning of these sentences appears."[60] In the same way, he maintains that in the light of the whole chapter of Exodus 18, the true meaning of verse 12 will appear much different from what the adherents of the Kenite hypothesis and many others hold.

The reason the Kenite hypothesis is wrong Brekelmans holds, is that, Moses did not come to Jethro, but the reverse. Had the Israelites needed to be taught how to worship Yahweh, Moses would have gone to Jethro and not, as the text shows, the other way (verse 1). The main purpose Jethro came is not the bringing back of Moses' wife and sons either. After verses 1-5, Moses' wife and sons disappear from the scene entirely. The real intention of Jethro's coming is that he had heard of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and how Yahweh had blessed the enterprise of Moses, and therefore he wanted to enter into a treaty with them. This is exactly parallel to Gen. 26:28 where Abimelech came to Isaac and said, "We see plainly that Yahweh is with you; so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you."

Brekelmans asserts that offerings and a sacred meal of the two parties are the common religious ceremonies for making a covenant; and verse 12 confirms that it is really a covenant that is meant. He further indicates, "When two tribes make a covenant with one another, the chieftains act

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[60] Ibid., 216.

as the cultic leaders of the ceremony."[61] Now the question is, whether Jethro is a chieftain. To which Brekelmans' answer is affirmative; for the statement of verse 1, "Jethro, the priest of Midian," is a particular one. He says,

> It stands alone in the whole Old Testament. In all other places the priests are priests of a god; only here we have a priest of a land or a tribe. Scholars appear to have paid not much attention to this capital difference. If as we have seen, Jethro really acts as the leader of his clan in concluding a covenant with the Israelites, why then his official title kohen Midian should not indicate this function also? It may be the only trace of this meaning of kohen, but is this impossible? An exact parallel is found in South-Arabic epigraphic texts, where the word mkrb (= offering an oblation) is used to design the high priest, but in the same time it is the title of the oldest Sabaean kings. . . . The mkrb, therefore, is called the mkrb of a land or tribe, not of a god, just like Jethro, because this title used with the name of his land or tribe indicates his royal function. The same will be the case when Jethro is called the kohen of his tribe; it is his title as chieftain of the Midianites.[62]

Hence, Brekelmans maintains that when Jethro offers the sacrifices at the making of the covenant with Israel, he is acting just like Abimelech and others. Although the answer to the question, why did Jethro offer the sacrifice and not Moses and Aaron, is a difficult one, Brekelmans resolves, "It must have been the same reason why Abimelech and not Isaac did so. Perhaps it is the one asking for the alliance who has to offer the other a sacred meal."[63]

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[61] Ibid., 219.

[62] Ibid., 220-221.

[63] Ibid., 221.

Another related question in verse 12 is whether the offering was to Yahweh. To which, Brekelmans gives a negative answer. He says that even if it was possible that Jethro honoured the God of the Israelite tribes by making an offering to Him, it does not imply that he was or became a worshipper of Yahweh. When Isaac and Abimelech offered sacrifices in their making of covenant, we cannot infer that Isaac became a worshipper of the god of Abimelech or vice versa. On the other hand, the text in question does not show that the narrator considered that the offering was to Yahweh at all, "otherwise he would without the slightest doubt have used the word Yahweh instead of Elohim, even if we suppose that the narrative is of elohistic origin."[64]

Brekelmans does take the text as an Elohistic one, because the name Elohim is used in the whole chapter. He holds that the name Yahweh was not in the original form of Exodus 18. All the verses where this name occurs are additions to the original narrative by a Yahwistic writer. Therefore, Brekelmans maintains that we should not pay much attention to the use of the name Yahweh in the mouth of Jethro, because it is the Yahwistic writer who made Jethro speak these words. And he affirms that it is "impossible to use Exodus xviii as an argument for the Kenite origin of Yahwism in Israel."[65]

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 221-222.

Finally, Brekelmans indicates that the stories of the covenant-makings in the Book of Genesis (confer 21:32; 26:31; 32:1-2; 33:12-17) all conclude in generally the same way, saying that each of the partners went home. In Exodus 18, too, Jethro "went his way to his own country" (verse 27).

S. Mowinckel

Sigmund Mowinckel (1884-1965) strongly advocated the abandonment of the notion that Moses adopted the name and the cult of Yahweh from the Kenites or the Midianites and thus introduced a new god to the Israelites. The main reason for his assertion is that he believes the name Yahweh was known to all North-Sinaitic tribes and they all took part in Yahweh's annual feast[66] prior to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Although Mowinckel recognizes that both the Kenites and the Midianites were worshippers of the god Yahweh, he maintains that they were not the only worshippers of Yahweh. Ex. 5:1-3 indicates that Moses himself asks permission of Pharaoh to let the Israelites take part in the annual feast, "as they have done for ages--in the feast of the god of the Hebrews."[67]

To understand his position, one has to know that Mowinckel asserts that the opinion of the earliest historian

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[66]S. Mowinckel, "The Name of the God of Moses," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXXII (1961), 125.

[67]Ibid.

J who knew the pre-Mosaic Israelites worshipped a--or the--god Yahweh is basically correct. J uses the name Yahweh in the patriarchal stories without reservation, and in his opinion it was known already at the time of Enosh (Gen. 4:26). Since the old Israel, as J has shown, already used the Tetragrammaton, Mowinckel avers that P's statement in Ex. 6:2-3 that the name Yahweh was not known till it was revealed to Moses and that God had appeared to the Patriarchs as El Shaddai were unhistorical theological theories.[68] Further he holds that it is a misinterpretation of Ex. 3:13-15 that the text supports the Kenite hypothesis. It is rather an account of the revelation of the meaning of the name of God which had not previously been known. Mowinckel believes Exodus 3-4 essentially belongs to J, containing some secondary elements.[69]

Concerning the interpretation of the verses Ex. 3:13-15, Mowinckel states that Moses foresees when he goes back to his compatriots in Egypt, that he has to legitimatize himself and his alleged mandator: To answer his compatriots that "the god of our (your) fathers" (confer Ex. 3:6,13,15, 16) has sent him will not be sufficient, for there are hundreds of gods. Moses has to tell them <u>the name</u> of the god of their fathers--his real cult name, not just some everyday epithet. At the same time, to tell them the name of

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[68]Cf. <u>Ibid</u>., XXXII, 121.

[69]<u>Ibid</u>., XXXII, 122.

Yahweh by itself would not suffice for the legitimization for him nor for the numen who sends him. The mere name of the god of the Hebrews could be expected to be known by many others than the alleged messenger of the god. However, in the opinion of the ancient Israelites names were symbolic--not only in regard to their actual and literal signification, but also with regard to all the symbolic meanings that might be found in them. A name may have deeper meanings than the one discernible at first glance and recognizable by everybody. Hence Mowinckel asserts.

> To find the deeper, hidden meaning of the names of the gods was one of the tasks of the "theologians" of those days. A man who knows the "real" deeper meaning of the name of a god, really "knows the god" in question. The old Israelites hardly knew what the name of Yahweh really meant in the scientific, etymological sense of the word. What mattered was the meaning that the inspired and "wise" knower of God could find in it. . . .
>
> What Exod. 3:16 tells us is that this deeper meaning of the name was revealed to Moses by God himself. Moses at once understands that the mysterious words refer to the name of Yahweh, and also that the god who speaks to him from the burning bush and can reveal the hidden meaning of the Name, must certainly be Yahweh himself, and such a revelation is sufficient proof that Yahweh has sent him.[70]

Consequently, his conclusion is,

> In J's opinion it was not the name of Yahweh, which was revealed to Moses here--that was known already by Enosh centuries before--but the deeper meaning, which according to Yahwistic tradition and the theology of the "school" of J, was hidden in the name.[71]

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[70] Ibid., XXXII, 126.

[71] Ibid.

What is the deeper, hidden meaning of the name Yahweh, then? Mowinckel holds that the original meaning of the name comes from the form ya-huwa, ya being the interjection well known from Arabic, and huwa, the personal pronoun third person masculine: Oh He! Mowinckel says that the God the old Israelites worshipped as "He" is attested, besides other proofs, by Deutero-Isaiah who asserts that the ultimate aim of Yahweh's acting in history and nature is expressed in the phrase, "that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He" (Is. 43:10). It is also directly attested in the personal name 'Abihu (Ex. 6:23; 24:1). Mowinckel maintains that this personal name can only be interpreted as "(My) Father is He," or "He is (my) Father," where "He" stands for the god of the bearer of the name.[72]

Therefore, Mowinckel concludes, "Oh He"!--ya-huwa--originally was the cultic cry of exclamation and invocation of the North-Sinaitic tribes in the annual feast when the worshippers met their god, and it was gradually used as a symbolic designation and finally felt to be a name.[73]

## The Reasons for the Opposition

The opposition to the Kenite hypothesis proceeds from various points of view. To incorporate all views under one umbrella may not be an easy task, yet it will be attempted

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[72]Ibid., XXXII, 131.

[73]Ibid., XXXII, 132.

in this section. For convenience of comparison, the summary of the opposition to the Kenite hypothesis will generally be paralleled with the synopsis of the evidence on behalf of the theory presented in the foregoing chapter. Whenever one of the viewpoints is not specified with the sources, it is the present writer's understanding of the Biblical records.

## The Kenites and Yahwism

Unlike the advocates of the Kenite hypothesis, who were interested in discussing the ethnic origin and occupation of the Kenites at length, the opponents are almost entirely silent on these topics. They also, in general, do not regard Genesis 4 as having much significance to the argument. On the other hand, most of them consider the Kenites as converts to Yahwism. Gordon says that there is no indication from the Bible that the Kenites were the original worshippers of Yahweh; and that it was not the Israelites who joined the Kenites but vice versa.[74] In the same way, Meek states that the Kenites were converts to the Yahweh cult and he argues that if Jethro had been a priest of Yahweh and the one who initiated the Hebrews into his cult, it would have been on this basis that Moses would have invited him to join them on their journey to the promised land instead of on the

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[74]Cf. Gordon, pp. 107-109.

basis, as indicated in Num. 10:29-32, that he knew the desert and its camping places, and would be an efficient guide for them.[75]

Other opponents of this theory, Buber, for example, consider that Jethro identified his god with Yahweh[76] and therefore imply that the Kenites were not the original Yahweh worshippers. Mowinckel, as treated in the previous section, recognizes that the old Israelites, too, were part of the original worshippers of Yahweh among the North-Sinaitic tribes.[77]

Since the Kenites were converts to Yahwism, or identified their god with Yahweh, or were part of the original Yahweh worshippers, according to the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis, this explained why they helped Moses and the Israelites; and it also interpreted the reason for the friendship between the Kenites and the Israelites in the days of the Judges and Kings.

The God of Israel

Yahweh is uniquely the God of the Israelites. This is the basic concept of most of the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis. Kaufmann follows the Israelite tradition asserting that the Torah divides mankind into two realms: Israelites

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[75]Cf. Meek, pp. 88-89.

[76]Cf. Buber, Kingship of God, p. 34.

[77]Cf. Mowinckel, XXXII, 125.

who are obliged to worship Yahweh and the nations who have no part in Yahweh. He maintains that the name and the religion of Yahweh were disclosed to Moses at the burning bush.[78] So he implies that Yahweh is specifically the God of Israel. Gordon[79] and Davidson[80] both claim that there is no trace in Israel's tradition that Yahweh was worshipped outside of Israel, and He was the God of the fathers. If Moses were proclaiming a new God to the slaves in Egypt, he could not have rallied the people to follow him, for the ancient Near Eastern people could not accept a god of whom they have no previous knowledge.

However, learning from the proponents of the Kenite hypothesis, as treated in the previous chapter, there are three major obstacles for the assertion of Yahweh as the God of the Israelites and not the God of the Kenites: (1) If Yahweh is uniquely the God of the Israelites, why do the Biblical traditions have so many indications of Yahweh as God of fire which concurs with the occupation of the Kenites? (2) If Yahweh is uniquely the God of the Israelites, why do the Biblical traditions mention again and again that Yahweh is the God of Sinai which coincides with the general locale where the Kenites came from? (3) If Yahweh is uniquely the God of the Israelites, why were there so few Yahweh elements

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[78]Cf. Kaufmann, pp. 163-164, 222-224.

[79]Cf. Gordon, p. 108.

[80]Cf. Davidson, p. 52.

in personal names--which is surely an indication of the worship of that deity--in the early history of Israel and none of them occurred before the days of Moses?

