

## Cult and prophecy in Israel<sup>(\*)</sup>

**P**ROPHETISM, like monotheism, was a characteristic feature of Israelite religion. Its origin goes back to Mosaic times when monotheism was solemnly proclaimed the official religion of Israel, and both remained inseparably bound together until the dawn of the New Testament era. During the course of Israel's history it took various forms, or rather manifested itself in various forms of activity according to the various religious needs of the people and the exigencies of the time. The prophets were the spiritual leaders of the people and the political advisers or privy councillors of kings; they were preachers of righteousness and teachers of moral and religious law; they were the indomitable defenders of monotheism against the onslaught of idolatry; they admonished and rebuked, they counselled and threatened and always laboured to wake up the national conscience to the lofty ideals of Israel's election and mission.

The study of Old Testament prophetism may be approached from different lines. It was, in fact, a religious institution closely related, in its development, to the history of Israel; but at the same time it was also a divine institution serving a divine purpose and entirely uncontrolled by the laws which govern human events. It is this theological line of approach that will lead us to a full comprehension of the real nature of prophecy and to a fair estimate of the relations of prophecy to history. Unfortunately, the theological aspect of prophecy has often been either underestimated or entirely ignored, especially by non-Catholic writers, and the result has been a misrepresentation of the nature of prophecy or at least a misconception of the true function of the prophets.

In this paper I intend to deal with one problem which has lately been the object of much heated controversy among scholars, the relation between cult and prophecy, or between priest and prophet. Until a few years ago that relation was generally described as one of irreconcilable antagonism, in the sense that the prophets were said to have strongly condemned sacrificial

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worship and all the liturgical worship as external acts having no religious value and utterly unacceptable to God. The prophets, it is said, preached righteousness not sacrifice, morals not liturgy. Thus Samuel, one of the earliest and greatest prophets, said to Saul: "The Lord does not desire holocausts and victims, but rather that his voice should be obeyed; for obedience is better than sacrifices" (1 Sam. 15, 22). And many years later Osea wrote almost the same words: "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of God more than holocausts" (6, 6). Amos, a contemporary of Osea, denounces sacrificial offerings in these terms: "If you offer holocausts and your gifts, I will not receive them" (5, 22). And with a more vehement language Isaiah condemns all acts of worship: "To what purpose do you offer me the multitude of your victims, saith the Lord? I am full, I desire not holocausts of rams and fat of fatlings, and blood of calves and lambs, and buck goats... Offer no more in vain: incense is an abomination to me" (1, 11.12).

These and many other passages taken at their face-value are a flat rejection of sacrificial worship. Interpreters generally agree, and rightly, that the prophets do not condemn sacrifice as such, but only in so far as it was a mere external act dissociated from those internal sentiments of repentance, obedience and adoration which alone can render the external religious manifestation acceptable to God. Indeed, what material interest can God have in the slaying of animals, in the burning of fat and incense and in the multitude of offerings brought to the temple by his worshippers? God does not require offerings, he rejects them because they are not the expression of the people's internal dispositions of obedience and righteousness. "Wash your blood-stained hands, says the prophet Isaiah, cleanse yourself and then your prayers will be heard and your offerings will be acceptable".

But some interpreters explain the rejection of sacrifice as an unqualified condemnation of sacrificial worship irrespective of the internal dispositions of the offerers. Thus E. Kautzsch in a lengthy article on the *Religion of Israel* in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible writes: "There are sayings of the prophets proper which cannot be understood except as absolutely disclaiming any demand on God's part for sacrificial gifts". And further on: "it is a favourable subterfuge still to say that the prophets never polemize against the offerings *per se*, but only against those offerings that are presented hypocritically, without repentance and

a right disposition" (1). That was in 1904. But as recently as 1947 Prof. Norman H. Snaith of Leeds wrote: "That the prophets did condemn sacrifice in no uncertain terms is clear. It is difficult to see how any sound exegesis can avoid this conclusion" (2).

The pendulum of discussion has now swung in the opposite direction. The view has recently been propounded that the prophets were more closely associated with the sanctuary than has generally been believed. They are no longer represented as the violent opponents of cult, but have been raised to the rank of members of the temple-personnel and composers of religious songs. The priests offered sacrifices, and the prophets, as the representatives of the lay community, accompanied the sacrificial action with their songs and music. They pronounced divine oracles, proclaimed God's will and communicated his answer to the people's prayers. Samuel was a prophet who on various occasions announced God's will to Saul and offered sacrifices. The band of enthusiasts encountered by Saul soon after his anointment by Samuel were young prophets coming down from the sanctuary after having performed their cultic service (1 Sam. 10, 5.6). The prophet Elias offered a sacrifice on Mount Carmel (1 Kings, 18, 30-38), and it is, at least, probable that the true prophets worshipped Yahweh with the same orgiastic rites as the prophets of Baal.

