

The need to take up the pen to write once again about J. Evola's views on the Jewish question developed from the combination of a meditation on the misleading claim that "What is highlighted here [in Three Aspects of the Jewish Problem] is the complex spirit of Hebraism, whose deep-rooted tradition seems to have been undermined by the disintegrating influences of Judaism" (<http://www.edizionidiar.it/evola-julius/tre-aspetti-del-problema-ebraico.html>), and of the will to draw explicitly the necessary conclusions which can be read between the lines in a recent well-documented article on J. Evola and the historical role of Judaism in the ancient world (<http://it.narkive.com/2008/10/20/1015986-gerusalemme-contro-roma-parte-1.html>), with the awareness that there are still misunderstanding about J. Evola's views on the problem at stake, whether they are due, in part or in full, to the reader, to the author, or, for that matter, to his exegetes. In this regard, our critical reading of 'Julius Evola's Political Endeavors', based on full quotations from those works of his which have been published in English, resulted in some clarification, particularly as regards the statement that the Italian author's "writings never spoke out against orthodox religious Judaism." This examination led us to summarise his analysis of the Jewish question as follows : 1. a tradition existed in the shape of Judaism ; 2. the valuable part of its content was most likely not intrinsically Jewish ; 3. it degenerated into a ferment of decomposition on all planes, whether spiritual, intellectual, social or economic, through a process of secularisation. In this explanatory outline, the only variable in J. Evola's work concerns the element on which the emphasis is put, the extent of the borrowing and the determination of the traditions to which the borrowed elements originally belonged.

Here, we propose to do the opposite, which means to develop the three points we highlighted, breaking down the Italian author's argumentation into all the arguments it is constituted of, so as to make it easier to grasp, as crystal clear as possible. To achieve this, of course, our comprehensive account will be based on relevant quotes from his work. Then, a critical analysis of his line of reasoning will be provided in the light of the Ancient Testament, of the work of various Biblical scholars and of various historians of antiquity, as well as of recent genetic studies. With only a very few exceptions, such as the postface to 'Il Mito del sangue' (Sear, 1995), the studies, such as P. di Vona's and G. Monastrà's, on J. Evola's racial views, especially in relation to the Jewish question, work in a closed circuit, in that they check these, not against scholarly sources, not even "which is the icing on the cake, coming from writers who are scholars" against the Old Testament, one of the very best sources to study the Jews, but merely against their own views, perceptions and feelings on the Jewish question, which are based on mere personal opinions that are unsupported, or supported only by a unilateral and self-righteous reading of J. Evola's anti-Semitic writings. Whereas, as we shall see, the assumption is made in some of these that Judaism is an alteration of Hebraism, others do trace the origins of the distinctive traits of Judaism to the very nature of the early Jewish people.

In the ancient Hebrew tradition as in any other tradition there would a solar, heroic, component and a lunar, passive, component. A solar symbolism would be present in the events described in the book of Exodus, insofar as they are "capable of esoteric interpretation" (RATMW) ; Eliha, Enoch, as well as Jacob, would be heroic types. Yet, "these elements are sporadic and reveal a curious oscillation, which is typical of the Jewish soul, between a sense of guilt, self-humiliation, deconsecration, and carnality and an almost Luciferian pride and rebelliousness" (ibid;) ; the Kabala, that is, the initiatory tradition that is found in Judaism, "has some particularly involuted traits, which characterize it at times as an 'accursed science'" (ibid.) ; the same oscillation can be noticed in the Jewish concept of kingship : on one hand, rulers such as David and Solomon belonged to a stock of king-priests, but, on the other hand, "the Jew saw in the full and traditional understanding of regal dignity a disparagement of God's privilege (whether historical or not, Samuel's opposition to the establishment of a monarchy is very significant)." (ibid.) In the earliest conception of the afterlife in the Jewish scriptures, not even the king can avoid to tread the lunar 'path of the ancestors', the only path that can be tread by all dead.

Furthermore, these traits of a positive, virile, spirituality turn out not to be intrinsically Jewish (they are "most likely derived (â€¦) from the Amorites, whose non-Semitic and Nordic origin is sometimes argued") (TAOTJP), with one exception : the idea of the king-messiah "had numerous common features with purely Aryan conceptions and ideals, from which, besides, the Jews, in this respect, often borrowed elements" (Trasformazioni del Regnum, La Vita Italiana, 1937) ; "the very idea of a 'chosen people' destined to rule the world by divine mandate... is an idea that can also be found in Aryan traditions, particularly among Iranians, just as, among the latter, though with virile and non-passive Messianic features, the type of the future 'universal master', Shaoshyant, a king of kings." (TAOTJP.) The only inborn characteristic of the ancient Hebrew religion would be "the so-called 'formalism' of the rites", insofar as it is thought to have "more than likely" "the same anti-sentimental, active, determinative spirit that... was the characteristic of the primordial and even Roman virile Aryan ritual." (ibid.)

How could it have been otherwise on the religious plane ? How would the religious belief and practices of the Hebrews not have reflected their composite racial substance ? "Ethnically, and originally, very different bloods flowed into the Jewish people ; the Old Testament itself speaks of many tribes and races contained in this people and modern race research has come to admit, in it, the presence of elements even of Aryan or non-Semitic origins, as seems to be the case in particular for the Pharisees."

(http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id16.html ; see Ezekiel 16:3 ff) As "a half-caste people... The Jew is essentially a mix of the Levantine or Armenoid race and of the desert or Orientaloid race ; besides, he would also combine elements such as the Hamitic race, the Black race, then the Mediterranean and Alpine (Ostisch) race and of secondary races, whether Oriental or European... The Jewish people is an admixture of races, not to say a detritus of predominantly non Indo-European races." (Sulla Genesi dell'ebraismo come forza distruttrice, La Vita Italiana, July 1941).

