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The character and work of Moses

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THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF MOSES

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OUTLINE

CHARACTER AND WORK OF MOSES.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Name of Moses.

A. Origin of the Name.

The problem, relative to the origin of name of Moses, is whether it comes from a Hebrew or an Egyptian source. The name of Moses appears in the Old Testament as משה, Mōšé; the Arabic form of this is Mūsā. Reverend T. K. Cheyne in dealing with this problem states, "In Josephus and Philo, and in MSS of the LXX and the New Testament generally, we meet with the Graecised form μωυσῆς (cp. vg. Moyses); there is a constant variant, however, μωσῆς. But if the Old Testament form were correct, and the name Hebrew, the obvious meaning would be 'deliverer' (משה, 'to draw out', cp. 2s. 22:17=Ps. 18:17). There is no trace, however, of such an explanation anywhere in the Old Testament".[1]

Pharaoh's daughter, according to E's account, is supposed to have spoken Hebrew, and upon discovery of the foundling calls him Mōšé, "because I drew him up out of the water".[2] It is doubtful that E had any thought of attributing the name of Moses to any Egyptian origin, and its strikingly non-Egyptian nature, as compared to the other names found in the Joseph story, makes a very strong case for the Hebrew origin.[3] So Cheyne concludes: "It remains to interpret the name of Mōšé on the analogy of the names of Moses's nearest relations which express ethnic, more precisely, the present writer now thinks, North Arabian affinities.

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1. "Moses", Encyclopaedia Biblica, Vol. iii, p. 3205
2. Ex. 2:10
3. T. K. Cheyne, "Moses" Encyclopaedia Biblica, Vol. iii, p. 3205

W. H. Bennett and Andrew C. Zenos both contend that in spite of the conclusion of Cheyne that the name Moses does come from an Egyptian origin. Zenos states at the point, " in spite of the objections raised by Cheyne" the Egyptian origin "is to be preferred".[4] W. H. Bennett agrees with this conclusion as to the origin of the name.[5]

B. Meaning of the Name:

The Hebrew form of "Moses" (משה, Mōsheh) is derived in Ex. 2:10 apparently from the Hebrew root MSHH, "to draw out". But from the earliest time an Egyptian etymology has been sought for it. According to Andrew C. Zenos "Josephus (Ant. ii, 9:6) makes it from mŌ, "water", (Egyptian) and ses, or uses, "saved".[6] This is characteristically a coptic view and has been set aside in favor of the more characteristically Egyptian mes, or mesu, meaning 'son, child'. This name is frequently found in Egyptian proper names in combination with some Divine appellation.[7]

2. The Sources of Information Concerning Moses.

A. Documents of the Hexateuch.

The sources from which we draw the beginnings of Hebrew history are found in the Pentateuch, or better the Hexateuch. In reality the first six books belong together. Frederick Carl Eiselen states the consensus of opinion regarding the addition of Joshua in this statement: "its contents, and, still more, its literary structure, show that it is intimately connected with the Pentateuch and describes the final stage in history of the

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4. "Moses" A Standary Bible Dictionary, p. 559
5. W. H. Bennett, "Moses", A Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. iii, p. 438
6. "Moses", Std. Bible Dict., p. 559
7. Ibid, p. 559

origines of the Hebrew Nation".[1] The same problems and the same literary types that are found in the first five books are found in the book of Joshua.

The principal source for the History of Moses is the Pentateuch. The last four books of the Pentateuch are occupied either with the history of Moses or with the laws and instructions which are associated with his name. The legislation of the Pentateuch is consistently represented as given for special purpose: "its aim, stated in general terms, is to raise up a holy people for Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, and to keep this people distinct from the people around them. The history, into which the legislation is now fitted as a jewel in its setting, tells of Jehovah's choice of Israel to be His own special and peculiar people. Thus history and legislation are found to blend into a harmonious whole, giving the books of the Pentateuch an unmistakable unity of thought and purpose".[2]

When we speak here of unity it is only relative. The Biblical tradition has ascribed to Moses the laying of the foundations of the Hebrew nation and religion, and we may well consider it so, but the question as to how is a searching one. "Obviously no writer could have written a narrative extending over a thousand years out of his own personal knowledge: he must have written it either by hearsay, or on the basis of written historical documents".[3] In the narratives at divers places the laws are referred to as having been spoken by Moses, but in Ex. 24:4 and Deut. 21:9ff

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1. "The Pentateuch, Its Origin and Development", Abingdon Bible Com., p 134b
2. J. Hastings, The Greater Men and Women of the Bible, Vol. ii; p. 3, 4
3. Gray, Critical Introduction to O. T., p. 19

there are unmistakable allusions to laws now in the Pentateuch having been written prior to the narrative that refers to them. Thus the Pentateuch draws upon, if it does not actually incorporate, previously independent legal documents.

Further evidence of the incorporation of earlier writings into the Pentateuch is verified by the considerable number of poems attributed to several different sources. Some of these poems are: the song of Lamech (Gen. 4:23f), the curse of Noah (Gen. 9:26f), a divine oracle (Gen. 25:23), the blessings of Isaac (Gen. 27:27-29, 39f), and the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:2-27), the song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18), the song of Miriam (Ex. 15:21), a poetical fragment cited from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num. 21:14f), a folk-song (Num. 21:17f), a paean recited by the professional reciters (Num. 21:27-30), songs of Balaam (Num. 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24), the song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43), and the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33:1-29).