This theory was first propounded by the Norwegian scholar S. Mowinckel in the 3rd volume of his *Psalmenstudien (Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen, 1923)*. Starting from the consideration of the fact that many Psalms contained prophetic oracles given by Yahweh and spoken in the first person, Mowinckel put forth his theory that these oracles were in reality a response to a request made by the prophet on behalf of some member or members of the community. The prophets were, therefore, the representatives of the congregation and the bearers of God's messages to the people. Cult consisted not only in sacrifice, but also in songs and music by which the ecstatic state was induced, and other actions representing dramatically God's loving care for his people. To these two different aspects of cult, which are called the sacrificial and the sacramental aspect, there

(1) Vol. V, 685.

(2) *Exp. Times*, 1947, 152.

corresponded two distinct classes of temple officials, the priests serving at the altar and the prophets accompanying in their own way the sacrificial action and acting as bearers of God's messages to the people.

Mowinckel's theory was taken up by the Catholic scholar Hubert Junker of Bonn and extended by him to the early history of Israelite prophetism (*Prophet und Seher in Israel*, Trier, 1927). The nebiim, or prophets, he writes, were, from very early times, a professional class whose duty it was to take part in liturgical worship with music, sacred dances and cultic songs (p. 26). Junker agrees with Mowinckel in attributing to the prophets the task of communicating, during the liturgic service, God's word to the people, hence the word *nabi* "prophet" is taken to mean "Sprecher Gottes", "God's spokesman" (p. 37).

But the fullest treatment of this problem is unquestionably that by Aubrey R. Johnson in his pamphlet *The cultic prophet in ancient Israel* (Cardiff, 1944). According to Johnson the principal function of the cultic officials, priests and levites, was, originally, the giving of oracles (p. 8) for the guidance of the people. The prophet too, whether he was called *nabi*, *roeh* or *hozeh*, was a man who, through his superior knowledge, gave those who consulted him direction in the daily occurrences of life. The prophet, therefore, had this in common with the priest that both were consulted for the sake of obtaining oracular direction (p. 25). Besides this link, suggesting a close connexion of the prophets with the sanctuary and the cultus, further historical evidence is adduced to show that the prophets had an important rôle in the cultus not only in the early years of the monarchy but also in later times. Thus Samuel was the leader of an organized group of prophets; he gave Saul oracular direction and at the same time was closely associated with the "high-place" or sanctuary. Gad, the seer, instructed David to set up an altar on the threshing-floor of Areuna (2 Sam. 24, 18-25), and Nathan encouraged him to carry out his plan of building a temple (2 Sam. 7, 3). There are many other passages pointing out at the close association of the prophet with the cultus and the sanctuary. Johnson concludes: "... there is considerable evidence in the more definitely historical records of the Old Testament to show that during the monarchy (and, in a measure, for some two centuries later) the prophet was an important figure in the personnel of the cultus— particularly that of the Jerusalem Temple.

As such, his function was to promote the *shalom* or "welfare" of the people, whether an individual or a "corporate personality". To this end his role was a dual one. He was not only the spokesman of Yahweh, he was also the representative of the people. He was not only a giver of oracles; he was also a specialist in prayer" (p. 63).

While Prof. Johnson restricted his field of research to the Old Testament with only occasional references to analogous prophetic phenomena amongst other Semitic peoples, A. Haldar, a young Swedish scholar, has set himself to investigate all the evidence provided by the Mesopotamian, Phoenician, Ugaritic and pre-Islamic Arabic peoples comparing it with the Biblical evidence about the function of the prophets and arrives at the conclusion that there must have been throughout all the old Semitic world a more or less uniform pattern uniting together priests and diviners into one cultic system (3).

The theory of cultic prophetism has been favourably accepted by Prof. N. W. Porteous (4) who put forth the hypothesis that the *nehim* and the *kohanim* were not necessarily distinguished, both offices being possibly performed by the same person; by Sidney Jellicoe (5), by J. Pedersen (6), by E. Würthwein (7), and by O. Eissfeldt (8).