The main obstacle for the opposition to the Kenite hypothesis is the scarcity of theophorous names with Yahweh elements in the early history of the Israelites. Virtually none occur prior to the Mosaic age. To this problem, Kaufmann probably would reply that that is because the name and the religion of Yahweh were started at the revelation to Moses in the burning bush[81] and consider Jochebed, the name of Moses' mother, as a contribution of the late source P. Meek,[82] on the other hand, asserts that if P did not have some ground to base it on, he would not have coined such a name involving Yahweh elements, as Jochebed, earlier than Moses. He maintains that Yahweh was already early known to the Hebrews, and the absence of Yahweh names with the early Hebrews indicates that there was no general worship of Yahweh among them. Therefore he holds that Yahweh had His origin in nature: a tribal god of Judah in the south which grew in prestige as the political influence of the tribe grew. Gradually, the tribal God Yahweh became the God of the Southern Confederacy, and finally the national God of Israel.

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[81]Cf. Kaufmann, p. 244.

[82]Cf. Meek, pp. 91-94.

Other scholars have different ways to solve the problem of this scarcity of Yahweh names. Buber[83] regards the name Yahweh as a taboo name and therefore the early Israelites were afraid of misusing it. Or it may have been an exclamation, a "numinous primal sound," with which the deity could not be properly addressed. The latter is also part of Mowinckel's position. Mowinckel[84] maintains that the old Israelites, as well as the North-Sinaitic tribes, already worshipped Yahweh prior to the Exodus in their annual feast, yet, in addition to the interjection plus the personal pronoun third person masculine of ya-huwa as the deity's name, the worshippers did not know the meaning of the Name fully until it was revealed to Moses and to the new Israel which subsequently came out from Egypt and entered a covenant to serve Yahweh. Davidson,[85] however, reasons that among the Hebrews, the name was never a mere sign by which a person was distinguished from another; it always expressed the meaning of the person or thing designated. Since Yahweh was worshipped by the fathers, and Jochebed, Moses' mother did have Yahweh elements in her name, the revelation to Moses recorded in the Book of Exodus can hardly mean that the name was not known before. It only means that the character of the name had never been experienced by the fathers. And

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[83]Cf. Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 28.

[84]Cf. Mowinckel, XXXII, 125-127.

[85]Cf. Davidson, pp. 37-39.

further he holds that since the name Yahweh emphasizes the presence of God, therefore, even if the name Yahweh is new to the Mosaic age, it is because the new situation required it in order to assure the people of His presence in their circumstances.

To call Yahweh, the God of Israel, "the God of Sinai" is not an obstacle for the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis; the God of Sinai is a unique Israelite expression. As Davidson has indicated,[86] the reason Moses led the people to Sinai was because Yahweh manifested Himself there in the bush. Elijah fled Jezebel and went to the mountain of God, the place of the theophany of Yahweh at the giving of the Law. The main work of the prophet Elijah was to turn the people away from Baal to follow Yahweh. In the description of the manifestation of Yahweh on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Law, the saying that Yahweh came down upon Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:20), Davidson takes as a manner of speaking and implies that Yahweh does not have His permanent dwelling place there. The same opinion has been expressed by Buber who says that Yahweh does not reside on Mount Sinai, but from time to time "dwells" there as a temporary dwelling place.[87] Actually, for the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis, Yahweh, the God of Sinai, has a close relationship to El Shaddai,

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[86]Cf. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[87]Cf. Buber, Moses, p. 97; Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 25.

which, to most of the scholars, is interpreted as "a mountain God," or as some of the English Bibles render it, "The Mighty God," or "God Almighty." This may have been the reason for God to say to Moses in Ex. 6:2-3, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them." They say the text does not mean that the name Yahweh was unknown but the real significance or character of the name had not yet been experienced by the patriarchs.[88]

The God of fire, too, is not an obstacle for the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis; this may have nothing to do with the Kenites. It may only indicate Yahweh's revelation to Moses and His people (Ex. 3:2-6; Deut. 4:11-12; 5:4). Or, it may just picture His holiness (Deut. 4:24), His hatred of sin (Num. 16:35; Lev. 10:1-2; Is. 29:6), and His extinction of enemies (Deut. 9:3; Is. 30:27-30). Or, it may merely symbolize His guidance and protection of His people by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21,22; 14:19,20,24; 33:9-10; Num. 14:14). Or, it may simply show His dignity and glory (Ex. 19:18; 24:17).

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[88]Cf. Davidson, p. 68; Buber, Moses, pp. 48-49; Buber, The Prophetic Faith, pp. 27-28.

The evidence of the opposition in Exodus 18

It is interesting that both the proponents and the opponents utilize Exodus 18 to prove their points of view. According to the proponents, as treated in the previous chapter, it seems that by analysis, every bit of Exodus 18 proves that the worship of Yahweh came from the Kenites. However, the opposite also seems true to the opponents concerning this chapter.

Simple statistics of the usage of the terminology seem to show clearly that Jethro came to Moses not as a priest, but as Moses' father-in-law. In verses 1-12, Jethro is mentioned as "father-in-law" of Moses seven times, only once as "priest." In the second section, verses 13-27, which credits Jethro as the originator of Israel's judicial system, the narrator refers to Jethro as Moses' "father-in-law" five more times, but no mention is made of his priesthood at all, though some of the proponents assert that Jethro gave advice to Moses out of his priestly function.[89]

It is also a vital point, as Buber,[90] Kaufmann,[91] Meek[92] and others have pointed out, that Jethro is the priest of Midian (verse 1, confer 2:16; 3:1). No place in

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[89]Rowley, for example. Cf. From Moses to Qumran (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 52.

[90]Cf. Buber, Moses, pp. 94-96.

[91]Cf. Kaufmann, p. 244.

[92]Cf. Meek, p. 88.

the Bible ever mentions that he is a priest of the Kenites or of Yahwism. The implication is that Jethro as a priest of the Kenites or of Yahwism can only be a conjecture and not a factual reality. On the other hand, as Brekelmans indicates, if Moses needed to learn something from Jethro concerning Yahwism, it would be Moses who should go to Jethro[93] and not as recorded in verses 5-6 that Jethro came to Moses.

Concerning the confession of Jethro in verse 11 that "now I know Yahweh is greater than all gods," Gordon says that this is the first time Jethro recognized the might of Israel's God.[94] Buber indicates that it is odd for a priest to say that for the first time he knows his god is greatest,[95] if Jethro does hold the priesthood of Yahwism. Hence, Kaufmann states that Jethro's confession of the greatness of Israel's God is no more than the Biblical stories tell of several other pagans (2 Kings 5:15-17, Naaman; Jonah 1:16, the men on the ship; Dan. 2:47, and 3:28-33, King Nebuchadnezzar, and others).[96]

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[93]Cf. Brekelmans, X, 217.

[94]Cf. Gordon, p. 108.

[95]Cf. Buber, Kingship of God, p. 29; Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 26.

[96]Cf. Kaufmann, p. 244.

The most troublesome text is verse 12. Buber[97] points out that the word עלה is used in Lev. 12:8 and argues that Jethro did not conduct the burnt offering and sacrifice. He just procured it for Moses who conducted it. Buber contends further that the reason Moses is not mentioned in the text is because the spot where the sacrifice was brought "before God" was at the entrance to the leader's tent, to which Moses had led his father-in-law, and which Aaron and the elders of Israel now also enter. This tent, to Buber, is the real "tent of meeting" and its entrance is the place "before God" where the sacrifices were made; and the one who conducts the rite would be understood as the leader and owner of the tent. Since Buber asserts that Jethro identified his god with Yahweh, he reasons that here the burnt offering and sacrifices were made to Elohim instead of, as elsewhere, to Yahweh, and serve to illuminate the uniqueness of what had happened.

Meek,[98] too, points out that "God" here is the generic term Elohim and not the personal name of Israel's God, Yahweh. Since he considers Jethro as a convert to Yahwism, the incident here would be a convert's thanksgiving offering.

Extending Gordon's assertion[99] that the eating together of the Israelites and the Kenites "before God" implied a

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[97]Cf. Buber, Moses, pp. 95-96.

[98]Cf. Meek, pp. 88, 108.

[99]Cf. Gordon, p. 108.

recognition of each other's God, Brekelmans[100] maintains that Ex. 18:12 alludes to a treaty between two parties--Jethro representing the Midianites to make a covenant with the Israelites. He holds that the burnt offering and sacrifices were made by Jethro. The reason that Jethro did it was because he was a priest and chieftain of Midian, and it was probably the one who asked for the alliance who had to offer the other a sacred meal parallel to the account of Gen. 26:26-31.

For those who champion the idea that the name and the cult of Yahweh were first revealed to Moses, Kaufmann,[101] for example, argues that since the Bible does not hide Moses' obligation to Jethro with regard to judicial procedure, it would not have hidden Jethro's other teachings to Moses if there were any. The contention, again, is that the cult of Yahweh did not come from Jethro and the Kenites to the Israelites.

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[100]Cf. Brekelmans, X, 219-221.

[101]Cf. Kaufmann, p. 244.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE KENITE HYPOTHESIS AND THE COVENANT-MAKING APPROACH OF EXODUS 18:1-12

In the previous two chapters our research has found that the text under discussion is used decisively for and against the Kenite hypothesis; and there are some indications that the episode includes covenant-making elements also. However, in these last two chapters we have selected only a few scholars to examine the distinctive points of the pros and cons of the Kenite theory. What is the general scholarly consensus about this hypothesis now? Further, since the covenant-making understanding of the pericope grows out of criticism of the Kenite theory, how is this approach progressing at present? Furthermore, if we approach the text as either with a bias for or against the Kenite hypothesis, or the covenant-making hypothesis, what problems will we meet? The answer to these questions is the main task of this chapter.

### The Current Status of the Kenite Theory and Its connection with Exodus 18:1-12

As the inquiry concerning the Kenite hypothesis has shown, the theory was first proposed in 1862 by Fr. W. Ghillany. After turning to the twentieth century, there are more and more scholars who espouse the Kenite hypothesis

besides those who have been treated in Chapter II. Barton,[1] for example, describes a picture similar to our findings. In the last three decades, Eerdmans,[2] North,[3] Bright,[4] Hebert,[5] and von Rad[6] are some of the scholars who hold this theory to some extent. Although there are a number of scholars who champion the Kenite hypothesis, the opposition to this theory in the twentieth century is equally strong. Besides those scholars whose opposition has been recorded in Chapter III, the proposed hypothesis is rejected by König[7] whose assertion is similar to Kittel.[8] Kittel held that the

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[1]Cf. G. A. Barton, A Sketch of Semitic Origins: Social and Religious (New York: The McMillan Company, 1902), pp. 269-308; G. A. Barton, The Religion of Israel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928), pp. 56-73; G. A. Barton, A History of the Hebrew People (New York: The Century Company, 1930), pp. 58-60.

[2]Cf. B. D. Eerdmans, The Religion of Israel (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1947), pp. 8-20.

[3]Cf. C. R. North, The Old Testament Interpretation of History (London: Epworth Press, 1953), pp. 4-6.

[4]Cf. John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 110-127.

[5]Cf. Gabriel Hebert, When Israel Came out of Egypt (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1961), pp. 65-82.

[6]Cf. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, translated by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), I, 8-11, 57-68.

[7]Cf. Eduard König, Geschichte der Alttestamentlichen Religion (Gütersloch: C. Bertelsmann, 1912), pp. 162ff.

[8]Cf. Rudolf Kittel, The Religion of the People of Israel, translated by R. C. Micklem (New York: The McMillan Company, 1925), pp. 63-65.

name Yahweh was neither borrowed from distant foreign countries, nor was it at home in Israel from antiquity. Its naturalization in Israel was the work of Moses. And he argued that no matter from whatever quarter Moses may have received the name, it was only the name that he took. Kittel recognizes that the God of Moses still bore traces of local influences from the wilderness, and that reminiscences of the terrible nature-god and flashing fire, are everywhere still discernible. But he avers that Yahweh was a "great ethical Being," and "it was precisely this which the Kenite god was not."[9]

Another opponent of the Kenite hypothesis is Julian Morgenstern.[10] He considers Exodus 18 as part of the K document which was composed in the Southern Kingdom at a time when the old pastoral life and culture, religious belief and practice, were beginning to give way to a more advanced agricultural civilization with its own peculiar religious institutions and ceremonies. Hence he asserts that the K document was composed in the fifteenth year of Asa (899 B.C.), by leaders of the prophetic party who were in close association with the Rechabites of the Kenite tribe, in support of the religious reformation of King Asa. His article argues that Exodus 33-34, 1 Kings 19:3-14, Num. 10:29-33a, Ex. 4:24-26 and Exodus 18 are parts of the

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[9] Ibid., p. 65.

[10] Cf. J. Morgenstern, "The Oldest Document of the Hexateuch," Hebrew Union College Annual, IV (1927), 1-138.