What gave shape and unity to the Jewish people was the Law. "... in ancient Judaism we find a very visible effort on the part of a priestly elite to dominate and coalesce a turbid, multiple, and turbulent ethnical substance by establishing the divine Law as the foundation of its 'form', and by making it the surrogate of what in other people was the unity of the common fatherland and of the common origins. From this formative action, which was connected to sacred and ritualistic values and preserved from the first redactions of the Torah to the elaboration of the Talmud, the Jewish type arose as that of a race of the soul ['race of the soul', and not 'spiritual', as translated in the American edition of 'Rivolta'] rather than of a physical race." (RATMW) "It has been said, by a Jew, that, just as Adam was formed by Jehovah, the Jew was formed by the Jewish law, (â€¦)." (http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id16.html) "This 'Law', in the Jew, replaces the homeland, the land, the nation, the blood itself ; this 'Law' reacted to an original, chaotic and detrital racial mixture, imposed a shape upon it, had it assume instincts and attitudes of a special type, which would become hereditary through the centuries." (IMDS)

However, "Once the military fortunes of Israel declined, defeat came to be understood as a punishment for 'sins' committed, and thus an expectation developed that after a dutiful expiation Jehovah would once again assist his people and restore their power. This theme was dealt with in Jeremiah and in Isaiah. But since this did not happen, the prophetic expectations degenerated into an apocalyptic, messianic myth, and in the fantastic eschatological vision of a Savior who will redeem Israel ; this marked the beginning of a process of disintegration. What derived from the traditional component eventually turned into a ritualistic formalism and thus became increasingly abstract and separated from real life." (ibid.) "... moreover, a connection was established with a human type, who in order to uphold values that he cannot realize and that thus appear to him increasingly abstract and utopian, eventually feels dissatisfied and frustrated before any existing positive order and any form of authority... so as to be a constant source of disorder and of revolution." (RATMW)

Now that a precise summary of J. Evola's views on the Jewish question in ancient times has been given, it is time to subject them to a critical reading. The problem of the historicity of the Bible, that of its dating, or, more precisely, of the dating of the various books of the Old Testament, that of the successive revisions they have undergone throughout the centuries, and that of its translation into the languages of the Gentiles, and, more particularly, of its first translation, the Septuagint, which was initiated and supervised by the Jews themselves, will hardly be taken into account. They are inextricable. Whether the authentic history of Israel only began with the monarchy (around 1000 BCE) or the earlier stories are mere allegories, whether the earlier stories were transmitted by oral traditions or from literary circles of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, the extent to which the scriptural corpus was reinterpreted, amended, corrected, over the centuries, are questions which cannot be resolved positively in most cases from what we know at present, any more than it is always possible to identify with complete certainty whether some scriptures, whose study is however very important for the examination of J. Evola's assumption that the concept of Messiah was distorted after the destruction of the political life of Israel and the deportation of its leadership, are pre-exilic or post-exilic. Even so, the whole Jewish scriptural corpus, with a few exceptions that correspond to passages unanimously considered as dubious, will be taken, as it was by J. Evola, as it is, as the Jews want non-Jews to perceive them.

According to Genesis, Japhet is the father of the white race, and, more precisely, of the Indo-Europeans of Western Asia and of Europe ; Shem, the father of the peoples of the Middle East and of Southern Asia, while the descendants of Ham are the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, the Libyans and the Canaanites, as well as the Black race. It is certainly not our intention to discuss the ethnographic conceptions of the ancient Hebrews, in whose maze biblical scholars themselves get mixed up. While much has been written about the Table of Nations since Flavus Josephus, the most important thing, the main point, may have been missed. It has been missed because most of those who have studied it have focused exclusively on the question of its historical accuracy and validity, thus overlooking the deep truth it contains, which should be sought, so to speak, upstream, and not downstream. The starting point for arriving at a clear view of the matter is not the lineage of Japhet, Ham, and Shem, but the fact that "Ethnically, and originally, very different bloods have flowed into the Jewish people ; the Old Testament itself speaks of many tribes and races contained in this people..." (TAOTJP) In other words, the Table of Nations should be read, so to speak, in reverse : it's not that the various races come monogenically from the ancestors of the Jewish people, it's that the Jewish people is made up of various races. Indeed, "... modern race research has come to admit, in it, the presence of elements even of Aryan or non-Semitic origins, as seems to be the case in particular for the Pharisees." (http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id16.html) The results of later genetic studies have confirmed that research unambiguously : "Haplotypes constructed from Y-chromosome markers were used to trace the paternal origins of the Jewish Diaspora. A set of 18 biallelic polymorphisms was genotyped in 1,371 males from 29 populations, including 7 Jewish (Ashkenazi, Roman, North African, Kurdish, Near Eastern, Yemenite, and Ethiopian) and 16 non-Jewish groups from similar geographic locations. The Jewish populations were characterized by a diverse set of 13 haplotypes that were also present in non-Jewish populations from Africa, Asia, and Europe." (<http://www.pnas.org/content/97/12/6769.full>) As a matter of fact, for example, "â€ members of the black, Bantu-speaking southern African Lemba tribe, who have some rituals similar to Jews and have tribal origin stories that they are descended from Jews, do indeed carry some Y-chromosome markers that are undoubtedly of Semitic, probably Jewish, origin." A study "by A. Oppenheim and her colleagues showed that about 70 percent of Jewish paternal ancestries and about 82 percent of Palestinian Arabs share the same chromosomal pool. The geneticists asserted that this might support the claim that Palestinian Arabs descend in part from Judeans who converted to Islam" (Human Genetics, December 2000) ; "In 2001, a team of Israeli, German, and Indian scientists discovered that the majority of Jews around the world are closely related to the Kurdish people -- more closely than they are to the

Semitic-speaking Arabs or any other population that was tested" (<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1626606/posts>) ; the haematological research of A. E. Mourant shows that all Jews throughout the world have an admixture of at least 5% to 10% of Congoid blood, findings which do not prevent some contemporary White Supremacists who report them, such as R.P. Oliver, to be adamant that "Jews are a race" ! Such nonsense is widespread, not to say endemic, among suggestible anti-Zionist goyim who are led to identify Nuremberg Laws, which, besides, did not refer exclusively to the Jews, with the mission of enforcing the Torah ban on mixed marriages Ezra and Nehemiah were entrusted with by the God of Israel following the close of the Babylonian captivity and the return of some Jews to Israel. Miscegenation was as uncommon and was felt as unnatural in early twentieth century Germany as it was seemingly widespread and regarded as natural in pre-exilic Israel, judging by the avowed reluctance with which the Israelites sent away their foreign wives and children, when urged to do so by Ezra, by the readiness with which they began to intermarry again, by the time Ezra had returned to his Babylonian dwellings, and by the unanimous reaction of the Israelites, upon Ezra's return to Jerusalem to take further measures to enforce his earlier legislation : "Nehemias (he is Athersatha) and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the Levites who interpreted to all the people, said : This is a holy day to the Lord our God : do not mourn, nor weep : for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." (Nehemiah 8:9) : "And shall we also be disobedient and do all this great evil to transgress against our God, and marry strange women ?" (ibid. 13:27) It does not appear that endogamy was the rule among Israelites in earlier times : Esau was married to two Hittites (Genesis 26:34) ; Joseph was married to an Egyptian (Genesis 41:45) ; Moses – irrespective of his ethnicity and, for that matter, of his historicity - was married to a Midianite (Exodus 2:21) and a Cushite (Numbers 12:1) ; David – who is portrayed as a descendant of a mixed marriage in the book of Ruth - to a Calebite and an Aramean (2 Samuel 3:3) ; "And king Solomon loved many strange women besides the daughter of Pharaoh, and women of Moab, and of Ammon, and of Edom, and of Sidon, and of the Hethites : Of the nations concerning which the Lord said to the children of Israel : You shall not go in unto them, neither shall any of them come in to yours : for they will most certainly turn away your heart to follow their gods. And to these was Solomon joined with a most ardent love. And he had seven hundred wives as queens, and three hundred concubines : and the women turned away his heart" (1 Kings 11:1-3), to mention but a few examples.