Other scholars, however, have been more cautious in expressing their views. H.H. Rowley sounds a note of warning against drawing too easily conclusions from facts which admit of other explanations (9), and H. Wheeler Robinson has pro-

(3) *Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites*, Uppsala, 1945.

(4) *Prophecy in Record and Revelation*, Oxford, 1938, p. 221; *The basis of the ethical teaching of the Prophets in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* Edinburgh, 1950, p. 145. *Prophet and Priest in Israel in Exp. Times*, 1950, pp. 4-9.

(5) *The Prophets and the Cultus in Exp. Times*, 1949, pp. 256-258.

(6) *Israel, its Life and Culture, III-IV*, London and Copenhagen, 1940, p. 116; *Role played by inspired persons in Studies in O.T. Prophecy*, p. 130.

(7) *Amos Studien in Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Bd. 62, 1949/50, pp. 10-13.

(8) *The Prophetic Literature in The Old Testament and Modern Study*, Oxford, 1951, pp. 119-126.

(9) *The nature of Prophecy in the light of recent study in The Harvard Theological Review*, 1945, pp. 14-16.

nounced the theory of the cult prophet as not yet proven (10).

Despite these discordant voices, the theory of the temple-prophet, as a distinct class of cult functionaries, which originated in Norway with Mowinckel, is now gradually gaining ground in England and on the continent. The prophets are no longer isolated from their contemporary world, nor are they represented as the obstinate opponents of those outward manifestations without which no religion can hope to survive. They are *Heilspropheten*, prophets of welfare announcing God's *shalom* to the people during the religious festivals and praying for them in times of national calamities. They were really God's spokesmen and the people's intercessors. But the relation between the earlier *nebiim* and the later canonical prophets or prophet-writers does not appear clear in the works mentioned above. According to Prof. Johnson the Jerusalem prophets were members of the Temple personnel (p. 51), but, in a note, he promises to treat separately the cases in which a canonical prophet appears as such a specialist in prayer. A. Haldar denies that there was any essential difference between the two classes of prophets (p. 119). E. Würthwein takes a middle course. He stresses the necessity of studying the several prophet-writers separately before trying to establish any relation between them and the earlier *nebiim* (p. 15 f.).

From this bare exposition of the cult prophet-theory it appears clearly that the problem has more than a mere historical, or even a historico-religious importance. We are not concerned simply with a historical institution or a religious practice, but, chiefly, with the theological aspect of that institution or practice and with the theological belief underlying its origin and development. Whether the prophetic mission was restricted to the giving of divine oracles during the temple service or extended over a wider range of activity, and whether they were exclusively prophets of weal or also prophets of woe must be determined not by a comparison with similar institutions of other Semitic peoples, nor by philological investigations or speculative reasoning, but by a close inquiry into God's plan and purpose manifested to us through revelation. The theological importance of the problem becomes even greater when we read, for example,

(10) *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, Oxford, 1946, 222-25.

in Johnson that the average professional prophet, who had continually promised peace and welfare was proved false and during the exile fell into disrepute, lost all its authority and finally merged with the other levitical orders until it completely disappeared (pp. 56-60).

The method of our inquiry will be neither purely historical nor exclusively theological, but rather historico-theological based on a sound exegesis of the relevant passages viewed in their historical context and in the light of the incontrovertible principles of theology. Philological questions will be purposely avoided because, although etymology and comparative philology may be an invaluable help to exegesis, words may assume different meanings or different shades of meanings when used in different places, ages and contexts.

For the purpose of our investigation the history of prophetism will be divided into three periods: 1. From its origins to the institution of the monarchy; 2. the first years of the monarchy, or the reigns of David and Solomon; 3. from the division of the kingdom to the end of prophetism. As the subject is too vast to be dealt with adequately in one lecture, I shall limit myself to the first period hoping to be able to deal with the other periods in other lectures.

I. *From the origins to the Institution of the Monarchy.* The starting-point of our inquiry is Deut. 18, 15-18: "The Lord, thy God, will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: him thou shalt hear;... I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren like to thee: and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him". Although the whole passage and its context look like a defence of true prophecy and a condemnation of false prophets and magicians that were both common during the monarchical period, there is nothing which postulates necessarily such a late date. Diviners and soothsayers practising all sorts of superstitious arts were common in Palestine since pre-monarchical times. In 1 Sam. 28, 3 Saul is said to "have put away all the magicians and the soothsayers out of the land". Obviously they had been practising their art long before Saul was made king. And it is legitimate to suppose that the Israelites learned these superstitious practices from the Canaanites soon after their entrance into Palestine. There is therefore no cogent

reason compelling us to assign the Deuteronomic passage to the monarchical period.