K document, that is originated by the prophets who associated themselves with the Kenites. Morgenstern explicitly states

> The close connection of this narrative in Ex. 18 with the general content of the K document, as we have reconstructed it, has long been half recognized by Biblical scholars; and it was chiefly upon the basis of their interpretation of this chapter that the so-called Kenite hypothesis was evolved.[11]

He nevertheless denies that the cult of Yahweh came from the Kenites by saying "the beginning of Yahweh-worship in Israel came through direct revelation from Yahweh Himself, and not from the Kenite priest."[12]

Some of the scholars who do not accept the Kenite hypothesis most likely will say with U. E. Simon, "The so-called Kenite theory of explanation displays the acme of liberal inventiveness."[13] For example, R. Abba says that this view can claim no direct support in Hebrew tradition.[14] Jack Finegan, too, holds that Jethro is described as the priest of Midian, and that he simply learns from Moses what the Lord has done for them, and joins Moses in praising God

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[11] Ibid., IV, 127.

[12] Ibid., IV, 130.

[13] U. E. Simon, A Theology of Salvation (London: SPCK, 1953), p. 88.

[14] R. Abba, "The Divine Name Yahweh," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXX (1961), 321.

for it.[15] The same attitude is taken by R. de Vaux.[16] He holds that the Kenites and the Midianites were two different ethnic groups. He also maintains that the marriage of Moses came from two different traditions: the Kenite tradition and the Midianite tradition. The former originated in southern Palestine where the Kenites settled with Judah in the region of Arad; the latter was linked closely with the exodus groups. Further he states that we cannot prove that Jethro had been a worshipper of Yahweh before Exodus 18, nor can we say the mountain of God was in Midianite territory (confer Ex. 18:5,27 and 3:1 where the mountain is far removed from Jethro). It is true Jethro is mentioned as a priest of Midian, but we know nothing about the Midianite God, Midianite cult, and Midianite priesthood. Although some have claimed that Jethro installed Moses into the office of kâhin (oracle recipient) in this incident, it must be remembered that our information on kâhin comes from 2000 years later. Finally, in verses 21b and 25b the people are numerous and sedentary. This indicates that the second section of Exodus 18 does not represent old material. In short, he finds that the Midianite or Kenite hypothesis is not capable of proof.

While the proponents and the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis still hotly debate the theory in the current

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[15]J. Finegan, Let My People Go: A Journey Through Exodus (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 112.

[16]Cf. R. de Vaux, "Sur l'origine Kenite ou Madianite du Yahvisme," Eretz-Israel, IX (1969), 28-32.

generation, there are a number of scholars who consider the possibility of the proposal but hold that it is hard to prove in its entirety.

When commenting on Ex. 18:8-12, concerning Jethro's reaction to what he has heard, Oesterley and Robinson note that "this action is incomprehensible except on the supposition that Yahweh was the God of Jethro and his tribe, the Kenites, and that Jethro himself was Yahweh's priest."[17] However, after examining some extra-Biblical evidences and Biblical references, they state, "We do not know who it was that worshipped Yahweh before He became specifically the God of Israel . . . all we know for certain is that Yahweh had an independent existence before His adoption of Israel as His people."[18]

Similar opinion is expressed by E. Jacob, G. E. Wright and R. H. Pfeiffer. Jacob indicates that although the attribution of "the name Yahweh to Kenites retains a certain measure of probability, it must be recognized that up to the present we have no attestation of Yahweh as a name for God

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[17]W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development (New York: The McMillan Company, 1937), p. 148.

[18]Ibid., pp. 155-156.

outside Israel."[19] Wright says that the evidence for the theory is very tenuous.[20] And Pfeiffer attests,

> There may be an element of truth in this suggestive theory; but if it is used exclusively it is neither certain nor necessary. There is no proof, aside from circumstantial evidence, that Yahweh was the god of the Kenites; Moses could have heard of this god from Levites, the tribe of Judah, or other tribes. What is certain is that Yahweh was the god of Sinai and must have been worshipped by several nomadic tribes living in the vicinity. The contribution of the Kenites or others could have been merely the name Yahweh.[21]

In his books, The History of Israel,[22] Exodus: A Commentary,[23] and The Old Testament World,[24] Martin Noth leaves room for the possibility of the Kenite hypothesis, but makes no reference to it. A similar attitude is taken by

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[19]E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 49.

[20]G. E. Wright, Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 65.

[21]R. H. Pfeiffer, Religion in the Old Testament, ed. by C. C. Forman (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1961), p. 56.

[22]M. Noth, The History of Israel, translated by S. Godman (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), pp. 57, 76-77.

[23]M. Noth, Exodus: A Commentary, translated by J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 30-47, 58-62, 144-150.

[24]M. Noth, The Old Testament World, translated by V. I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 76-83, 93-100.

W. F. Albright,[25] and F. M. Cross.[26] They all have researched the form, the etymology, the meaning and the pronunciation of the name Yahweh or the function of Yahweh; they all may have mentioned the plausibility of the Kenite hypothesis to their friends or in classroom teaching, but have not committed themselves in writing concerning this theory.

In recent years, M. L. Newman is a champion of the Kenite hypothesis. He avers that the acceptance of this hypothesis leads one to the conclusion that Moses may have sought to combine a charismatic understanding of God's manifestation of Himself with more traditional and priestly forms from Kenite Yahwism.[27] However, the views of B. W. Anderson and T. C. Vriezen might be somewhat closer to reality. After explaining the content of the Kenite hypothesis Anderson states, "The honest truth is that we do not know for sure

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[25]Cf. W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A History Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 37-42, 168-172; supra, p. 39, n. 95; and W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pp. 195-196.

[26]Cf. F. M. Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 225-259; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Cult," Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 11-30.

[27]M. L. Newman, The People of the Covenant: A Study of Israel from Moses to Monarchy (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 26. Cf. also his contention on this theory in pp. 75-90.

the source from which Moses received the name Yahweh."[28] And Vriezen observes that although the Kenite hypothesis "is still much in favour, yet however attractive and plausible it may be, it can never be finally substantiated."[29]

## Covenant-Making: A New Dimension of the Interpretation of Exodus 18:1-12

It is true that the Kenite hypothesis is an attractive theory, but our study will show that the decisive point of the proposition cannot depend upon this pericope alone. A new dimension has opened with the interpretation of Ex. 18: 1-12 as a covenant-making episode.

To consider the text under discussion as the making of a covenant is already hinted at by Barton in 1902. However, Barton regards the incident as Moses binding the Israelites to a future alliance with the Kenites.[30] Morgenstern, too, concludes his study of the K document in 1927 by saying, "A covenant meal was eaten by Hobab and the elders of the tribes of Israel in the presence of Yahweh, and thereby a covenant relationship was established between the Kenites and Israel."[31]

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[28]B. W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 41.

[29]T. C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 125.

[30]Cf. Barton, A Sketch of Semitic Origins, p. 272.

[31]Morgenstern, IV, 137.

Scholars who in the last two decades treat the episode as the making of a covenant include Brekelmans, Fensham, Cody, Hyatt, and Newman.

Brekelmans asserts[32] that the reason the Israelites asked to go out of Egypt was to sacrifice to Yahweh in the desert; they must have had no need for the priest of Midian to teach them how to worship Yahweh. If Moses needed to learn something from Jethro, he would have gone to Jethro and not vice versa as the text shows. Jethro's coming to Moses and Israel was intended for the making of a covenant with this people because he had heard how Yahweh blessed them in their coming out of Egypt. The sacrifices and the sacred meal in verse 12 were the common ceremonies at the conclusion of an alliance. Brekelmans holds that Jethro was the priest and the chieftain of his tribe; when he offered the sacrifices at the making of the covenant with Israel, he was acting just like Abimelech in Genesis 26. The sacrifices Jethro offered could be either to Yahweh or to his own God. It need not imply that he was, or became, a worshipper of Yahweh. Compare the similar case with Abimelech and Isaac. Brekelmans maintains that the name Yahweh does not occur in the original form of Exodus 18. The Name in the present narrative is a later addition by a Yahwistic writer. Therefore, Brekelmans avers that it is impossible to use

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[32]Cf. C. H. W. Brekelmans, "Exodus xviii and the Origins of Yahwism in Israel," Oudtestamentische Studiën, X (1954), 215-224.

Exodus 18 as an argument for the Kenite origin of Yahwism in Israel.

From a wider horizon, Fensham argues that a covenant had existed between the Israelites and the Kenites.[33] He holds that the relation between the Midianites and the Israelites may coincide with the relation between the Kenites and the Israelites. For the Kenites formed part of the larger Midianite group of nomads or seminomads. Fensham maintains that the friendship between the Kenites (Midianites) and the Israelites in the Old Testament tradition indicates the existence of a treaty between equals. He notes that the reason Saul sent a message to the Kenites and asked them to leave the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:6) is because a ḥesed was made between the Kenites and the Israelites after the latter had come out from Egypt. Fensham points out that the word ḥesed has the meaning of "Covenant love" as Snaith,[34] Bright,[35] and others have indicated. He infers that this ḥesed must be applied to the non-offensive alliance between the Israelites and the Kenites in Exodus 18. Further, Fensham asserts that the hostile act of Jael, a Kenite woman,

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[33]Cf. F. C. Fensham, "Did a Treaty between the Israelites and the Kenites Exist?" Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, CLXXV (October, 1964), 51-54.

[34]Cf. N. H. Snaith, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 94-96.

[35]Cf. J. Bright, The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 28, n. 18.

against Sisera, the Canaanite king (Judg. 4:17-22), was out of a sense of obligation to kill the enemy of the other party of the treaty. Furthermore, Fensham avers that there are three important aspects which must be noted in Ex. 18: 1-12: (1) The negotiations between the two parties were carried out in the name of Yahweh; there was a God as witness to the forming of the treaty. (2) Sacrifice, which is a part of covenant-forming evidence brought by Jethro to Yahweh, is mentioned (verse 12). (3) Communion meal, which accompanies the sacrifice at the forming of a treaty is recorded (verse 12). Therefore, Fensham concludes, "This seems to imply that a covenant was formed between the Midianites (Kenites) and the Israelites."[36]

The result of Cody's study is somewhat questionable. He interprets the covenant in Ex. 18:12 as a covenant "between social equals."[37] After drawing some Biblical parallels to prove that the sacrifice and the communion meal mentioned in verse 12 are evidences of making a covenant, he contends that the Hebrew word לקח in the text "is intended not in its more general sense of 'to take' but in its more particular sense of 'to accept.'"[38] Therefore he concludes,

> The text portrays the making of a covenant between the Israelites and the Midianite Jethro. The manner of

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[36]Fensham, CLXXV, 54.

[37]A. Cody, "Exodus 18,12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites," Biblica, XLIX (1968), 155.

[38]Ibid., XLIX, 159.

> making the covenant, however, was such that it was Moses--or the Israelite elders--who took the initiative in proffering the covenant to Jethro, offering to God sacrifices of communion as a sign of the covenant, and presenting a portion of the sacrificial victims to Jethro. Jethro accepted (wayyiqqah) the covenant by accepting the sacrifices, expressing this acceptance outwardly and tangibly by accepting the portion of the victims presented to him, and the rite was completed by a sacrificial meal shared by Jethro and the Israelites, in which together they ate their portions of the victims.[39]

Difficult aspects of Cody's conclusions are these: (1) Equating Jethro's acceptance of the sacrificial victims with his acceptance of the covenant (Hyatt considers this a weak interpretation[40]); (2) Moses or the Israelite elders initiating the covenant. (The text seems to indicate that Jethro is the one who takes the active part in the whole pericope[41]).

Hyatt interprets the text in question as a record of the making of a covenant between equals, or treaty between the Midianites (Kenites) and the Israelites.[42] He holds that this incident had occurred some time after the Israelites reached Sinai, perhaps as they were about ready to leave there. He seems to be against putting this visit of

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[39] Ibid., XLIX, 165.

[40] Hyatt, Exodus (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1971), p. 190.

[41] Cf. infra, pp. 151-153.

[42] Cf. Hyatt, pp. 186-192.

Jethro at Kadesh after the incident of the Sinai Covenant; but this is precisely the position of M. L. Newman.[43]

Newman sides with Rowley that the Kenites were the original Yahweh worshippers and that the Southern tribes came to worship Yahweh by a "gradual penetration"[44] of the faith after they had come into association with the Kenites in the Kadesh area. He maintains that the Kenites were the source of priestly traditions connected with Yahweh worship. When Moses brought the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt, he brought them to Kadesh because he was a Levite and his fellow Levites were there. At Kadesh, Jethro came to visit him. Here Newman proposes,

> On this occasion Jethro, the priest of Kenite Yahwism, actually accepted Mosaic Yahwism; and not only in his own behalf but also in behalf of all the tribes at Kadesh who had been devoted to Kenite Yahwism, i.e., Judah, Simeon, Othniel, Caleb, some Levites, and Kenites. One might, therefore, conclude that at Kadesh in the thirteenth century B.C. the southern Hebrew tribes received the tradition of Yahweh's wondrous act in the exodus.[45]

This proposal is based on the covenant ceremony in verse 12. However, to Newman, the Sinai covenant (Ex. 24:1-2,9-11) and the Kadesh covenant (Exodus 18) are two different incidents. The former was the immediate response of the Hebrews who came out of Egypt to Yahweh. The Kenites were not involved

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[43]Cf. Newman, pp. 74-75, 87-90.