On that basis, how are we to explain that there are proscriptions of exogamy in the Pentateuch and in the Deuteronomy ?

"Does this prohibition apply to all gentiles or only to the seven Canaanite nations ? The answer is clearly the latter. Moses commands the Israelites to destroy the seven Canaanite nations because they threaten Israelite religious identity and live on the land that the Israelites will conquer. Intermarriage with them is prohibited. The Ammonites and Moabites, somewhat more distant and therefore somewhat less dangerous, were not consigned to destruction and isolation ; they were merely prohibited from entering the congregation (Deut. 23:4). The Egyptians and Edomites were even permitted to enter the congregation after three generations (Deut. 23:8-9). The meaning of the prohibition of "entering the congregation" is not at all clear (â€) but I presume that originally, at least, it was not a prohibition of intermarriage. Other nations, even further removed from the Israelite horizon, were presumably not subject to any prohibition. Internal biblical evidence confirms this narrow interpretation of Deut. 7:3-4." (S. Cohen, *The Beginning of Jewishness*). Then, it would seem that Ezra's opposition to intermarriage did not result from the racial ties of foreign wives, but from a concern about the effects that their religious beliefs and practices would have on the relatively small Hebrew community of the time. The issue may have been simply of the religious order, as opposed to the racial justification of the Nuremberg laws. Solomon fell in disfavour with Yahweh, not because, as David, he had intermarried, but because "his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods." (1 Kings 14)

The Jewish Encyclopaedia acknowledges, not only that "Whether regarded

politically or ethnologically, Israel must be considered a composite people. This appears both from the genealogical statements of the Bible and from recorded instances of racial amalgamation" (of the twelve sons of Jacob, two – Judah and Simeon - married a Canaanite ; Joseph married the daughter of Putiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's palace guard), but also that "early and late Judah derived strength from the absorption of outsiders" ; of course, the nature of this strength is not specified.

The mixed character of the early Israelites would inevitably be reflected in their religious beliefs and practices. The early period of Israelite settlement was characterised by a strong tendency towards syncretism with the religion of the Canaanites, which had in turn borrowed heavily from their neighbours'. The combination of different forms of belief and practice in the religion of Israel in the period of the kings was so pregnant that M. Eliade was led to describe it as the "culmination of syncretism." (History of Religious Beliefs and Ideas, chap. XIV) "The Canaanites, with whom the Israelites came into contact during the conquest by Joshua and the period of the Judges, were a sophisticated agricultural and urban people. The name Canaan means 'Land of Purple' (a purple dye was extracted from a murex shellfish found near the shores of Palestine). The Canaanites (–) absorbed and assimilated the features of many cultures of the ancient Near East for at least 500 years before the Israelites entered their area of control...

The religion of the Canaanites was an agricultural religion, with pronounced fertility motifs. Their main gods were called the Baalim (Lords), and their consorts the Baalot (Ladies), or Asherah (singular), usually known by the personal plural name Ashtoret. The god of the city of Shechem, which city the Israelites had absorbed peacefully under Joshua, was called Baal-berith (Lord of the Covenant) or El-berith (God of the Covenant). Shechem became the first cultic center of the religious tribal confederacy (called an amphictyony by the Greeks) of the Israelites during the period of the judges–The Baalim and the Baalot, gods and goddesses of the Earth, were believed to be the revitalizers of the forces of nature upon which agriculture depended. The revitalization process involved a sacred marriage (hieros gamos), replete with sexual symbolic and actual activities between men, representing the Baalim, and the sacred temple prostitutes (qedeshot), representing the Baalot. Cultic ceremonies involving sexual acts between male members of the agricultural communities and sacred prostitutes dedicated to the Baalim were focused on the Canaanite concept of sympathetic magic. As the Baalim (through the actions of selected men) both symbolically and actually impregnated the sacred prostitutes in order to reproduce in kind, so also, it was believed, the Baalim (as gods of the weather and the Earth) would send the rains (often identified with semen) to the Earth so that it might yield abundant harvests of grains and fruits. Canaanite myths incorporating such fertility myths are represented in the mythological texts of the ancient city of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) in northern Syria ; though the high god El and his consort are important as the first pair of the pantheon, Baal and his sexually passionate sister-consort are significant in the creation of the world and the renewal of nature.

The religion of the Canaanite agriculturalists proved to be a strong attraction to the less sophisticated and nomadic-oriented Israelite tribes. Many Israelites succumbed to the allurements of the fertility-laden rituals and practices of the Canaanite religion, partly because it was new and different from the Yahwistic religion and, possibly, because of a tendency of a rigorous faith and ethic to weaken under the influence of sexual attractions. As the Canaanites and the Israelites began to live in closer contact with each other, the faith of Israel tended to absorb some of the concepts and practices of the Canaanite religion." (http://history-world.org/canaanite_culture_and_religion.htm) The ritual system, the sacred sites and the sanctuaries of Yahwism were borrowed from the Canaanite religion, and the Yahwist sacerdotal caste was modelled on the Canaanite's. However, the external influences which imparted Yahwism as it took shape were far from being limited to the worship of their closest neighbours, who were themselves a mixed people, whose political organisation, too, as will be seen, owed much to foreign influences.

"The initial level of Israelite culture resembled that of its surroundings; it was neither wholly original nor primitive."

(http://history-world.org/history_of_judaism.htm) From an Indo-European perspective, "the idea that the ancient Jewish civilisation represented something privileged and superior is absurd, since the stature of Israel appears modest with respect to the ethics and the spirituality common to the ancient Aryo-Hellenic, Indo-Aryan, Aryo-Roman, and Aryo-Iranian stocks." (Importanza dell'idea ariana, in La Stampa, 13 XI-1942 ; now in I Testi de La Stampa, AR, Padova, 2004) "This nation, despite what has been claimed, never had a civilisation of its own any more than the Phoenicians did" (A. de Gobineau, An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races) "The Jews possessed neither arts, nor sciences, nor industry, nor anything of that which constitutes a civilisation. They have never made even the faintest contribution to the edification of human knowledge. They have never surpassed that semibarbarous state of peoples without a history. If they ended in having cities, it is because living conditions, amidst neighbours which had arrived at a superior level of evolution, made it a necessity for them. They were unable to build themselves their cities, their temples, and their palaces, and, at the peak of their power, under the reign of Solomon, they had to bring from abroad the architects, the workers, and the artists, of whom no imitator could be found in Israel and in neighbouring countries. During its long years of history, Israel produced only one book, the Old Testament, in which only a few lyric poems are worthwhile. The rest consists of hallucinations, of lifeless chronicles, and of prurient and gory tales." (G. Le Bon, Les Premi res civilisations) "If Christianity had not triumphed, the history of the Jewish people would be more foreign, more unknown, more indifferent to us, than that of the peoples of Asia Minor, such as the Lydians, the Phoenicians and the Hittites, which have certainly played in the ancient world an infinitely more important part than the Jews, some small tribe with no culture, continuously defeated and conquered, subdued and scattered. In fact, what is taught as 'Sacred History' is completely unrelated to the plane of history." (G. Batault, Le Probl me juif, 1921)