The whole passage of Deuteronomy on the prophets (18, 9-22) describes the prophet not only as Moses' successor and God's spokesman but, in a certain way, also as the counterpart of the Canaanite diviners and soothsayers. Man has an inborn craving to pierce the veil which conceals the future from him, especially in certain critical situations. To satisfy this natural tendency the Canaanites and other heathen peoples had a band of diviners who, through their communion with the deity and by means of various superstitious acts, pretended to discover what was known to God alone. Now the Israelites, on entering the land of Canaan, would hardly have resisted this natural inclination of consulting the heathen prophets, and their faith in Yahweh would have been seriously jeopardised. In order to ward off this danger God gave his people persons who could speak in his own name and convey his messages to them. These persons were the prophets, God's soothsayers, who could foretell the future not by means of superstitious practices but by their superior knowledge derived from communion with God. Thus Samuel informed Saul about the lost asses (1 Sam. 9, 20); he foretold the victory over the Philistines on condition that the Israelites would be faithful to God (1 Sam. 7, 3). Many years later, Josaphat, king of Juda, and Achab, king of Israel, consulted the prophet Micah about the result of the war they were about to undertake (1 Kgs 22, 7-28). Jeroboam's wife inquired of the prophet Ahias about her son's illness (1 Kgs 14, 2f). Ochozias' messengers were severely rebuked by the angel of the Lord for consulting Beelzebub, the god of Accaron, instead of the true God (2 Kgs 1, 2f).

This, however, is not enough to give us a complete picture of the prophet and his functions during the early period of the history of Israel. Besides communicating God's messages Samuel officiated as priest in Masphath (1 Sam. 7, 9), in Ramatha (1 Sam. 7, 17), and in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16, 2). After Eli's death he is represented as the highest and the only cult official in Israel performing the offices of priest and prophet. This is admitted by one and all. But this cumulation of offices in one person is far from establishing a permanent relation between priest and prophet. The history of that period is too fragmentary to justify general conclusions. Samuel may well have been privi-



ligned with some rights which were not granted to other prophets. He was called to the prophetic ministry in his early years and at a time when the prophetic vision had almost ceased. He lived in one of the most critical periods of Israel's history when the people demanded a change in the form of government which, though based on futile motives, was later to unite and consolidate the separate tribes into a strong and well constituted nation. He was the most influential person, both as a judge and as a prophet, and laboured strenuously to bring the people back to Yahweh and to organize worship. It is not at all surprising that he enjoyed special privileges which we have no right to extend to other prophets. Thus it does not appear that the anonymous prophet who announced to Eli the transfer of the High-priesthood from his descendants to Sadoc (1 Sam. 2, 27-36) had any connexion with the cult or the sanctuary. In fact he is described as *coming to Eli* and communicating to him, very probably in private, a divine message, not as delivering a divine oracle during a liturgical service. Nor, again, is there any reason for supposing that the prophet who rebuked the people for their infidelity (Jdg 6, 8) exercised any cultic function. We must therefore conclude that Samuel, owing to his special position, exercised the functions of priest and prophet, but there is absolutely no evidence that the two anonymous prophets mentioned in Judges 6, 8 and in 1 Sam. 2, 27 had any connexion with the sanctuary.

An important feature of early prophetism and, apparently, a strong argument in favour of the cult prophet theory, are the prophetic guilds which came into existence in Samuel's time, or perhaps earlier, and continued until late in the monarchical period. After his first encounter with Samuel Saul met a band of prophets descending from a high-place or a local shrine and manifesting their religious excitement with songs and music (1 Sam. 10, 5-13). On another occasion Samuel is seen at the head of a band of prophets who were singing in their usual excited manner (1 Sam. 19, 20). These two stories are said to provide indisputable evidence of the close connexion between prophets and cult. The former group of prophets were certainly coming down from the sanctuary after having performed their religious service (Junker, 27): the latter were very probably engaged in some religious practices, perhaps on a feast-day (Junker, 33).