[44]H. H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua (London: The British Academy, 1950), p. 153.

[45]Newman, p. 87.

in this covenant. The latter was the one which marked the entrance of the Southern tribes into Mosaic Yahwism.

Concerning the covenant in Ex. 18:12, Newman maintains,

> The significance of Exod. 18:12 becomes clearer. "Aaron" could represent the priesthood of the tribes at Kadesh when Moses arrived. The "elders of Israel" were the representatives of the tribes themselves. Jethro was a priest of Kenite Yahwism, the religion of these tribes. So it was he who officiated at the cultic meal which sealed the covenant of the tribes with Yahweh on the basis of the newly accepted exodus tradition. In entering this covenant they were united with the Joseph tribes. Now all were the covenant people of Yahweh, who had acted in the event of the exodus.[46]

There are several problems or questions in Newman's proposal. For example: (1) If Aaron represented the priesthood of the tribes at Kadesh when Moses arrived, he must have been a priest of Yahweh at Kadesh already, as Newman's study earlier shows.[47] Then, why did not Aaron preside over the sacrifices and communion meal? Why was Jethro the one who officiated at the cultic meal? (2) Where did Kenite Yahwism come from? Does not this just substitute one unknown for another?

In fact, not only Newman's assertion is questionable, but a critical evaluation of each of the above mentioned proposals reveals defects.

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[46] Ibid., p. 89.

[47] Cf. Ibid., pp. 76-83.

## Problems of the Above Proposals

Basic problems of the Kenite hypothesis and the covenant-making proposal are the following:

1. Both the advocates and the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis utilize Exodus 18:1-12 to substantiate their assertions. But their main mistake is that they both have neglected to examine closely from which source or tradition the text has derived.

2. Although the covenant-making approach of the text derives from the Kenite hypothesis, it is not entirely out of the range of the pro and con struggle of the Kenite theory. Barton and Newman are for the Kenite hypothesis while asserting that the pericope is a covenant-making episode. Morgenstern and Brekelmans are against the Kenite theory while making the same assertion that the text is a covenant-making. Fensham maintains that the Kenites and the Israelites are negotiating under the same name of God, Yahweh. The logical conclusion is that they both serve the same God though Fensham has not pursued it further. The interpretation of Hyatt concerning the episode, in the final analysis, supports the Kenite theory as J. Bright and H. H. Rowley have commented.[48] And Cody's study is questionable as we have said earlier.

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[48]Cf. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 116; and H. H. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 57.

3. In the oral stratum, the story may have concluded with the making of a covenant, but it is doubtful whether the supposed treaty occurred in the earliest written stratum. The chief concern we have is whether the writer or collector of this story, or the tradition which preserved this incident, would simply be interested in transmitting the presumed covenant-making story alone, or whether there are other intentions behind the writing of this episode.

4. It is true, even if the earliest written stratum could have recorded the making of a covenant while still conveying the writer's other intention, the present text does not indicate this assertion of covenant-making explicitly as the proponents of the covenant-making of the episode would like to have. The MT in verses 11 and 12, however, does manifest some textual corruption and incompleteness. Would this, then, suggest some recension or redaction? If so, according to the text we now have, what did the redactor want to say?

5. Finally, but most importantly, if we could find out the literary source or the tradition of the material under research, and if we could search out the intention of the writer and the redactor, what would the pericope be really saying? Would the episode tend to support the Kenite hypothesis? Or oppose the Kenite hypothesis? Or, simply relate a covenant-making incident? Or something else?

In order to answer all these questions, we must make a critical scrutiny of the text itself.

## CHAPTER V

## AN EXEGESIS OF EXODUS 18:1-12

Since both the proponents and opponents of the Kenite hypothesis utilize Exodus 18, especially verses 1-12, to champion their respective assertions, and since a new approach of the pericope as a covenant-making episode has emerged from our scrutiny of the Kenite hypothesis, a detailed exegesis of this text is essential to this study. The translation below is based on the present Massoretic text (MT). After textual, literary, form, tradition and redaction criticism, and historical analysis of the pericope, a tentative admittedly hypothetical reconstruction of the original episode will be provided as the conclusion of this chapter.

### Translation of Exodus 18:1-12

(1) Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that Elohim[1] had done[2] for Israel his people, for Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt.
(2) Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, the

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[1]The word Elohim is translated Κύριος in the LXX, usually corresponding to the Hebrew Yahweh. We believe that MT is original, especially since this passage is E.

[2]MT adds the words "for Moses and" here, but they are lacking in the LXX. They probably are a later addition.

wife of Moses, after he had sent her back, (3) and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom[3] (for he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land"), (4) and the other was named Eliezer[4] (because he said, "The God of my father is my help and has delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). (5) And Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses and the latter's sons and his wife came to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of Elohim. (6) And it was said to Moses, "Behold,[5] your father-in-law, Jethro, is coming to you and your wife, and her two sons with her." (7) Moses came out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed[6] and kissed him, and they greeted each other with friendliness. Then

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[3] גֵּרְשֹׁם is portrayed here as a compound word of גֵּר (Ger, meaning "stranger" or "expulsion") and שָׁם (Sham, "there").

[4] אֱלִיעֶזֶר also is a compound word of אֵלִי (Eli, "My God") and עֶזֶר (ʿezer, "help").

[5] We followed the Syriac and the Greek Versions for vocalizing the first word in this verse, וַיֹּאמֶר, treating it as Niphal imperfect with waw consecutive. The word אֹמֵר here was probably changed after the misunderstanding of וַיֹּאמֶר as Qal. The original may have been הִנֵּה ("behold"), as the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Syriac and Greek attest. Gen. 48:2 has a similar structure. To send a messenger to announce one's coming to visit is not an unusual thing in the Biblical stories. Besides Gen. 48:2 and our text, there is another example in Gen. 32:3-5.

[6] Instead of וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ in this verse, the Samaritan text reads וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְמֹשֶׁה ("and they bowed down to Moses"). The Samaritan text represents a scribe's bias. He apparently was offended that Moses was subservient to Jethro.

they came into the tent.[7] (8) Moses related to his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians on account of Israel; and all the troubles which occurred on the way and how Yahweh had delivered them. (9) And Jethro trembled[8] over all the good things Yahweh had done to Israel by delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. (10) And Jethro said, "Blessed be Yahweh who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh.[9] (11) Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods for he delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians since they dealt arrogantly with them. . . ." (12) And Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses

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[7]For the last phrase of verse 7, "then they came into the tent," both the Samaritan text and the Codex Vaticanus read, "then he brought him to the tent" while other Codices read, "then he brought them to the tent." We have chosen the present MT since the versions seem to represent an attempt to maintain Moses' dignity.

[8]The verb וַיִּחַד ("rejoiced") in the LXX is translated ἐφρίκη ("trembled") corresponding to the Hebrew וַיִּחֲרַד. Since the only difference is the one letter "ר" we feel that the LXX represents the original; in the MT the letter "ר" was left out by haplography which resulted in this unusual rare form of חָדַד. The only other place which has the same form is Job 3:6 and the root there may have been חדד ("joined"; cf. Gen. 49:6; and it makes more sense, too), instead of חדה.

[9]The last part of verse 10, "for he delivered the people from the hand of the Egyptians," is lacking in the LXX. We have followed the suggestion of Biblia Hebraica and transferred it to verse 11.

offered[10] a burnt offering and sacrifices to Elohim. And Aaron and all the elders[11] of Israel came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses before Elohim.

## Literary Criticism

From a literary critical point of view, the episode basically is E material. No P material can be traced here except for "Aaron" in verse 12 which we will discuss in redaction criticism. Although the text does use the name Yahweh the E document also uses this special term after introducing it in Ex. 3:13-14.[12] The phrase "for Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt" in verse 1b might not have been in the original E stratum. It seems to have been added later by a redactor who wanted to harmonize the narrative with verses 8-11 which employ the special name Yahweh. The use of Yahweh in verses 8-11 does not prove that this section

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[10]The verb וַיִּקַּח ("took") in Syriac, Targum and Vulgate is translated as "offered." The aforementioned translations are plausible renderings since the present MT has a parallel usage of the verb לקח in Lev. 12:8. While we have chosen to follow the translations of the Syriac, Targum and Vulgate, no change in the text is necessary.

[11]The Samaritan text reads "some of the elders" instead of "all of the elders" in verse 12. This probably was a Samaritan attempt to indicate that not all the leaders participated in this meal which they considered suspect.

[12]See for example, Ex. 4:27; 5:1; 9:22-23a; 10:12-13a, 27; 11:1-3; 17:4-6; et al.

is J. There is no theophany, nor anthropomorphism, nor miracles, nor any other strand of indication as J.[13]

There are many reasons for claiming that the pericope comes from E: (1) The preference of the divine name in the whole chapter is Elohim. In the section under discussion Elohim occurs 6 times, and Yahweh also 6 times; but in the next section, verses 13-27, Elohim is used exclusively. Furthermore, Elohim is used in the important places (see verses 1,5 and especially verse 12). (2) The name of Moses' father-in-law is Jethro which is in accord with other E materials in the Pentateuch (Ex. 3:1; 4:18) whereas in J, it is either Reuel (Ex. 2:18) or Hobab (Num. 10:29). (3) When Moses returned to Egypt after his sojourning in Midian, according to E, he left his wife and two sons with the priest (Ex. 4:18, 20b); but according to J, he took his

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[13]There are a number of scholars who believe the text for discussion comes from J and E. G. E. Wright, "The Book of Exodus," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 193 follows J. E. Carpenter, The Composition of the Hexateuch (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), p. 516 and disposes the pericope as follows: v. 1, E and R; vv. 2-4, JE; v. 5, E; V. 7, J; v. 8, E; vv. 9-11, J; and vv. 12-27, E. (Note that both Wright and Carpenter have left out v. 6 with no comments.) Martin Noth, Exodus, translated by J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 146 mentions that the chapter in question is in essentials to be derived from E, however, he regards vv. 1b, 8-11 as secondary J expansion of E material. The opinion of J. P. Hyatt, Exodus (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 1971), p. 186, however, is closer to ours. He says that the narrative here is largely, if not exclusively, from E. He allows vv. 2-4 to be an explanatory gloss, but avers that there is no valid reason to consider vv. 8-11 as originating with J, even as a secondary addition, for the Elohist sometimes used the divine name Yahweh after the revelation in Exodus 3.

wife and son with him (4:19,20a; J knew only one son. Confer 2:22). This is in accord with verses 2-5a in our pericope. (4) The mentioning of "the mountain of Elohim" in verse 5, instead of J's preferential term, "Mount Sinai," is also a mark of E (confer Ex. 3:1; 4:27; 24:13; all belong to E). (5) "The God of my father" in verse 4 is another feature of E.[14] E uses this opportunity to introduce Moses' family (J has done so in chapters 2 and 4). (6) The use of the word דבר in verse 11 as a "cause" (a "case," a "charge,"

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[14]As H. G. May has indicated, the formula "Yahweh, the God of their (your, etc.) fathers" in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Chronicles was never a part of the individualistic (i.e., personal) religion of the biblical Hebrews. In contrast to the plural formula, however, the singular "God of my (thy, etc.) father" is obviously early and already archaic at the time of JE writers. See H. G. May, "The God of My Father--A Study of Patriarchal Religion," Journal of Bible and Religion, IX (1941), pp. 155-158, 199-200. We may observe further that apart from its use in the two ancient songs in Gen. 49:25 and Ex. 15:2, the formula appears 15 times in Genesis and Exodus: 4 times in J (Gen. 32:10 [Eng. 9], twice; 43:23; Ex. 3:16), all expressed in a conventional way, viz., by taking a name or names of the fathers to follow the phrase, "God of my (your) father(s)." In Gen. 43:23, however, the Egyptian speaks the formula, but not as a personal confession of faith. There are 11 occurrences in E (Gen. 31:5,29,42,53; 46:1,3; 50:17; Ex. 3:6,13,15; 18:4). However, except the introduction of the divine name, Yahweh, in E (Ex. 3:13,15) which has to use 2nd person plural suffixes (because it is God who is speaking to Moses and tells him what to say to the Hebrews), all the rest are in singular. (The "God of their fathers" in Gen. 31:53 apparently is a later addition which is not included in our discussion.) Although we have reservation on A. W. Jenks' 10th century B.C. dating of E, he might be right in saying that in the E tradition the formula might reflect a desire to make explicit the identity of the ancient El deity of the patriarch with Yahweh, the God of the Exodus tradition. A. W. Jenks, "The Elohist and North Israelite Tradition" (unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 290.

or a "dispute") is known also as a characteristic of E (confer other usage in E: Ex. 18:16,19,22,26; 22:9; 23:7; 24:14. J only uses it to convey the meaning of a "thing," or a "word." Confer Gen. 18:14; 19:8,22; 37:14; 44:18; Ex. 5:11). (7) E emphasizes the function of the elders which is brought out clearly here in verse 12 (other passages which emphasize the point in E are Ex. 24:1,9-11; Num. 11:16-17). (8) If the "tent" in verse 7 is the "tent of meeting" as Buber and Morgenstern asserted[15] (it seems probable because of the technical usage of the term אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד), then it connects with other E passages (Ex. 33:9-11; Num. 11:16-24,26; 12:4) which stress this point distinctively. (9) It is recognized that E has its inner consistency by binding the separate narratives and blocks of traditional material together.[16] It means that E proceeds deliberately and within the separate accounts themselves showing connections to earlier or later narratives. In our pericope, it not only provides ties to the earlier E accounts which tell how Moses shepherded his father-in-law's flocks (Ex. 3:1), how he left Jethro after his call and went to Egypt alone (4:18,20b), and the great

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[15]Cf. M. Buber, Moses (Oxford and London: East and West Library, 1946), p. 96; M. Buber, Kingship of God, translated by R. Scheimann (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), pp. 30, 133. J. Morgenstern, "The Oldest Document of the Hexateuch," Hebrew Union College Annual, IV (1927), 129-131. And cf. also Jenks, p. 171.