"The tribal structure resembled that of West Semitic steppe dwellers known from the 18th-century-BCE tablets excavated at the north central Mesopotamian city of Mari ; their family customs and law have parallels in Old Babylonian and Hurro-Semite law of the early and middle 2nd millennium. The conception of a messenger of God that underlies biblical prophecy was Amorite (West Semitic) and found in the tablets at Mari. Mesopotamian religious and cultural conceptions are reflected in biblical cosmogony, primeval history (including the Flood story in Gen. 6:9-8:22), and law collections. The Canaanite component of Israelite culture consisted of the Hebrew language and a rich literary heritage -whose Ugaritic form (which flourished in the northern Syrian city of Ugarit from the mid-15th century to about 1200 BCE) illuminates the Bible's poetry, style, mythological allusions, and religiocultic terms. Egypt provides many analogues for Hebrew hymnody and wisdom literature. All the cultures among which the patriarchs lived had cosmic gods who fashioned the world and preserved its order, including justice ; all had a developed ethic expressed in law and moral admonitions ; and all had sophisticated religious rites and myths."

(http://history-world.org/history_of_judaism.htm) Syncretism does not stop there. The 'trial of jealousy' (Numbers 5:11  31), a test of innocence or guilt consisting for the priest in administering bitter water to a wife accused of adultery by her husband, bears a certain resemblance to a similar custom among the primitive tribes of Western Africa ; circumcision, one of the primeval rites of Yahwism, seems to have originated among certain tribes in sub-Saharan Africa. J. John Williams (Hebrewisms of West Africa, from Nile to Niger with the Jews) reports that "Professor Keller of Yale University, relying in great part on data gathered by William Graham Sumner, while treating of 'Disguise and other Forms of Mourning', places many West African funeral customs in the same class with the ritual 'sackcloth and ashes' of the Old Testament."

<http://www.angelfire.com/ill/hebrewisrael/printpages/hebrewism.html> provides an overview of the striking resemblances of traditional African customs to some of those which are described in the Ancient Testament.

It is important to bear in mind that no element whatsoever remains unchanged when passing from one culture to another. This process has been extremely well studied from a dynamic perspective by Sigmund Mowinckel (He That Cometh) with

respect to the institution of kingship in the early Hebrew community. In fact, his clear and enlightening presentation, which will give us further insight into the genius of the Jewish people and, more particularly, into the Jewish Messianic idea, into the radical changes that were undergone in it by elements borrowed from other cultures, is so relevant to the matter at hand and so free of confrontational positions that it will be incorporated into this study almost word for word, although in a pruned form, as a transition to the consideration of the matter of Messianism.

The settlement in Canaan and, more exactly, in Schechem, involved an entirely new way of life, whose inevitable consequences were a new social structure, and new political institutions and agencies, which in turn called for new forms and fashion. It was from the Canaanites that the Hebrews learned what a king was like. In legal and commercial transactions they often had to resort to the tribunal of these kings, and they had to use, or, of necessity, to submit to regulations for trade and agriculture which they had not had to develop when they were nomads. They learned that the monarchical system lay behind every attempt to establish a great empire, and that only a monarchy had the power to hold together scattered tribes and settlements, since only a king could have an army big enough for the purpose. Together with the monarchy it was natural that Israel should take over from the Canaanites a great many ideas and conceptions of kingship, the royal ideology, the 'manner (mispat) of the kingdom', its etiquette and customs, the whole pattern of life which was bound up with it. The Old Testament does not conceal the fact that in many ways it was a new and alien 'manner'. The ideal of kingship that the Hebrews took over from the Canaanites was actually a special development of the common oriental concept of kingship. The Canaanite kingship was not an indigenous creation, independent of foreign influences. The entire culture of the country was in large measure composite, mainly Syrian, but, like Syrian culture itself, subject to strong influence from Mesopotamia (Hurrian-Mitannian), from Babylonia and Assyria, from Asia Minor (Hittite) and from the neighbouring country of Egypt.

The god is thought of particularly as the god of fertility and creation. The most important cult festival is that of the New Year, when the world is created anew. In it the king goes through the humiliation and death of the god, his resurrection, combat and victory, and his 'sacred marriage' with the fertility goddess, and thereby creates the world and makes its prosperity and blessing secure for the New Year. It is thought that this pattern left its stamp on the cultic practice of the entire Near East, including that of Israel, but partly in such a way that the pattern was 'disintegrated', that is, interpreted, re-interpreted and, at times, misinterpreted.

Behind this conception of kingship lies a thought which is found among many primitive peoples, and particularly among the Hamitic tribes of Africa, with whom the Egyptians had close ethnological and cultural connexions. The thought is that of a mana-filled chief of the type called 'rainmaker-king', who after death remains a source of power, and who, inter alia, is incarnated in his successor, though he himself also exists everywhere and acts in other ways. Yet as early as the time of the ancient Sumerians, the idea of kingship differed considerably from that of Egypt in many ways. We are dealing here not simply with two variants of a common oriental ideology of kingship, but with a basic difference of principle, in spite of many similarities in detail to Egyptian phenomena. For instance, the individual has no prospect of lasting life, as in Egypt. The aim of the cult is to safeguard the continued life of the world, of nature, and of the race in 'the land'. But even the gods need to be strengthened and renewed by the 'service' and 'food' of which the sacrifices consist. The gods created men to perform this service, and set a king over them. He is, indeed, the 'great man' (Sumerian, Lugal), but nevertheless a man like other men. His task is to serve the gods, and carry out their will on earth. His relation to gods is that of a worshipper, not an equal; he represents his people before them. Here too, of course, there is a background of the common primitive ideas of the mana-filled chief and leader of the cult, in whom the 'power' of the community is concentrated; he is the channel of divine life and power to the community.