Before rushing to conclusions we must settle a preliminary question of fundamental importance. Were the members of these prophetic guilds really prophets, endowed with the spirit of God, speaking and acting in the name of Yahweh? Junker rejects König's view that the members of the prophetic guilds were prophets of a lower rank, and implicitly admits that all prophets, whether acting singly or jointly, were real prophets with a definite mission and with definite rights and functions (p. 26, not. 7). Johnson considers the *nebiim*, or members of the prophetic guilds, to be endowed with the same unusual knowledge as any other who bears the name of *nabi* as Samuel, Elias and Eliseus (p. 17-20). Pederson is more explicit. Speaking of the prophetic guilds, in which "the ecstatic state played an important part", he says: "The ecstatic state was not an end in itself, it accompanied that possession by the divine soul which was the real nature of the prophet. By their exercises the prophets of the societies impelled the presence of the spirit, thus they contributed to uphold the spirit of God and spread holiness throughout the land. They were holy men because the divine spirit dwelt in them, and they carried this quality with them as an inherent character (2 Kgs 4, 9). They were spiritual men (Hos. 9, 7) or men of God, *'ish ha-ruah* and *'ish 'elohim* (Jdg 13, 8; 1 Sam. 2, 27; 9, 6ff; 1 Kgs 13, 1; 17, 18 etc.), expressions which say the same thing, viz. that the divine soul is in them (14). From this description, which Pedersen applies both to the members of the prophetic societies and to such prophets as Samuel (1 Sam. 9, 6), Elias (1 Kgs 17, 18), Eliseus (2 Kgs 4, 9) it appears clearly that Pedersen makes no distinction between the members of the prophetic guilds and the other prophets. The conclusion seems to be borne out by the fact that the name *nabi* is given indiscriminately to the members of the prophetic guilds and to others as Samuel (1 Sam. 3, 20), Nathan (2 Sam. 7, 2), Gad (2 Sam. 24, 11), Ahias (1 Kgs 11, 29), Elias (1 Kgs 18, 22) Eliseus (1 Kgs 19, 16) who are universally recognized as real prophets.

It seems more probable, however, that the members of the prophetic guilds, despite a certain resemblance to the prophets, were no prophets at all. Identity of name is no sure proof of identity of office. The prophets of Baal too and the false prophets of Yahweh were called *nebiim* (1 Kgs 18, 19; 22, 6) and

(11) *Israel, its Life and Culture, III-IV, 1940, 111f.*

yet no one ever thought of reckoning them with the true prophets. As regards the ecstatic state, its importance must not be exaggerated. Although it must be admitted that the prophets of that early period exhibited sometimes an unusual and abnormal behaviour, there is nothing to suggest that their enthusiasm, however uncontrolled, reached the paroxysmal state of the Canaanite prophets, Nor can it be maintained that the ecstatic state was an indispensable condition for the prophetic inspiration or the manifestation of the spirit of God taking possession of the prophet's soul. The prophetic guilds were, most probably associations of pious Israelites who, under the leadership of a recognized prophet, endeavoured to resist the impact of idolatry and to revive among the people the Yahwistic faith in times of religious decadence. Their enthusiasm may have run to some excesses, owing perhaps to Canaanitish influence; but they have largely contributed to uphold the religious traditions of their people. This is how these prophetic associations are described by A. Médebielle: "Though these prophets bore the same name (*nabi*) as the prophets chosen by God to communicate his will and to pronounce oracles, their role was altogether different. They did not speak in the name of God, they did not announce future events, they were not "seers", they were not intermediaries between Yahweh and the people, all their efforts being directed towards fostering their religious ardour and to lead a kind of life that would facilitate it. They would often go to the high place to pray and to take part in the divine service. They formed societies in which all members rivalled in their zeal for the divine service (12). The same view is held by J. Chaine (13). E. Tobac-J. Coppens (14), L. Desnoyers (15). If the members of these prophetic bands were not real prophets, their association with the sanctuary cannot be adduced as evidence of the connexion of the prophets with the temple worship.

Another argument in support of the cult-prophet theory is provided by the fact that both Miriam, Moses' sister, and Debora are called prophetesses for having composed and sung religious songs. Both their appellation *nebiah*, and their lyrical religious songs point out unmistakably to the relation of prophetism

(12) PIROT-CLAMER, *La Sainte Bible, tome III* (1949) p. 387.

(13) *Introduction a la lecture des prophètes*, Paris, 1932, pp. 12ff.

(14) *Les prophètes d'Israël*, I, Malines, 1932, pp. 23-28.

(15) *Histoire du peuple Hébreu, III*, Paris, 1930, p. 181.

to cult in which singing played an important part. It appears then that in those early times the notion of *nabi* implied the composition and singing of religious songs (Junker, p. 15).