[16]Cf. H. W. Wolff, "The Elohistic Fragments in the Pentateuch," translated by K. R. Crim, Interpretation (April, 1972), 167-172.

deliverance from the Egyptian oppression; it also has connections with the next account, for example, the phrase "on the morrow" (verse 13); and we learn that Jethro returned "to his own country" (verse 27) just as Abraham returned to his starting place, Beersheba (Gen. 21:33), after the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:9) and Laban "returned home" (Gen. 32:1 [31:55]) after having a covenant with Jacob in other E accounts.[17]

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[17]There are three scholars, S. Mowinckel, P. Volz, and W. Rudolph, who deny E as an independent source. In general, their opinion is that the J epic is the basic narrative of the Pentateuch. The E passages, for Mowinckel, are primarily the result of oral rather than written tradition; they are a long process of explanatory and corrective additions to the J epic. See S. Mowinckel, "Der Ursprung der Hil'āmsage," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, XLVIII (1930), 271; cf. also Jenks, pp. 76-78. Although both Volz and Rudolph in general consider that the E passages are added to over the course of centuries in the form of glosses, explanations, and commentary to the J epic. See P. Volz and W. Rudolph, Der Elohist als Erzähler ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik? an der Genesis erläutert (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1933), pp. 21-25; cf. also Jenks, pp. 78-83; they have differences. While Volz takes E (and P) to be merely redactor(s) of J, Rudolph acknowledges the independence not only of P, but also of certain E sections, which, however, he understands as isolated interpolations in J (cf. G. Fohrer, initiated by E. Sellin, Introduction to the Old Testament Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968 , p. 110). Only Rudolph has commented on Ex. 18. His view of the section under research is in accord with the above mentioned assertion. He maintains that there is nothing which prevents one from taking this section as a unified understanding (einheitliche Verständnis). What is his understanding, then? He says that verses 1-12 are connected with the main line of 3:1 to 4:18 and stand in contrast to 4:19 and 20a. But since J has in chapter 4 combined both concepts, it is not strange that Jethro is here named by name and with all his titles, which we know from chapters 2-4; see W. Rudolph, Der "Elohist": von Exodus bis Josua (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1938), pp. 37-38. Although Rudolph is arguing that this section is the insertion of J epic, he is in reality

It is not necessary to discuss whether E is a writer or a tradition. Any religious writer, even with a distinct theological bias or motivation, wrote what was believed, confessed, and taught in his religious community. His writing, no doubt, was examined, corrected, and ratified or rejected by the community according to the community tradition. This is the reason some scholars hold that E is both a tradition and that the E material comes from a writer.[18]

The exact date of E is debatable[19] but E's teaching about the fear of God, the obedience to His will, and

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acknowledging that the pericope is E, because 3:1 and 4:18 are E in contrast to J's 4:19 and 20a.

[18]Jenks, for example.

[19]In general, the date of E, as G. Fohrer has said, is in between the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon and the catastrophe of the Northern kingdom in 722 B.C. Fohrer and Sellin, p. 158. Carpenter, pp. 218-221; S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: The Meridian Books, 1957), p. 23; W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (New York: The Meridian Books, 1958), p. 61; and R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), p. 168, however, favor the middle of the 8th century B.C. as the date of E. A. Weiser, though, mentions the possibility of the middle of the 8th century B.C., but suggests an earlier origin; A. Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, translated by D. M. Barton (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), p. 124. M. Noth's opinion is that E stands much nearer to the pre-literary stage of the Pentateuchal tradition than J (Noth, p. 15). A. W. Jenks asserts a definite dating of the late 10th century B.C., namely, after the division of the kingdom in 922 B.C. but before the time of Elijah and Elisha (Jenks, pp. 253-256, 262-264). Jenks' dating would seem to fit the contents of E better than H. W. Wolff's assertion that E comes from the century between Elijah and Hosea (Wolff, p. 172).

peaceful life with others undoubtedly can be searched out from the fragments of E in the Pentateuch.

The root "fear" (יָרֵא) occurs 10 times in Genesis and Exodus in connection with the Deity. Three times it is connected with Yahweh (Ex. 9:20,30; 14:31) which references apparently belong to J or $R_{JE}$. These passages do not belong to the realm of our discussion. Seven times the word is connected with Elohim (Gen. 20:11; 22:12; 42:18; Ex. 1:17,21; 18:21; 20:20) and all belong to E. We will delve deeper into these passages and the background of them below.

Gen. 20:11--The whole chapter of Genesis 20 belongs to E. The chapter deals with Abraham's wife entering Abimelech's harem. There are two parallel stories in J (Gen. 12:10-20; 26:6-11), but they do not have the same theme as the E account here. In a dream from God, Abimelech learned that he had wrongly taken Abraham's wife. When he told all these things to his servants the next morning, "the men were very much afraid" (verse 8). Then, he rebuked Abraham and asked why he did this thing to him. Abraham's answer in verse 11 conveys the theme of this tale and the chief theme in E. He said, "I did it because I thought there is no fear of God in this place." The "fear of God" here, as attested by H. W. Wolff, is understood as "respect for the freedom and responsibility of the outsider. Wherever God is feared, that is, wherever men are obedient to God's protective will,

we can expect to find respect for the rights of outsiders."[20] Thus, the story is didactic. Both Abraham and Abimelech feared God and were obedient to His will to live peacefully with each other again.

Gen. 22:12--Gen. 22:1-19 is another E account. The episode relates how "God tested Abraham" (verse 1) and asked him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. The story contains a skillful play on words in that the יִרְאֶה אֱלֹהִים ("God will provide" in verse 8) connects with Abraham's יְרֵא אֱלֹהִים ("fear of God" in verse 12), וַיַּרְא ("and he saw," verse 13), and with the name of the place יְהוָה יִרְאֶה ("Yahweh will provide" or "Yahweh will see," verse 14). But the main theme is in verse 12 where Abraham passed the test, as the angel of God declared, "Now I know you fear God." Abraham had obeyed the will of God and passed the test, so now also Israel should use animals as sacrifices instead of children. Nevertheless, the story seems to have a further implication, namely, since their ancestors were doing the same thing, that is, sacrificed children to God as the Canaanites are now doing, they should try to live peacefully with them.

Gen. 42:18--Again, almost the whole chapter of Genesis 42 belongs to E. Here the ten brothers came to Egypt for buying grain; Joseph tested them (verses 14-16) by asking one of them to bring their youngest brother to Egypt for proof that they were not spies. After putting them in prison

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[20]Wolff, pp. 162-163.

for three days, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God" (verse 18). This statement, "for I fear God," is the theme of the whole life of Joseph. It not only stimulated the brothers to confess their wrong doings to Joseph in verses 21-22, it also guided Joseph to pass his test. When their father Jacob died, the brothers came with trembling and fell down before Joseph to ask for forgiveness. Joseph said to them, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Gen. 50: 19-20). So, Joseph feared God and was obedient to His will to live peacefully with his brothers though they had done evil to him.

Ex. 1:17,21--It is generally recognized that Ex. 1: 15-21 is E. When the king of Egypt told the Hebrew midwives to kill the Hebrew male new born babies, "the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live" (verse 17). Then, in verse 21 it says, "Because the midwives feared God he gave them families." Now, this "fear of God" enabled the midwives to obey God's will but disobey the will of the king of Egypt. Thus, they lived peacefully with their consciences and with their families.

Ex. 18:21--The whole chapter of Exodus 18 is E. The incident here in the second section of this chapter tells how Moses' father-in-law advised Moses to choose leaders for

the people so that they could live peacefully with each other. Verse 21 is the key for the whole section. Jethro says, "Moreover, choose able men from all the people, such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens."

Ex. 20:20--The giving of the Decalogue in this chapter may have been the peak of E's central thought. When "the people were afraid and trembled" (Ex. 20:18) before God's presence on the mountain Moses said to them, "Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin." The greatest law is to love God and the neighbors. God comes to show men that fear and love of God should lead to obedience to His will and to abstaining from sin against God and their neighbors. They should live peacefully with them.

Thus, from the foregoing scrutiny of the passages, it appears that E's writing is didactic; the main theme for E is the teaching of the fear of God, the obedience of His will, and peaceful life with others. The pericope under discussion, Ex. 18:1-12, is in accord with the main theme of the E tradition. When Moses' father-in-law heard all that Yahweh had done to Israel, he brought Moses' family back so that they could live peacefully together again. After Moses related to him all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians on account of Israel, Jethro trembled. This trembling and fear of God led Jethro to do

several things: He praised Yahweh (verse 10); he acknowledged that Yahweh is greater than all gods (verse 11); he offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God (verse 12a); and he ate a communion meal with the elders of the Israelites (verse 12b). These last two incidents may indicate that they made a covenant to live peacefully with each other. But even if it were not a covenant-making in reality, we have a picture of how they lived peacefully with each other in the text.

Although the E tradition in the earliest time did have a positive attitude toward foreigners[21] and recognized that the patriarchs were idol worshippers (Joshua 24:1-2), E always tried to get rid of the heathen gods or belittle them (confer Gen. 35:1-4; Joshua 24:14-15). This, too, is attested in Exodus 18, especially verse 11: "Yahweh is greater than all gods."

If the episode was originally in accord with E's main theme, teaching the fear of God, the obedience of His will, peaceful life with each other, why, then, does the MT not have explicit evidence for this? We will try to answer this in our discussion of redaction criticism.

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[21]Besides the good relationship with the Kenites/Midianites in this pericope, see for example, the good attitude toward Hagar and Ishmael in Gen. 21:15-21, the way Abraham and Abimelech solved their discord in Gen. 21:22-34, the curse which became a blessing in Balaam's tale, Num. 22-24, et al.

The whole pericope in question can be outlined as follows:

1. Verse 1--Jethro heard the news
2. Verses 2-5a--Moses' family
3. Verses 5b-6--Jethro came to Moses
4. Verses 7-11--Jethro's visit with Moses and his acknowledgement of the greatness of Yahweh
5. Verse 12--Jethro offered sacrifices and ate bread with the elders of Israel before Elohim

From this outline, three thoughts emerge: (1) Jethro is the central figure of the episode; (2) Moses' family in verses 2-5a stands out by itself and looks like an addition incorporated into the pericope, perhaps already in the oral stage; (3) Jethro's coming to meet Moses and the elders of Israel probably had a significant purpose as can be seen in the way verse 12 records the story. A later redactor may have tried to downplay this.

## Form Criticism

The text under discussion is in narrative prose. Since it is a short story with a dialogue form and involves so many titles and explanations of names, it is unlikely that the original form of this piece of literature was poetic and later prosified. The setting as shown in the pericope has no indication of cultic formula or liturgy, or prophetic proclamation. Instead, the impression one can get from the episode is that this is a folk-tale which has been retold again and again by the campfire.