Even after the emergence of permanent personal rule, the rulers do not usually call themselves 'kings', but the 'vicegerents' (Sumerian, ENSI ; Accadian, ifiakku) and priests (sangu) of the god of the city. And when the position of the king acquires a more political and military character, based as it is on force, a distinction may arise in practice between the king and the vice-gerent priest ; but it is still the king who is the link between the god and the community. He has a sacral character, inasmuch as he is an intermediary between the god and the people. As a rule he is presented as a man among men. Insofar as the Babylonian king is endowed with divine powers and qualities, he may be regarded as a 'divine' being ; but he is not a god in the same sense as Pharaoh. In accordance with the will of the god he administers and governs the whole land, which is really the god's property, or the world and mankind, whom the gods created for their own service. The dominant thought is that the king has been designated and chosen by the gods, called by name, equipped with power, thought of beforehand in the heart of the god. In accordance with a common religious tendency, this divine election of the king is often regarded as predestination. The election of the king implies that he has a definite vocation and a definite task, namely to represent the gods before men and vice versa. The king is the intermediary between gods and men. By means of oracles (asked for or sent), he must discover the will of the gods and accomplish it on earth. He must represent men before the gods, and govern his realm in accordance with the law of the gods. In principle, therefore, he is also priest (sangu), even if there are professional priests, who in practice carry out the daily routine which forms part of his duties. He conducts sacrifices and performs rites. In relation to the gods, he is 'servant', subordinate to them and dependent on them. The god is his 'king' and 'lord'. But the title of servant also implies that he has a task to perform by the god's authority. He also represents the people before the gods, and is responsible for relations between them. He must expiate and atone for the people's sins, and must personally submit to the rites of atonement. He may even have to suffer death for the sins and impurity of the people.

Through his good relationship with the gods, a relationship which is strengthened and made effective by means of the cult, the king is able to convey to men the blessings of nature, good crops, abundance, peace, and so on. The Mesopotamian royal texts are full of effusive descriptions of the material, social, and moral prosperity which abounds in the land when the rightful king has come to the throne, or when he has performed his cultic duties in the right and proper way, and complied with the will of the gods. But it is only after the king, by his vicarious and representative rites in the festival, has atoned for the impurity which has accumulated, that prosperity can be maintained.

It will have been noted that this characterisation of Semitic spirituality and religions fully supports that which is articulated in 'Three Aspects of the Jewish Problem' and in 'Revolt against the Modern World'.

Israel, S. Mowinkel goes on, did not take over either Canaanite religion, or the sacral kingship which was connected with it, unaltered. In Yahwism the royal ideology underwent profound changes. Even in the purified, Yahwistic form of the tradition in the Old Testament, there are many indications that the forms and ideas associated with the monarchy, which were originally adopted in the court ceremonial of David and Solomon, were strongly influenced by common oriental conceptions. Yet many ideas were adopted in a sense different from that which they originally carried in Canaan or Babylonia. Many a cultic rite may have been dissociated from its original context when it was appropriated for Yahwism, so that it now appears either as a survival or with a new meaning.

It should also be clear that the Israelite monarchy also inherited traditions from the old chieftainship of the semi-nomadic period and the time of the settlement. In the traditions about Saul, the account of his simple household, court, and bodyguard are reminiscent of the establishment of an ancient chieftain rather than of an oriental king's court. The chieftainship was in a measure hereditary. But the position of a tribal chief or sheikh depended primarily on his personal qualities, his ability to lead, advise, and help, and

to settle disputes within the tribe or between tribes and clans. All the traditions about the Judges show that they attained their position because, in a given historical situation, they were able to rally the tribe, or several tribes, around themselves, to beat off the enemy, and thus 'save' their people. This testifies to a more concrete aspect of the later "very visible effort on the part of a priestly elite to dominate and coalesce a turbid, multiple, and turbulent ethnical substance by establishing the divine Law as the foundation of its 'form', and by making it the surrogate of what in other people was the unity of the common fatherland and of the common origins."

The comprehensive expression for all the chieftain's qualities and activities was that he 'judged'. He was 'judge', i.e., ruler, and leader, and magistrate, by virtue of his ability to do mispat, and his inherent 'righteousness'. This chieftainship has been called 'charismatic', as dependent on Yahweh's 'grace-gift'; and the legends often emphasise that the Judges were called to the task of liberation by a revelation from Yahweh Himself. We also hear that they performed their heroic deeds because Yahweh's spirit came upon them and endowed them with unusual power and insight. When the spirit seized them in the hour of crisis, the effect was ecstasy, a high tension of all the powers and faculties of the soul. Then they 'went in this their might', with Yahweh as their protector and helper (Judges 6: 14; cf. I Sam. 10:1-7). There is no mention of a permanent endowment with the spirit, but of an abnormal communication of power from time to time.

In his activity the chief was dependent on the fact that he represented ancient use and wont and conceptions of justice, and on the approbation of the leading men of the tribe, 'the elders'. He had no independent power to enforce his commands. His authority was founded on the trust he enjoyed, the spiritual influence he exercised, and the approbation of public opinion and the common sense of justice. If he had the tribe or a personal following behind him, he might also enforce his will on other tribes.

Besides his activity as a judge, the chief was also in charge of the public cult of his tribe. The ancient unity of chief and seer-priest is reflected in the traditions about Moses; the chief Ehud appears as the bearer of an oracle from Yahweh (Judges 3:19).

The Israelite monarchy is the result of the fusion of the traditions of the old chieftainship with the laws, customs, and ideas of Canaanite kingship. Thence arose the early attempts at tribal kingship under Gideon and Abimelech. In contrast with these, Saul represents a conscious attempt to create a comprehensive national kingship embracing all the tribes; and he probably had behind him the old Israelite amphictyony of ten tribes. On the other hand, the kingship of David and Solomon represents a national and religious syncretism. But in Israel the tension between the traditions of chieftainship and those of kingship, and, in general, the hostility of the 'desert ideals' to the monarchy were always present. This is evident in the opposition between the old standard of justice and the despotic mispat of the new monarchy. In the affair of Naboth they clash in the persons of Elijah and Ahab (I Kings 21). The opposition is still more plainly seen in the theory that Yahweh alone should be king in Israel, and in the clear awareness that kingship was a Canaanite innovation, thoughts which find expression in one of the collections of traditions about Saul and Samuel (I Sam. 8; 10; 12; 15). When the cultic functions were transferred to the king, and the chiefs entered his service, it was left to the circles of old seers and prophets to conserve the traditions of nomadic times, or rather, what they believed these traditions, which are thought to have been post-exilic idealisations, not to say fabrications (Keith W. Whitelman, *The Invention of Ancient Israel*) to be. In the traditions about Moses he is not, as has been maintained, a partial reflection of the figure of the king: on the contrary, he represents the ideals and traditions which were opposed to the monarchy. It was this prophetic opposition which constantly renewed the claim that the king's task was to submit to and maintain 'the justice of Yahweh', and not to claim to be more than he was, or to exalt himself over his 'brethren'. It is emphasised that it was a warrior chosen

from among the people that Yahweh exalted when he made David king (Ps. 64:20).