The prophetesses that are mentioned in the Old Testament are, besides Miriam and Debbora, Isaias' wife (Is. 8, 3), Holda (2 Kgs 22, 14) and Noadia (Neh. 6, 14). That Holda and Noadia were real prophets there is not the slightest doubt, but most probably Isaias' wife had not the gift of prophecy, but was called "prophetess" simply because of her husband's office. It is not probable that Debbora was called by her husband's title, as there is no evidence that Lappidoth was a prophet. On the contrary it is most likely that Debbora was herself a prophetess, as she is represented as conveying a divine message to Barac and foretelling victory by means of a woman (Jdg 4, 6.9). If Debbora is called prophetess for having composed and sung a song, the title prophetess, *nebiah*, would be more appropriate in 5, 1 as an introduction to the song, as in the case of Miriam, who is introduced as prophetess when she leads the chorus of female singers (Ex. 15, 20). Debbora was therefore called prophetess on account of the charge entrusted to her by God, not as a composer and singer of religious songs.

The same cannot be said of Miriam. Moses' sister is never represented as helping her brother in his mission, she bears no divine messages to the people, she is even punished by God for her feminine jealousy (Numb. 12, 1-10) although she claims equal right and the same prophetic dignity as her brother (Numb. 12, 2). That Miriam shared her brother's title, like Isaias' wife, is not probable, because she is nowhere called prophetess except on the occasion of her singing the victory song after the crossing of the Red Sea. There must therefore be some connexion between the meaning of *nabi* or *nebiah* and religious singing and dancing.

A philological consideration is here necessary. Whatever the etymology and the original meaning of the word *nabi* may be, one thing is certain, that it was used in two different senses, that is one who conveys God's message in a state of self-possession and self-control and one who was overpowered by a divine impulse and irresistibly driven to perform actions and to utter words in an ecstatic state. The literary prophets belonged to the first group; the prophets of Baal, especially as described in 1 Kgs 18, 26-29, belonged to the other group. The two meanings or uses

of the word *nabi* have developed a denominative verbal form *nibbu* and *hitnabbe* "to act as a nabi", hence "to convey a divine message" and "to manifest outwardly the presence of the indwelling spirit of God by means of unusual actions and in an excited manner". As the ecstatic state was induced by means of music, singing and dancing, the verb *hitnabbe* came to mean also "to sing, to dance and to perform other actions in an excited and frenzied state"; cp 1 Kgs 18, 26-29. There was a time, therefore, when, owing perhaps to Canaanitish influences, *nabi* and *hitnabbe* were used in the sense of singing and dancing on a religious occasion and in a somewhat excited manner. And this usage may account for Miriam's title of *nebiah*. This, however, is not enough to establish a permanent relation between the function of prophets and the temple-cult or the liturgical singing or even the composition of liturgical songs. Miriam is called a prophetess because she sang, to the accompaniment of musical instruments and dancing, a thanksgiving song which the text expressly attributes to Moses (Ex 15, 1), but we are not to suppose that she sang it because of her singing and dancing abilities, that is because she was a *nebiah* or prophetess. In other words, even supposing that *nebiah* in Ex. 15, 20 means "a religious singer and dancer, a religious enthusiast", we are by no means justified to infer that the *nebiim* were composers and singers of liturgical songs and as such permanently attached to the sanctuary.

We readily admit that the prophets of that early period were in some way associated with the cultus. After their conquest of Palestine the Israelites came into contact with a people who had not only attained a higher cultural level, but who also practised a different religion which, for many reasons, appealed so strongly to man's lower instincts. Although there has never been a general apostasy from Yahweh, a new form of religion combining genuine Yahwism with Canaanite elements tended to develop among the Israelites. In order to offset the pernicious influences of the Canaanite religion and to arouse in the people the conscience of their special privilege and mission as the Chosen people, the prophets not only delivered God's messages but also endeavoured by their enthusiasm, however uncontrolled, to keep alive the true religious spirit in the people.

From the evidence which we have so far examined for the first period of the history of prophetism in its relation to the tem-

ple-service we draw the following conclusions: Prophetism as instituted by God had no connection with the temple-service. The prophets were God's spokesmen and his representatives in all that concerned God's position as the Only and true God of Israel. Their activity extended over, and regulated, all the life of the people, religious and domestic, public and private. They may have taken part in sacrificial worship, but their positions as God's representatives made them independent of, and superior to, all the temple officials. Any cultic function which they may have performed was necessarily and essentially subordinate to their general mission as God's representatives and the guardians of true religion.

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