The structure of the tale features most of the characteristics of a saga.[22] The introduction of the story states that Jethro, the priest of Midian heard all that God had done for Israel and came with Zipporah and her two sons to visit Moses. So, Jethro, Moses, Zipporah and her two sons are components of a triad. The story immediately brings Jethro to converse with Moses after the stage is set. Verses 7-11 are the scene of duality: dialogue between Moses and Jethro. The Priest of Midian, Jethro, and the instrument of Yahweh, Moses, are polarized. The fact that Zipporah and her two sons were sent back by Moses to Jethro in verse 2 may have connoted a polarization, too. From the literary point of view, the duplication of verses 1, 8, 9, and 10 concerning what God had done to Israel and the Egyptians is a dull thing; it is, however, one of the characteristics of saga form--the repeating of similar incidents. The story not only brings Jethro directly to the confession of the greatness of Yahweh and concludes with the eating of bread before Elohim with the elders of the Israelites, it also has a specifically religious tone of believing in the one God, Yahweh.

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[22]Klaus Koch claims the general characteristics of sagas in the Bible are as follows: The triad of characters or groups; the law of scenic duality; a definite concentration upon the main character of the story; all characters are polarized; the straightforwardness of the story; the narrator likes to repeat similar incidents; the religious tone of believing in the one God. Cf. Klaus Koch, The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form Critical Method, translated by S. M. Cupitt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 148-150.

Why were the ancient Israelites interested to recount this story? To put it another way: What is the purpose of this episode that led the saga to be orally transmitted over centuries and finally written down? Did it have an aetiological function? According to the contents of the pericope, it seems that there are four possibilities of the original intention of the tale that make it of interest for the ancient Israelites to retell the story again and again: (1) It is the family reunion of Moses, their great leader; (2) It is the identification of Elohim and Yahweh, their God; (3) It is the indication of the origin of Yahwism, as the proponents of the Kenite hypothesis asserted; (4) It is a covenant-making between the Israelites and the Kenite/Midianites.

The first possibility of the original intention of the episode is the family reunion of Moses.[23] As indicated earlier, it seems that Moses, his wife and children, and Jethro are components of a triad as one of the characteristics of a saga. However, there are several reasons for one to surmise that this is not the original intention of the episode: (a) The text later does not mention Zipporah and her two sons at all; (b) There is no Biblical tradition emphasizing the preservation and special privilege of

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[23]This has been emphasized by T. J. Meek who says that the whole narrative in Exodus 18 is best interpreted at its face value as a record of the occasion when Moses was reunited with his family and father-in-law. See T. J. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 89.

Moses' descendants;[24] (c) The text repeats again and again what Yahweh had done for Israel, and not for the family of Moses; (d) As treated in the literary criticism, verses 2-5a apparently are a gloss. Hence, the triad in this story most likely is Moses, Jethro, and the elders of Israel, instead of Moses, Jethro, and Zipporah and her two sons. Since the "God of my father" in this secondary section of verses 2-5a is a singular "father" cognate with the earliest usage of the phrase[25] as in 3:6 and 15:2, these verses must have been incorporated into the story already in the early oral stage. Presumably, this family reunion material was added by the early story-teller who wanted to capture the interest of his audience.

The second possibility of the original intention of the pericope is the identification of Elohim and Yahweh.[26] "It is quite true," as F. M. Cross states, "that an invading people identify old gods with new. Eastern polytheism is most syncretistic in every period. Canaanite and Babylonian deities were, of course, systematically identified, as were

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[24]On the contrary, when God wanted to consume Israelites because of their sin against Yahweh, Moses pleaded to preserve the people instead of making him a great nation. (Cf. Ex. 32:9-12; Deut. 9:13-21).

[25]Cf. supra, p. 122, n. 14.

[26]This notion is strongly asserted by M. Buber. His opinion is that Jethro, the gentile priest of Midian, identified his god, Elohim, with Yahweh, the God of Israel. Cf. Buber, Kingship of God, p. 34; Buber, Moses, pp. 96-98.

the Canaanite and Egyptian pantheons, and so on."[27] Looking closer at the text, however, we note that the original writer of the tale, probably as well as the story-tellers, constantly used Elohim. The use of the term does not indicate the position of Moses or Jethro, but the position of the writer. Although verse 1b does use Yahweh, it is secondary. In the scene of duality, verses 7-11, both Moses and Jethro use "Yahweh" naturally in their conversation as the appellation of their own God. There are no grounds to claim that Elohim was the name of Jethro's god and that Yahweh was the name of Moses' God or vice versa in this episode. The plausible fact, therefore, is that the use of Elohim in this pericope, is the habitual preference of the writer and probably the original reporter (as we have treated in the literary criticism). They have faithfully reported that the name of the God of both Moses and Jethro is Yahweh. Where does the name Yahweh come from? There is no answer to this question in this text.

The third possibility of the original intention of the episode is the indication of the origin of Yahwism in Israel.

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[27]F. M. Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962), 230.

Budde,[28] Köhler,[29] Rowley,[30] and most of the other proponents of the Kenite hypothesis consider Exodus 18, especially the section in question, as one of the main proof-texts of the theory. However, the text does not appear to be a record of the origin of Yahwism in Israel at all. The narrative plainly states what Moses has related to his father-in-law concerning what Yahweh has done and how Jethro expressed his feeling over the greatness of Yahweh. Since Moses, as indicated in the text, led the people out of Egypt under Yahweh's name, he and the people he led must have been Yahweh worshippers already. Moses may have learned Yahwism from Jethro, the Kenite or Midianite priest, but this text does not appear as a record of the origin of Yahwism in Israel.

The fourth possibility of the original aetiological intention of the narrative is to record a covenant between the Israelites and the Kenites/Midianites.[31] The text shows the

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[28]Cf. K. Budde, The Religion of Israel to the Exile (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), pp. 22-24.

[29]Cf. L. Köhler, Old Testament Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), p. 45.

[30]Cf. H. H. Rowley, The Re-discovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1945), p. 111; H. H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua (London: The British Academy, 1950), pp. 150-152; H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 46-48; et al.

[31]This is asserted by Morgenstern, IV, 137, followed by C. H. W. Brekelmans, "Exodus xviii and the Origins of Yahwism in Israel," Oudtestamentische Studiën, X (1954), 215-224; F. C. Fensham, "Did a Treaty between the Israelites

possibility of this assertion. Jethro heard of all that Yahweh had done for Israel, and came to Moses. This parallels Gen. 26:28-29 which records that when Abimelech saw that Yahweh was with Isaac, he came to Isaac and pleaded to make a covenant between them. The confession of Jethro, "Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods" (verse 11) comes after Moses related to him all that had happened to Israel and to Egypt. "This acknowledgement," as Brekelmans has probably rightly analyzed, "implies his wish for a covenant."[32] Brekelmans says further,

> The following verse 12 tells us the religious ceremonies which accompanied the making of the covenant, offerings and a sacred meal of the two parties. . . . Both ceremonies are the conclusion of an alliance, and v. 12 thus confirms our opinion that it is really a covenant that is meant. The feast has nothing to do with a thank-offering, as claimed by the scholars who understand v. 11 as the conversion of Jethro, nor with "the first incorporation of Israelite leaders into the worship of Yahweh" either.[33]

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and the Kenites Exist?," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, CLXXV (October 1964), 51-54; A. Cody, "Exodus 18,12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites," Biblica, XLIX (1968), 153-166, and accepted by J. P. Hyatt, Exodus (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 1971), pp. 189-192. See supra, Chapter IV.

[32]Brekelmans, X, 218. However, a caution must be made here that Brekelmans asserts that the original form of this story was probably related only to the war with the Amalekites in Ex. xvii; and that a narrative by a Yahwistic writer which connected with the deliverance of Egypt was added here to stress that even non-Israelites confessed the might and power of Yahweh in this unique fact of Israel's history. (X, 222).

[33]Ibid., X, 219.

In an earlier stage, then, the story may have ended with a covenant of the Israelites with the Kenites/Midianites. This would explain why Saul warned the Kenites to leave the Amalekites when he intended to attack the latter (1 Sam. 15:6). Although the parallel covenant story in E, namely, Gen. 21:22-32, has no sacrifice and eating of bread before God to parallel the covenant-making of the text under research, E does record a covenant incident in Gen. 31:54 which ends with offering a sacrifice and eating bread with the kinsmen. However, the intention of E, as we have discussed earlier, is didactic. In E, the episode urges the fear of God and the obedience of His will in order to live peacefully with others.

## Tradition Criticism

The episode under discussion deals with the tradition of Moses' father-in-law. According to the present biblical documents, this tradition is known early both in the North and in the South. In the South, Moses' father-in-law is known as a Kenite (confer Judg. 1:16; 4:11).[34] In the

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[34]It is true that two of the J sections connect Moses' father-in-law with Midian. In Ex. 2:16 he is called "the priest of Midian" exactly as E. In Num. 10:29, he is called "Midianite." However, not only, as G. Widengren has argued, is the tradition in Judg. 1:16, which mentions Moses' father-in-law as a Kenite even older than J; cf. G. Widengren, "What do We Know About Moses?," Proclamation and Presence (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1971), p. 30, there are several other reasons for us to believe that Moses' father-in-law is not a Midianite in the Southern tradition: (1) J mentions that Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land

North, however, the tradition seems to identify him as a Midianite (Ex. 3:1; 18:1).[35] But both traditions indicate that he is a priest (Ex. 2:16; 3:1; 18:1).

In the ancient oral stage, both traditions may have had no name attached to Moses' father-in-law as M. Noth[36] surmises. In the written stage, however, there are three

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of Midian (Ex. 2:15); if the priest he stayed with was a Midianite, the shepherds there would not have driven their priest's daughters away as Ex. 2:17 indicates. This priest must be a priest of the Kenites who was temporarily staying in the land of Midian when Moses fled there. B. D. Eerdmans' study indicated that the Kenites were held in contempt by the tribesmen, and could not water their sheep until all other shepherds had left; see B. D. Eerdmans, The Religion of Israel (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1947), p. 15. Therefore, "the priest of Midian" in Ex. 2:16 is just a "convenient statement" because Moses fled there, and it does not tell the whole story. (2) The "Midianite" in Num. 10:29, instead of "Kenite," as B. Baentsch has shown, is a later harmonizing insertion; cf. Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903), p. 15. (3) The Greek Version in Judg. 1:16 explicitly says, "the sons of Hobab the Kenite, father-in-law of Moses." If the Greek Version represents the original text, and if Hobab belongs to J, as Num. 10:29 indicates, this would mean that some of the strands of J also consider Moses' father-in-law as the priest of the Kenites. (4) However, if our analysis in Chapter II is sound, that the Kenites come from not only one ethnic group but an occupational group attached to different tribes (supra, pp. 41-45), Moses' father-in-law might have been ethnically a Midianite but a Kenite (smith) in occupation, besides being a priest.

[35]When the story-tellers in the North told this incident to their audience, they had to indicate the location. The "wilderness" is one indication, but there are many places in Palestine and Arabia which are wilderness. Therefore the story-tellers had to mention the wilderness of some of the tribes who were living there. This is probably how "Midian" slips into the story since the Midianites were one of the preeminent tribes, especially after they had used the camels to accelerate their mobility (cf. Judg. 6:1,5).

[36]Cf. Noth, p. 37.

different names for him in different accounts: Reuel in Ex. 2:18 and Num. 10:29; Hobab in Num. 10:29 and Judg. 4:11; Jethro in Ex. 3:1; 4:18; and 18:1. In general, these different names are assigned to different Pentateuchal documents: Hobab is in J; Jethro is in E; and Reuel is secondary in J.[37] Although there is difficulty in translating the word חתן,[38] we could surmise with W. F. Albright that Reuel is the name of the clan to which both Jethro and Hobab belonged; Hobab is Moses' son-in-law, and Jethro his father-in-law.[39] However, reality and this surmise are probably far apart. Reuel and Hobab seem to derive from different strands of tradition in the South. Jethro, on the other hand, probably is a name coined by the Northern tradition.

Since Moses' father-in-law is a priest (and possibly a chieftain as well[40]) and has flocks, and since the ancient story-tellers customarily emphasized the distinctive characteristics of a favored figure, they may have used רעה to convey these points. Besides carrying the meaning of

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[37]Cf. W. F. Albright, "Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXV (1963), 4-9; W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 38-52; and Noth, pp. 27, 37.

[38]Besides rendering it as "father-in-law," it can be translated as "mother-in-law" (Deut. 27:23), "bridegroom" (Ex. 4:25), and it also could mean "son-in-law" and "brother-in-law" as indicated by Albright in his article in Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXV, 4-9.

[39]Cf. Ibid., XXV, 9.

[40]Cf. Brekelmans, X, 220-221.

"abundance" (as in Is. 15:7) and "riches" (as in Jer. 48:36), יתר also has the meaning of "pre-eminence" (as in Gen. 49: 3-4), "excellence" or "excellency." Perhaps this is why the MT has a remnant of the form of יתר for the name of Moses' father-in-law in Ex. 4:18a. As a matter of fact, the root יתר in Sabean is an epithet of the king which conveys the meaning of "noble one."[41] Thus, יתרו (Jethro) may imply the meaning of "his majesty" in the mouths of the early Northern story-tellers. As time passed, the original epithet, Jethro, gradually became a proper name, and it was picked up by E, which belongs to the North.