The stormy and conflicting nature of the covenantal relation between Yahweh and Israel is reflected, not only in this opposition, but also in the more or less latent conflict between Yahweh and the kings, in the frictions between the priests and the kings, in the infightings within the sacerdotal caste, in the implacable and incessant conflict between Baal and Yahweh, and in the tension between the nationalistic conception of religion and salvation and the universalistic conception of God, between a cosmic religion and the faithfulness to one God, which is illustrated by the contest Elijah demanded on Mount Carmel between the powers of Israel's God and the powers of Jezebel and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18). The very establishment of a monarchy in Israel was not a sinecure. Both Yahweh and Samuel first opposed it (1 Samuel 8:10-18). However, Yahweh had a change of mind and gave Samuel the responsibility of selecting a king for the Hebrews, on the sole condition that the king was the servant of Yahweh. Yahweh was praised as king. The idea of divine kingship did not depend on the institution of monarchy. Yahweh is the master of the world because it is Him who created it.

Yahweh was praised as king, so much so that, when he wanted to give guidance to a leader, he often gave it through a prophet (David had the prophets Gad and Nathan in his palace).

Kingship, whose opponents were highly critical of, was, as seen above, a foreign institution, likely to have been imposed upon Israel, according to some scholars, with the complicity of the Levites, a priestly group whose origins are unclear but unambiguously reach back to the tribe of Levi, and which lost its supremacy to the Zadokite priests of Jerusalem in the later monarchical period (<http://www.answers.com/topic/levite#ixzz1W8rR3xVW>) ; the king, whose function, by way of summing up the foregoing, was to maintain the cosmic order, to impose justice, to protect the weak, and to ensure the fertility of the land, was only the representative of Yahweh, his vicar, conceived as an entity distinct from him, as is typical of Semitic religions ; before taking the throne, the king was anointed by the prophet, who, besides, was himself previously anointed with the holy anointing oil (1 Kings 19:16) - Anointing itself, the sacramental act which more than anything else linked the king with Yahweh, seems originally to have been borrowed from the Canaanites, and was probably also practised among the Babylonians ; he was literally a crownless king ; in this regard, some psalms seem refer to the non Indo-European symbolic ritual of death and resurrection of the king "Yahweh, as to him, does not die and resurrect. The Temple, whose architecture was based on a foreign model, became the residence of Yahweh among the Israelites under the reign of Solomon and, therefore, the royal cult was identified with the state religion, but not fully, since the kings were criticised on certain occasions for having performed rites reserved for priests" it has not escape your notice that the frictions between the Levites and the kings, spurred by the fact that the latter encouraged the combining of the religious ideas and practices which were those of the two sections of the population, the Israelites and the Canaanites, are reminiscent of the medieval conflict between the emperor and the pope over the question of the superiority or not of the spiritual authority over the temporal authority. In the same vein, the break up of the united kingdom resulted from one of those religious conflicts for which early Israel is not renowned enough : "Solomon's policy, late in his reign, of conciliating all the major influential political-religious parties by granting them state recognition (1 Kings 11:1ff) was a significant departure from the policy of his father David who granted state recognition only to the political-religious cult-party of Yahweh (while making no attempt to stamp out the other cults in his territory). Solomon's liberal policy provoked the opposition of the exclusivist... Yahwist power caucus (1 Kings 11:9-13) and provided convenient opportunity for the Ephraimite school of Yahwist prophets to sow the seeds of disunity by instigating the ambitious Ephraimite Jeroboam to rebellion (1 Kings 11: 28-40)."

<http://www.goddiscussion.com/75516/the-political-subversive-role-of-the-prophets\in-the-history-of-ancient-israel-the-early-independent-prophets-and-the-monarch\y-part-1/> Religious disunity, as medievalists know well, breeds political instability : "The received wisdom of popular pious opinion is that which

correlates the periods of Israel's highest points of political, military and economic prosperity with the ascendancy of the Yahwist religious-political party. The entirety of the Books of Kings and Chronicles were written in defense of the dubious but historically influential thesis that the prosperity of the state of Ancient Israel hinged upon the loyalty of people and state to Yahweh, and that national disaster was the consequence of disloyalty to the Yahweh. Yet there is abundant evidence that rather than having been a source of stability, the cult of Yahweh, for most of the history of Israel, played a major subversive, divisive and politically destabilizing role and that the uncompromising insistence of its religious cult on exclusive access to power and state patronage generated unnecessary friction which heated up and destabilized the polity, especially in periods of ascendancy of the opposition Baalist political party. There is also evidence that the most effective and competent dynasties of Kings in Israel's post-United kingdom history were Baalist, and that the Yahwists consistently worked to stymie the efforts of the Baalist party at stabilizing the kingdom

<http://www.goddiscussion.com/75516/the-political-subversive-role-of-the-prophets/-in-the-history-of-ancient-israel-the-early-independent-prophets-and-the-monarchy-part-1/>

Yahweh's nature itself is universally known to be conflicting. He appears to his own people as both loving and hateful, benevolent and merciless, charitable and avenging, depending on the circumstances and, so to speak, without warning, sometimes apparently for no reason. On one hand, He is "a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 4:24), and, on the other hand, He "is a merciful God : he will not leave thee, nor altogether destroy thee, nor forget the covenant, by which he swore to thy fathers." This bipolar disorder has been commented with humour as follows : "Apparently from the very start, being chosen was a mixed blessing because the God who did the choosing was himself mixed up" (Yahweh versus Yahweh : the enigma of Jewish history, Jay Y. Gonen).

A god with no name before the Israelites settled in Canaan, 'Yahweh', whose actual pronunciation is disputed by those who are not in the know and whose meaning is uncertain to those who are not in the know either, ended up with seven names. The original nature of this god and even the emergence of Yahwism are so shrouded in mystery that it is as though no effort had been spared to muddy the waters. Since it is certainly not the place to review all the hypotheses that have been formulated on these matters, it is only that to which J. Evola made reference that will be explored here. "There are ancient traditions according to which Typhon, a demon opposed to the Solar God, was the father of the Hebrew ; various Gnostic authors considered the Hebrew god as one of Typhon's creatures. These are references to a demonic spirit characterized by a constant relentlessness, by an obscure contamination, and by a latent revolt of the inferior elements" (RATMW). These references are however undermined by J. Doresse's finding that in Gnosticism the values of Genesis underwent the same inversion as had the Egyptian myths. After all, in the Book of Jacob, doesn't Yahweh boast about the slaying of Leviathan, the personification of chaos in the Canaanite myth with which this Biblical account shares similarities ? The matter is nonetheless far more complex than appears at first sight. In fact, there is no need to refer to Gnostic sources to realise that Yahweh can easily qualify as a demonic force. While a dose of faith is needed to rationalise Psalm 137:9 ("Blessed be he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock") and Isaiah 13:16-17 ("Their infants shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes : their houses shall be pillaged, and their wives shall be ravished. Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not seek silver, nor desire gold"), there is still no consensus as to the interpretation of Exodus 4:24-26 ("And when he was in his journey, in the inn, the Lord met him, and would have killed him. Immediately Sephora took a very sharp stone, and circumcised the fore skin of her son, and touched his feet and said : A bloody spouse art thou to me"), in which commentators seem to be more concerned about finding out who is this ambiguous "him" and the reason for the attack than about uncovering who or what exactly "would have him killed". To Gershom, "We may be sure that Yahweh is no more a concupiscent demon-god than Zipporah is a virgin mother" ; to Gregory of Nyssa, an underestimated master of forgery, it is not Yahweh who encounters Moses, not even the "angel of the Lord", but simply an "angel". `Clarifying

baffling biblical passages'

(http://tmcdaniel.palmerseminary.edu/CBBP_Chapter_5.pdf) does not clarify anything in this regard, but does acknowledge that "It is a very ancient primitive story that pictures a 'demonic' Yahweh (â€¦) The original story may have concerned a demon or deity of the boundary between Midianite territory and Egypt whom Moses failed to appease." (J. Philip Hyatt, Exodus) This is dismissed flatly as nonsense by J.B. Jordan (Law of the Covenant), whereas Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor reiterate that "the fact is that we do have examples in the Old Testament where 'evil' is attributed to Yahweh himself (â€¦) and that these passages have been regarded as difficult interpretive problems already in ancient Judaism." (Theodicy in the World of the Bible)

<http://www.fundotrasovejas.org.ar/ingles/Libros/Subersibe%20hebrew%20bible/Exodu\>

[s.pdf](http://www.fundotrasovejas.org.ar/ingles/Libros/Subersibe%20hebrew%20bible/Exodu\) gives some more detail : "In its notes the Sagrada Biblia (Cantera â€¦ Iglesias, BAC) suggests that the primitive narration, probably Midianite, "would have referred to a local bloodthirsty demon later identified with Yahweh (see Jacob's struggle with an "angel/God" Gen. 32:24-32). In the demythologizing process, Yahweh replaced the demon, and the text was adapted to legitimize the circumcision of boys." It should also be mentioned that there are a few texts from the Greek magical papyri in which Iao (a Greek form of Yahweh) is associated, among other divinities, with Seth-Typhon (Iao is identified with Jesus in the Coptic magical papyri -

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/6540917/Seth-in-the-Magickal-Texts#>) . See also 'God at war : the Bible and Spiritual Conflict', p. 344 (

http://books.google.fr/books?id=Hj791_BeAFoC&pg=PA344&lpg=PA344&dq=%22demonic+go\nd%22+yahweh&source=bl&ots=utlO8o1LRt&sig=wX7mkCa1KBvOA7aygmuLiAABNA4&hl=fr&ei=9w\B-Tvv1G8GnhAfihpAR&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CDwQ6AEwBg#v=onep\age&q=%22demonic%20god%22%20yahweh&f=false)

Let us pass on the fact that there are many examples of magical practices in the Old Testament

(<http://commonsenseatheism.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Jeffers-Magic-and-Divination-in-Ancient-Israel.pdf>), despite the Deuteronomic condemnation of magic

and witchcraft, and that the cut-off point between magica licita and magica illicita is set, as is definitely the case in early Christian writings, too, by God (http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_88.pdf), in virtue of its claimed and perceived normativeness. Let us also pass on the fact that even a Biblical scholar who would swear on the Bible that "Moses and Aaron do not employ magic of any kind in Exodus 7:8-12 and 15:1-18, " lets the cat out of the bag in accepting that "the miracles they perform do have Egyptian analogs," and in noting "that prior to the parting of the Reed Sea we find the mention of a curse, not in connection with the magicians, but rather in connection with Yahweh. As Exod. 14:20 informs us, the cloud of darkness that Yahweh created 'cast a curse/spell (rayw) upon the night, so that one could not come near the other all through the night.' Though 'rayw' as presently vocalized favors the usual understanding of 'cast light' rather than 'cast a spell,' the original consonantal text would have been ambiguous. Moreover, the ordinary interpretation fails to explain why, if Yahweh cast light, 'one could not come near the other all through the night.' This is a description of darkness and not illumination."

(<http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/PDFs/articles/Noegel%2019%20-%20JANES%201\996.pdf>) What merits some attention is that the author, when examining the

question of magic in the Old Testament, unconsciously tapped into a key aspect of Yahweh that is closely linked to his demonism : fear and dread : "It is this fear and dread that magic ultimately invokes in the heart of the enemy if affected properly.

When we return to Exodus 15 we find a similar concern with how the death of the Egyptian at the Reed Sea brought dread upon Egypt's neighbors. Exod. 15:14-16 reads :

The peoples hear. They tremble
Agony grips the dwellers in Philistia
Now are all the clans of Edom dismayed
The tribes of Moab-trembling grips them;
All the dwellers in Canaan are melting
Terror and dread descend upon them;
Through the might of your arm they are as still as stone."

The connexion between magic in its lower form and fear in its most primal form adds a whole new dimension to this spell of an 'unbelievable' violence that is cast at Gentiles : "And thou, O son of man, saith the Lord God, say to every fowl, and to all the birds, and to all the beasts of the field : Assemble yourselves, make haste, come together from every side to my victim, which I slay for you, a great victim upon the mountains of Israel : to eat flesh, and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and you shall drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, and of lambs, and of he goats, and bullocks, and of all that are well fed and fat. And you shall eat the fat till you be full, and shall drink blood till you be drunk of the victim which I shall slay for you." (Ezekiel 39:17-18-19) Doesn't it ?

Magic in its lower form, however, can backfire : "Fear was the driving force behind the recurrent and obsessive enquiry concerning each and all events whether they were good for the Jews." (Yahweh versus Yahweh : the enigma of Jewish history). Jay Y. Gonen, returning to seriousness, shares this view : "Thus a dread of fateful duality runs throughout Jewish history in various incarnations and reincarnations. It saturates the Jewish heritage. Its origin, however, is the split image of Yahwehâ€¦ It has become a shared fantasy that conditioned the Jews' collective response and their expectations of history" (ibid.). As the Jew, as any mixed people, is divided within himself, it should be expected that, if the Jew may be in the image of Yahweh, Yahweh is without any doubt in the image of the Jew.