## Redaction Criticism

Although the text under scrutiny is E in its entirety, as we have said earlier, it does not escape the hand of the redactors. There are indications that the pericope has probably gone through three stages of recension.

The first stage of the probable recension involved verses 1b ("for Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt") and 2b ("after he had sent her back"). These sentences were most likely added at the combining of JE. The fusion probably occurred sometime after the destruction of the Northern kingdom, at which time the E epic was brought to the South. Because this episode has no J parallel, the redactor had to

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[41]Cf. F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 451.

use this Jethro account in the E form. However, since verse 1 uses Elohim and does not make clear what the Deity had done, the redactor probably added a note at the end of the verse for clarity. Then, this note was copied into the text as 1b by a later scribe.

The interpolation of 2b might be a little bit more complicated. Since E indicates that Moses' reason for going back to Egypt was to visit the kinsmen there (Ex. 4:18), he left his father-in-law, taking only the rod of God in his hand (4:20b, confer 4:17). The phrase, "after he had sent her back," then, makes no sense in the E version. J, however, mentions that Moses took his wife and sons and went back to Egypt (4:20a). The JE compiler, then, who was more familiar with the J epic, had to explain why Jethro brought with him Moses' wife and sons. This probably was how the phrase was inserted here.

The second stage of the recension may have happened at about the time of King Josiah, especially after his reform in Jerusalem. It may have been involved in the deletion of some sentences in between verses 11 and 12 as numerous scholars agree.[42] If the original intention of the episode

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[42]For example, Hyatt, p. 190, notes that verse 12 seems to be unusually brief, even laconic, in view of the fullness of the preceding verses. It is quite possible that some of the details in the original account have been deliberately suppressed in the text. J. E. Park, "Exodus," The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 964-965, asserts that a sentence has been dropped from the text because Moses is not in verse 12.

is a covenant-making as we have discussed above under form criticism, this missing part in between verses 11 and 12 probably includes the words of the covenant and the oath. We will try to supply the omission later in historical analysis. The reasons for the redactor to delete these words are as follows: (1) The Deuteronomist (D) and the Deuteronomic-historian (Dtr) are strongly opposed to Israel having a covenant with the gentiles (confer Deut. 7:2; Judg. 2:2; Ex. 23:32; 34:12).[43] Therefore, they might have eliminated this covenant-making section from the present text. (2) The Dtr may have misunderstood the text in E: the original reference to a locale "Midian" was taken as an ethnic group. Since Judges 6-8 recorded the enmity between the Israelites and the Midianites,[44] and since the covenant with the Midianites apparently had already been broken, there was

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[43]M. Noth not only considers Judges to 2 Kings as the work of the Deuteronomic-historian, he also holds that two of the listed Exodus passages here are in the same Deuteronomic language. See his commentary on Exodus, pp. 174 and 262. Cf. also Hyatt, p. 186.

[44]Although the apostasy of the Israelites at Shittim (Num. 25:1-5) has the indication of E, the following verses (vv. 6-18), which record that the people played harlot with the Midianite woman, however, belong to P. The vengeance to the Midianites in Num. 31 also is a later P addition. These P additions are showing the general attitude toward the Midianites in the immediate following the Dtr's time. Since Num. 25:1 mentions the people played harlot with the daughters of Moab, we are not sure whether the two P additions are really historical accounts which connected with the Shittim incident. If they do, we have another reason to believe that the enmity between the Israelites and the Midianites led the Dtr to delete this covenant and oath part, for he explicitly mentions this Baal-peor incident in Deut. 4:3.

no need to retain these words. (3) Since D (confer Deut. 17:8-13) and Dtr (confer Deut. 1:9-17) recorded the choosing of the leaders almost as Ex. 18:13-26 does, the editor may have intended to make verses 1-12 the introduction to the second section of the chapter.[45]

Other evidence that the deletion was done by the editor of Dtr can be seen by the retention of verse 12: (1) D and Dtr emphasize the important function of the elders,[46] therefore this verse, mentioning the important function of the elders, is kept intact. (2) D stresses the centralization of worship. The most joyous occasion for the pilgrims is eating before Yahweh (12:1-7; 14:23-26; 15:19-20; confer 1 Chron. 29:21-22). Hence, the eating before God in this verse is preserved. (3) D maintains that the people should go to the central sanctuary and there bring their "burnt offerings and sacrifice" (12:5-6); this probably is why the "burnt offering and sacrifices" are preserved in verse 12.

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[45]The connection of this point can be seen clearly from the use of דבר as a "cause," a "case," a "charge," or a "dispute." Besides E's usage in these senses (cf. Ex. 18: 11,16,19,22,26; 22:9; 23:7; 24:14), the only places which have the same way of using this word are in D (cf. Deut. 17:8, twice; 19:15; 22:26, twice) and Dtr (cf. Deut. 1:17).

[46]In D, the elders have the power to punish the murderers (19:12), to perform sacrifice for unknown murderer's crime (21:1-9), to decide for stoning a rebellious son (21:18-21), to settle the sexual relationship (22:13-21) and the marriage of a dead brother's wife (25:5-10). Elders also function as heads and officers of the tribes and judges of the people (cf. 16:18; 17:8-13; 29:10; 31:28; also 1:13, 15; et al.).

However, the phrase "a burnt offering and" in verse 12 may have been altered by the Dtr. Scholars generally agree[47] that the burnt offering is characteristic of later stages of Israelite sacrificial practice; it probably was adopted from the Canaanites after their settlement there. Hence this phrase may not have been in the original story. It may have been added by D (confer Deut. 12:5-6), or both this reference and the mentioning of "burnt offering" in Deut. 12:6 were inserted by P since P explicitly records the administration of this rite in Lev. 1:3-9.[48]

The last stage of recension perhaps was done by the hand of P when he took JE as the base of his compilation of the Pentateuch. What he did to this pericope is simply the insertion of his favorite "Aaron" into verse 12. The reasons

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[47]Cf. L. Rost, "Erwägungen zum israelitischen Brandopfer," in Von Ugarit nach Qumran (BZAW, 77. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1957), 177-183; G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), I, 255-256; R. de Vaux, Les Sacrifices de L'Ancient Testament (Paris: Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 1, 1964), pp. 18-20, 41-48; and Cody, XLIX, 162-164.

[48]Since Lev. 1:9 says "the priest should burn the whole on the altar as a burnt offering," there is nothing left for sharing with the participants or worshippers. This is another reason why the burnt offering probably did not occur in this incident originally. However, since D's emphasis is the joy of the pilgrims' eating before God, and the burnt offering has nothing for them to share, this addition may have been inserted by P instead of D.

why "Aaron" should be considered secondary are as follows:[49] (1) That the elders as representatives of the tribes occur in this episode is comprehensible, but Aaron's name suddenly stands out here for no reason; (2) P has demonstrated his tendency to insert Aaron and his descendants into the narratives concerning Moses. For example, in the P account of the call of Moses, Ex. 6:2-7:13, we suddenly find a section of the genealogy, 6:14-27, which obviously centered on Aaron and his sons; (3) P also has the tendency to deemphasize Moses and make Aaron stand out as this is clearly seen from the following examples: The plagues in Egypt were not brought about by Moses as E records it but by Aaron (confer Ex. 7:19; 8:1-2,12-13 [Eng. 5-6,16-17], and others); the rod which Moses used to work miracles in P is in Aaron's hand now (Ex. 7:9,19; 8:1,15 [Eng. 5,16], and others).[50]

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[49]Rad, I, 243, 249, 293, 295-296, and J. Morgenstern hold the same view as ours. However, M. Noth and Rolf Knierim have different opinions from ours. Noth says that the special mention of Aaron must stem from special Aaron traditions which were once current but have no longer been preserved (Noth, pp. 149 and 122); Knierim maintains that E changed the priest of Midian with Aaron and the elders of Israel into a meeting between Moses, E's main character, and his father-in-law Jethro, the Midian priest. He also asserts that it is a remnant of a Levitic cult aetiology, which not only gave an account of a cultic meeting between the priest of Midian and the first priest of Israel, the Levite Aaron, but explained also how through the mediation or under the protectorate of this priest the order of the Yahweh cult under Levitic leadership came about; R. Knierim, "Exodus 18 und die Neuordnung der Mosaischen Gerichtsbarkeit," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXXIII (1961), 152-153.

[50]In this case, Moses' name may have originally occurred in verse 12 but was replaced by P's favorite Aaron.

Summing up the above discussion we find that verses 1b and 2b were probably added by the JE compiler in the late 8th century B.C. (or at the latest the first half of the 7th century B.C.). Some sentences or words in between verses 11 and 12 were probably deleted by Dtr at the end of 7th century B.C. The words "a burnt offering and" may have been inserted by D in the last half of 7th century B.C. (or by P). "Aaron" in verse 12 was an interpolation by P during, or after, the exile.

## Historical Analysis

Based on the studies presented in the above sections, the task of this section is an attempt to search out the probable historical background of this episode and to reconstruct its original shape.

As a journalist today investigates an incident with the six questions: when, where, who, what, how and why, the analysis of this episode will begin with "when and where." It is quite clear from the narrative that the incident happened not long after the Exodus (confer verses 1 and 8). How long after the Exodus is hard to determine. Not a few scholars believe the incident occurred after the Sinai covenant, and the placement of the present text before the Sinai covenant is an anachronism.[51] Verse 5 probably is a

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[51]See for example, Morgenstern, IV, 127; C. A. Simpson, The Early Traditions of Israel: A Critical Analysis of the Pre-deuteronomic Narrative of the Hexateuch (Oxford:

description of the Israelites' situation rather than the identification of a place. What the text shows here is a picture of the Israelites camping in the wilderness sometime after they have come out from Egypt. The exact "when" and "where" perhaps were not in the mind of the narrator. The narrative probably emphasizes the "who" and "what."

The central character of the episode is "Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses" (verse 1). Who is this father-in-law of Moses? Our research shows definitely that he is a priest--a priest of the Kenites rather than the Midianites, and most likely he is a priest of the primitive Yahwism, although we may not know exactly his name and the true relationship he had with Moses. For what purpose did Moses' father-in-law come?

Although E makes the episode a lesson on the fear of God and the obedience of His will, the pericope shows that the real intention of the coming of Moses' father-in-law is for making a covenant, as we have treated in the form criticism. But, what kind of covenant? Marriage? Amphictyony? Or frontier?

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Basil Blackwell, 1948), pp. 20, 197; and G. H. Davies explicitly says, "The chapter is out of place, for it is a Sinai story recorded of some locality before they reach Sinai. This displacement is confirmed by the appearance of this story in Deuteronomy as a record of events at Sinai, but towards the end of the stay of the Israelites there. In Deut. 1:6-8 we find the divine direction to leave Horeb; in 1:19 they depart; Deut. 1:9-18 is the D parallel to the appointment of the law officers of Ex. 18:13-27." G. H. Davies, Exodus: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967), p. 147.

The episode obviously is not a marriage covenant. However, if the priest who comes to visit Moses has real kinship as Moses' father-in-law, the covenant in this episode might have something to do with matrimony. There is an analogous story in Genesis. When Laban made a covenant with Jacob at Mizpah, he said, "May Yahweh watch between you and me, when we are absent from each other. If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, remember, God is witness between you and me." (Gen. 31:49-50). However, this most likely must not have been the central part of the covenant.

Since Moses' father-in-law is a Kenite and a priest of the primitive Yahwism, the covenant making here could have been initiated a kind of amphictyony that they would pledge its members to serve the God Yahweh who had shown His strength and power in the mighty acts of leading them out from the slavery in Egypt. If this were the case, however, it would seem unlikely that it would have been omitted from the text. Since the Old Testament history is a history of the faith of Yahweh, the compiler or redactor would likely retain every bit of material which could promote this faith.

It seems quite possible that the covenant here is connected with establishing a frontier. There is a similar account in Gen. 31:43-55. There, the active figure is Jacob's father-in-law Laban, just as here in Ex. 18:1-12 the active character is Moses' father-in-law Jethro. There, it seems Laban was concerned about the welfare of his

daughters and asked Jacob not to ill-treat them nor take other wives besides them. But it seems that what he was more concerned about was the frontier affairs. He pointed to the pillar which Jacob had set up, and the heap of stones his kinsmen gathered, and said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." (Gen. 31:51-53). And so Jacob swore by the Kinsman[52] of Isaac. The next sentence is, "and Jacob offered sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread" (verse 54). This same formula may fit Moses' father-in-law in the episode under discussion. He may have been concerned about his daughter; he may have said something to Moses not to ill-treat his daughter nor to take other wives besides her; he may have asked Yahweh to be witness for this; he may have taken some animals for Moses to offer as sacrifices as the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis strongly asserted, or he may have offered the sacrifices himself since he is a priest as the proponents of the Kenite hypothesis hold; and he certainly would have eaten the

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[52]Following the suggestion of W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 248; and O. Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," Jewish Social Studies, I (1956), 32.

communion meal with Moses and the representatives of the groups which were led by Moses who came out from Egypt and were now tarrying in the wilderness. But why did he go through all these troubles? Perhaps because he was concerned about his frontiers. He wanted Moses and his people not to trespass his territory.