It should be wondered whether the 'dark side of Yahweh' could be linked to a peculiarity displayed by most Semitic gods : "In the beginning, they defeated the powers of chaos and death ; but every year these powers escape again, and threaten life with drought, and flood, and all such things as make life hazardous. The changes in the life of nature show that sometimes the god himself falls into the power of the forces of chaos. This concerns not only the gods of fertility and vegetation properly so called." Even more interestingly, the Hebrew word for 'god', *elohim*, could be used "of many kinds of subordinate beings, such as the dead soul, the ghost that might be raised (â€¦) The word may also be used of a demon which causes disease" (Job. 19:22) (He That Cometh).

Demonic gods can be found in all pantheons, including the Vedic one and its Greek, Roman, Slavic and Germanic counterparts. What sets Yahweh radically apart from them is His unique status and function. The recasting of "age-old mythological traditions amounts to the emergence of a new "myth", that is to say of a new religious view of the world likely to become a model. The religious genius of Israel converted the relationship of God with the chosen people into a 'sacred history' of a previously unknown type. At a certain point in time, this 'sacred history', which was apparently exclusively national, became an exemplary model for the whole humanity. What distinguishes the biblical narrative is the personal message of God and its consequences. Without having been invoked beforehand, God reveals Himself to a human being, and makes a number of requests followed by prodigious promises. This is a new type of religious experience : the 'Abrahamic faith'." (M. Eliade) In this regard, the resemblance with Zoroastrianism is only superficial. "If, in Zoroastrianism as in Yahwism, the new religion is revealed directly from God, Zoroaster, in accepting it, imitates the primordial act of the Lord â€” the choice of goodness (cf. Yasna 32:2) â€” and that is all he asks his followers. Basically, the Zoroastrian reform consists in an imitatio dei. Man is summoned to follow the example of Ahura Mazda, but he has free choice. He does not feel like the slave of God, as the faithful of Yahweh or Allah do." (ibid.) Besides, this revelation is not the foundation of any monotheism. What Zoroaster announces, presenting it as a model for his followers, is the choice for God and other divine entities. Finally, "the very conception of the character of 'justice' and 'blessing' had a different basis in Babylonia and Assyria [as well as in Persia] from what it had, for instance, in Israel. We may put it in this way : the gods stand above justice ; 'justice' or 'blessing' is what the gods purpose ; but that is often arbitrary and incomprehensible. It too often seems as if what seems to man to be wise is contemptible in the eyes of the god, and what seems evil in the judgement of man is good in the eyes of his god. In Israel, too, Yahweh is the

source of justice and blessing, and in the thought of the pious He is supreme over these qualities. But the real belief of the reading minds is that Yahweh is not arbitrary. There is a norm in His relation to mankind." (He That Cometh) Here we have the actual reason underlying the belief of Israelites in the superiority of Yahweh over all other gods, as well as the explanation as to why exclusivism and internationalism go hand in hand in Yahwism and its offshoots. Later, as a result of the dispersion and missionary activity, the tension between the nationalistic conception of religion and salvation, and the universalistic conception of God, was mitigated, and the universalistic elements in the doctrine of God became more prominent and coloured the conceptions of restoration and salvation.

A new type of god means a new type of man.

The tribal religion of the Patriarchs had a non cultic character, unburdened as it was with the high level of detail and the complexity of the rules for the construction and the decoration of altars and tabernacles that are attributed to Yahweh in the Torah. The only rituals were bloody sacrifices (zebah) and that which was linked to the massebah (standing stones), which, even though it was condemned later by Yahwism, seems to have been shared by the ancestors of the Hebrews. The two rituals that have played an enormous role in the religious history of Israel are the covenant sacrifice and Isaac's sacrifice, which was performed until Jeremiah's times and may have been borrowed from the Canaanite cult. However this may be, as well seen by M. Eliade, Abraham did not have a specific outcome in mind when he was preparing to sacrifice his son. He felt bound to his God by 'faith'. He did not 'understand' the significance of the actions that God had just asked him, whereas those who sacrificed their first born to a divinity were perfectly aware of the significance and of the power of the magic-religious ritual. "Abraham, M. Eliade continues, summing up his considerations without seemingly suspecting the implications of this 'lack of understanding', did not perform a ritual (since he did not pursue any goal and he did not understand what his actions meant) ; besides, his 'faith' made him certain that he was not committing a crime ; it seems that Abraham did not question the 'sacredness' of his actions, which was 'irrecognoscible', and, therefore, unknowable. The meditation on this impossibility of identifying the 'sacred' (since the 'sacred' is completely identified with the 'profane'), will have enormous consequences", which, as we have just stressed, the Romanian author did not seem to fathom in their subversive aspects. By all means, take a pause for thought at this point and ponder over the significance of his considerations.

Faith is central to Yahwism. It is important to examine its centrality with respect to the cult and the worship of pre-exilic Israel. In propitiatory sacrifices, "the sacrificial gift was thought to have great influence in placating the angry Jehovah. But no special form of the propitiatory sacrifice was required. Apparently any ordinary sacrifice might be used for the purpose of making atonement ; Noah offered burnt-offerings (Gen. 8:20-22) ; David, burnt offerings and peace-offerings (II Sam. 24:25). It remained for later generations to develop an elaborate ritual for the specific purpose of atonement. In addition to this reliance upon sacrifice we have seen that even in preprophetic Israel the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man was thought to avail much in behalf of the guilty."

(http://www.archive.org/stream/biblicalideasofaoooburtuoft/biblicalideasofaoooburtuoft_djvu.txt)

According to M. Weber, "The necessity for having access to Yahweh priests knowing the law and ritual" increased ", in order to decipher God's will and the transgression necessary to be expiated." Whilst the focus came to be put on matters of rites and the rites became more and more complex, these were still based on faith and belief, a belief in a single creator, a unique and everlasting God, in His omniscience and omnipotence, a belief in the words of the prophets, the faith that God had a great future in store for His people, the faith that God's promises are genuine, and that God's purpose must be fulfilled, the belief in the revealed and redemptive character of the Torah (the objection that the concept of sin cannot be found in the Torah, since there cannot be sin

in law, but only crime, and that the only offence to the Commandments was non observance, is a specious distinction, for the Torah is a set of moral codes and imperatives, and sin is a transgression of a religious or/and moral law). The pathos of the Babylonian rite of atonement is reflected in the penitential rites of the New Year festival, during which the king, acting as the cultic representative and embodiment of the people, bore Israel's sufferings, and performed the atoning rites and prayers meant to induce Yahweh to intervene and save. Atonement issues in the questioning of Yahweh as well as supplication sacrifices already played a pivotal role in the pre-prophetic cult of Israel. In post-exilic times, the Priestly Code of the sacrificial system developed into an ordinance of atone