Why should a nomadic Kenite priest be concerned about frontiers? Probably, he represented not only the Kenites but the whole Southern six tribe confederacy. It seems that Rowley's assertion is correct, that the Southern tribes advanced northwards from Kadesh Barnea and got a foothold in the South[53] already prior to the Exodus of Moses' groups; and we learn from Joshua 14:14; Judg. 1:16,20 and 4:11 that the Southern tribes had a firm control of the South already with the center in Hebron. Why, then, did not the groups Moses led go up from there to Palestine with their Southern brothers? The reason is that this frontier treaty prevented them. Therefore, they had to go around by the way of Edom to the east of the Jordan to enter the central high lands of Palestine.[54]

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[53]Cf. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 101-102; Rowley, Re-discovery, p. 112; Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, p. 56.

[54]Questions immediately come up here: Did not Numbers 13 record that Moses sent spies to survey the land of Canaan? Did not the following chapter mention that some of them went up to attack the heights of the hill country but failed? This is precisely the point. The answer to these questions may have been as Sellin-Fohrer or as John Bright suggest. Sellin-Fohrer's assertion is as follows: "The tradition of how the Moses host settled in the territory west of the

We have to admit, however, this covenant of frontier affairs between the Southern tribes and the Exodus groups

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Jordan is not preserved. In the present course of the narrative, its place is taken by the Joshua tradition, found in the book of the same name. Joshua originally appeared only in the narrative of the occupation of the territory west of the Jordan; his presence in the Pentateuch is historically and traditio-historically secondary. It is nevertheless clear that the Joshua tradition is yet another narrative of territorial occupation. Even this does not exhaust the list of originally independent traditions of this type. Numbers 13-14 is also an occupation story, telling how the tribe of Caleb occupied the Canaanite city of Hebron in the mountains of Judah"; Fohrer and Sellin, p. 126. And Bright states, "There is evidence that various groups entered Palestine independently of the main conquest and were likewise absorbed in Israel. The south of Palestine affords the best example. . . . We are told (Num. 14:44-45) that when Israel attempted to enter the land from that direction [i.e., south] she was roundly defeated at Hormah and forced to fall back. But another account (Num. 21:1-3) tells of a great victory at the same place; later we find Kenites and others in possession of the area (Judg. 1:16-17). This probably reflects the entrance of various groups directly from the wilderness about Kadesh. Such groups were eventually absorbed into the structure of Judah"; J. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 123. However, since Moses is explicitly mentioned as an active leader here in Num. 13-14, we might as well consider that these two chapters had some connection with Ex. 18 originally but are fused with some later sources. The literary analysis of John Marsh on these two chapters in The Book of Numbers in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951, II, 203-215, bears out our point. These two chapters are largely composed of P with some fragmentary JE. Although P mentions that the whole country was surveyed (13:2,17a), JE indicates that only Hebron was visited (13:22-24). Since JE is an older source it might have preserved the more reliable actuality. If this is so, and if our contention is right, that Hebron was already the center of the Southern tribes early, then, from the Exodus groups led by Moses, after the immediate response of the mighty acts of Yahweh in the Sinai covenant, Moses may have sent spies to survey the South as indicated in Num. 13. This survey prompted the Southern tribes to send Moses' father-in-law to visit Moses at Kadesh (cf. Num. 13:26) with the intention of making a frontier covenant. Because the Southern tribes heard how Yahweh had brought them out of Egypt (Ex. 18:1), they dared not fight against the people

has not been mentioned anywhere by any person, and there is not much evidence on which we can rely. Therefore, further study on this treaty is needed.

While the following is purely speculative, it is at least a plausible reconstruction. Fortunately, the theological significance of this text is not limited to such "creative" efforts. If this is a frontier covenant, how did they make this covenant? Since the groups that came out from Egypt were slaves for years, and the groups with the Kenites were nomads or semi-nomads, most likely they would not have an elaborately written treaty as those treaties between the Egyptian and the Hittite.[55] But as mentioned earlier, the covenant between Laban and Jacob contains witness, words of the covenant, oath as calling God for witness, sacrifice and communion meal or "eating bread before God." In our text

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who were blessed by Yahweh. Similar to the Gebeonites (Joshua 9) who wanted to make a peace covenant with Israel, Moses' father-in-law successfully fulfilled his mission as recorded in Ex. 18. However, some of the tribesmen who had come out from Egypt and had experienced the mighty acts of Yahweh might not have agreed to this frontier covenant, and they attempted to invade Canaan from the South as reflected in the JE section of Num. 14:39-45. But they were defeated. Marsh's exegesis in this section again bears out our contention by saying, "The people set aside Yahweh's sentence and attempt to enter Canaan. Moses tries to dissuade them, and remains behind with the ark. The Amalekites and Canaanites defeat Israel. The story is rehearsed again in Deut. 1:41-45, and a parallel tradition may be preserved in Exod. 17:8-16."

[55]See for example those Egyptian and Hittite Treaties which are translated and collected in the book of Ancient Near Eastern Texts, edited by J. B. Pritchard (Priceton: Priceton University Press, 1969), pp. 199-206.

we do find sacrifices and a communion meal. It is true that there are no visible witnesses as they appeared in other covenant making accounts.[56] However, if the sacrifices mentioned in the text are not a mistake, then the altar on which they made sacrifices is the witness, for, as a rule, it is made of stones (confer Ex. 24:4-5; Deut. 27: 2-7; Joshua 8:30-32; and others). Besides, the elders may be present as witnesses. The missing words of the covenant here, originally may have been something similar to the covenant made by Laban and Jacob that they declared, "I will not pass over this altar to you, and you will not pass over this altar to me, for harm." And as mentioned earlier, this is why the party which came out from Egypt had to go a long way and across the Jordan River to enter Canaan. Another missing part is the oath to call on God as a witness. This is an important part of the covenant-making as McCarthy attested.[57]

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[56]See for example, seven ewe lambs in the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:27-32), a heap and a pillar in the covenant between Laban and Jacob (Gen. 31: 45,51-52), twelve pillars in the covenant at Sinai, a great stone in the covenant of Joshua and the people (Joshua 24: 25-27) et al. Cf. also D. J. McCarthy, "Three Covenants in Genesis," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXVI (1964), 185-188.

[57]McCarthy says that "to swear" taken by itself is enough to imply a covenant. There is no need to say "swear a covenant" even though the phrase is perfectly possible, and the verb appears parallel to "cutting a covenant," particularly in the sequence of Genesis 21, 26 and 31. A similar formulation occurs also in Joshua 9:15 which says, "Joshua made peace with them, and he made them a covenant that they might live, and the heads of the community swore them an oath" (cf. Ibid., XXVI, 181).

## Summary

On the basis of the criticisms and analysis reported above, the writer submits the following version of Exodus 18:1-12. Sentences or phrases in the brackets mark secondary material which was added in the oral stratum. Redactional additions appear in double parentheses. The brackets and parentheses indicate omissions in the present MT.

1. [Jethro], the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that Elohim had done for Israel his people, ((for Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt)).
2. [Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, the wife of Moses, ((after he had sent her back,))
3. and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom (for he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land"),
4. and the other was named Eliezer (because he said, "The God of my father is my help and has delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").] 5. And [Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses and the latter's sons and his wife] came to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of Elohim. 6. And it was said to Moses, "Behold, your father-in-law, [Jethro], is coming to you [and your wife, and her two sons with her"]. 7. Moses came out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed and kissed him, and they greeted each other with friendliness. Then they came into the tent.

8. Moses related to his father-in-law, all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians on account of Israel; and all the troubles which occurred on the way and how Yahweh had delivered them. 9. And [Jethro#] trembled over all the good things Yahweh had done to Israel by delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10. And [Jethro#] said, "Blessed be Yahweh who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh. 11. Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods for he delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians since they dealt arrogantly with them." [(Then the father-in-law of Moses built an altar with stones and said to Moses, "See this altar and the stones I have built between you and me. This altar is a witness, and the stones are witnesses, that I will not pass over this altar to you, and you will not pass over this altar and these stones to me, for harm." And they took oath with one another.)] 12. And [Jethro], the father-in-law of Moses offered ((a burnt offering and)) sacrifices to Elohim. And ((Aaron and)) all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses before Elohim.

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# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

Our research has found that major commentators did not pay much attention to Exodus 18 until 1862 when a new theory called the Kenite hypothesis was proposed by Fr. W. Ghillany in Germany. Since then, numerous scholars espoused this theory based on Exodus 18, especially verses 1-12, for their assertion. Major scholars who advocate the Kenite hypothesis or who hold this theory to some extent include B. Stade, K. Budde, B. A. Barton, L. Köhler, H. H. Rowley, B. D. Eerdmans, C. R. North, G. von Rad, J. Bright, G. Hebert, J. P. Hyatt, M. L. Newman and J. Plastaras.

Although there are a number of scholars who champion the Kenite hypothesis the opposition to this theory, based on our text, is equally strong. Some major opponents of the Kenite hypothesis whom we have discussed are the following: A. R. Gordon, E. König, A. B. Davidson, R. Kittel, J. Morgenstern, T. J. Meek, Y. Kaufmann, M. Buber, S. Mowinckel, U. E. Simon, C. H. W. Brekelmans, R. Abba, J. Finegan, and R. de Vaux.

While the proponents and the opponents of the Kenite hypothesis still debate the theory in the current generation, there are a number of scholars who consider the possibility of the proposal but hold that it is hard to prove in its

entirety. This opinion is maintained by W. O. E. Oesterley, T. H. Robinson, E. Jocab, G. E. Wright, R. H. Pfeiffer, B. W. Anderson and T. C. Vriezen. However, M. Noth, W. F. Albright, and F. M. Cross are some of the scholars who leave room for the Kenite hypothesis but do not commit themselves in writing on this theory.

It seems that the Kenite hypothesis may be possible but our study has shown that the assertion cannot depend upon Ex. 18:1-12 alone. As a matter of fact, the episode has no indication as to the fundamental base for advocating or for opposing the Kenite hypothesis. Meanwhile, we feel that to advocate this theory is just substituting one unknown for another; and there is no solid proof in our text or other passages in the Old Testament that indicate the source of Kenite Yahwism.

A new dimension of the interpretation of Ex. 18:1-12 as a covenant-making episode has derived from the study of the Kenite hypothesis. This approach was suggested by Barton and Morgenstern in the early part of this century but in the recent two decades confidently advocated by Brekelmans, Newman, F. C. Fensham, A. Cody and Hyatt. We find that the covenant-making assertion is possible but our study shows that the substance of the covenant is different from that of the above-mentioned scholars. Barton and Morgenstern do not state what kind of a covenant it was; Brekelmans, Fensham, Cody and Hyatt consider it as a covenant with equals; Newman, on the other hand, believes that both the Kenites and the

Israelites were making a covenant with Yahweh in this incident. Our informed guess is that the covenant here is a frontier treaty between the Southern tribes and the groups led by Moses who had come out from Egypt. This frontier treaty prohibited the exodus groups from going up to Canaan from the South; they had to go around Edom by way of crossing the Jordan River and entering into the high-lands.

However, we have noted that the story as a covenant-making incident was current only in the oral stage. The pericope has ample evidence that it belongs to E. E utilized this episode to convey his teaching of the fear of God and the obedience of His will and to urge living peacefully with others. Nevertheless, the MT neither explicitly shows that the text is a covenant-making incident nor a didactic episode of E, because the text has gone through three stages of recension by JE, Dtr and P. The major redactor of the pericope was Dtr. After this recension, the episode, as we have it today, becomes an introduction to the following section which tells how Moses received his father-in-law's advice to set up leaders in Israel.

With these findings, this research is completed. But further study must examine the suggestion that the original story of this pericope describes a frontier treaty, and that the present text serves as an introduction to the aetiology of the Israelite judiciary. Perhaps other studies can continue to draw continuities between the name Yahweh, the priesthood, the sacrificial and legal systems, and other

aspects of Yahwism and the theology and culture of such non-Yahwistic systems as the writers of the Mari and Amarna letters. In any case, the radical change effected at the Exodus and at Sinai is probably of much more importance--also today--than the slippery data from the history of religions.

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