It is evident then that to a considerable extent the Pentateuch is a compilation of legal documents, and poems, of which some at least had already been committed to writing.[4] So the modern critic has come to the conclusion that the Pentateuch is neither the work of a single author, nor the product of a single age, but a compilation from a number of older and originally independent works, separated from each other in date by several centuries. The Hexateuch is "the result of the fusion of four documents, each of which appears to be the work, not of a single author but of a

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4. Num. 21:14

group of writers belonging to the same period or the same circle, a school".[5]

The first document is known as the "Jahwist". Its narrators asserted in naive fashion that the earlier nations already knew God as "Jahweh", so their document is known by the abbreviation "J". They probably wrote in Judah during the ninth and eighth centuries.[6] Kittel believes in the validity of J to the extent that he claims J to be one author. He regards J as "a personality of the first rank, a man of decided moral and religious uniqueness". Others too hold this same opinion, but we are more prone to accept the theory of Budde, Gunkel, Cornill, and Lods that J represents a compilation of a school. Brightman says in summarizing the unity of J, "it is not a completely smooth and consecutive narrative written at one time, but it is (with certain qualifications) a unity in the main type of thought, expression, religious mood, social and ethical outlook and historical background; so that the J literature as a whole plainly belongs together, as contrasted with E, D, and P types".[8]

About the same time, in fact Budde calls J and E, "comprehensive, contemporaneous, literary schools",[9] but no doubt a little later there was composed in the Northern or Ephraimite kingdom the Elohist history (E). These authors always carefully employed the title elohim as a designation for God until such time in their narrative when He allowed Moses to reveal Him by the destinctive name Jahweh.[10]

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5. Lods, Israel, p. 11
6. Ibid p. 12
7. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p. 20
8. Ibid, 21
9. Ibid, p. 21
10. Ex. 3

J. Hastings has to say of these two documents and their compilation, "The principal materials out of which the two narratives were constructed were partly oral tradition, and partly written laws. Exerpts from these two sources were combined together, so as to form a single continuous narrative (JE), by a compiler, or redactor (R JE), who sometimes at the same time made slight additions of his own, usually of a hortatory or didactic character, and who lived probably in the early part of the seventh century". "Thus the Bible began to take form, and into it was incorporated the historic oral and written traditions and documents out of which we must take our information concerning Moses. Each period adding the flavor of its own age naturally would throw its own interpretations upon the character and work of Moses. So as we go to the third source of information concerning Moses, let us keep in mind the great gap in time since Moses lived before the Bible account was actually written.

Very different is the character of the third school that contributed to the composition of the Hexateuch, the "Deuteronomist"school (D). Its principal contribution is the book of Deuteronomy, at least chapters 1-31 of the actual book, a collection of laws and admonitions most certainly edited in the seventh and sixth centuries by the instigators and defenders of the great ritual and ethical reform arising from King Josiah's attempt in 622 to apply the principles of the prophets. This redacting influence continued, "The Deuteronomist school of redactors has recast the earlier sources of J and E, already combined, in order to bring them into agreement with the ideas of the reformers".[1] Hastings believes that the tone and point of view of JE is akin to the writings of the great prophets: the

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1. Leds, Israel, p. 12

addition which seem to be due to the compiler approximate in both style and character to Deuteronomy".[1] It was this book, discovered in the temple, that formed the basis of the religious reform undertaken by King Josiah as recorded in II Kings 22 and 23.

Finally, we must deal with the priestly school (P), which grew up after the destruction of the temple in 586 B. C. when the Temple ritual consequently was abolished for a period during the Babylonian captivity. Certain of the priests, among whom was Ezekiel, codified it in the formation of a new ritual and temple law. From this school came several small collections of laws.[2] The greatest work of them all was the casting into historical form the system of successive establishments by Jahweh of various Jewish ritual institutions through the ages. This is known as the Priestly Code (P).

Many of these laws sanctioned by the Priestly school can be viewed as being comparatively ancient, but through the introduction of many new rules, they attempted to purify as well as codify these ancient laws. There is a unamity among the critics as to the unity of P. Brightman says, "The literature in this collection of history and laws is a unity in the spiritual sense--it embodies unified ideals and uses a unified stereotyped vocabulary; but in the sense of being written by one author or at one time, it is certainly not a unity (so all, even Driver)".[3]

In order that we might see the Hexateuch in its historical perspective, S. R. Driver suggests that we think of it as a series of strata: "the oldest and the lowest stratum consisting of JE--for J and E, as they are

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1. Hastings, Greater Men and Women of the Bible, p. 4
2. Ex. 40-48; Lev. 1-7; 11-15; 17-26, etc.
3. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.203

very similar in character and tone, may, for practical purposes, be grouped together in a single stratum--expanded here and there by additions made by RJE; the second stratum consisting of the discourses of Deuteronomy, written in the 7th century B. C., and combined with JE not long afterwards; and the third and latest stratum consisting of P".[1]

In concluding it may be said that the J narrative is the oldest of all these sources, and as R.L.Ottley says, "most nearly represents the ancient popular tradition concerning the events of the Exodus; but it must be borne in mind that both J and E are parted by a gulf of some centuries from the incidents which they record, and in point of fact embody the ideas of a late age respecting Moses and his work".[2]

B. Jewish Tradition.

There is an immense amount of Jewish tradition that has gathered about Moses. Many of these are collected in Josephus, Ant. ii-iv, C. Apion; Philo, Vita Moysis; Eusebius, Praep. Ev. 9; then also in the Targums and rabbinical commentaries; and in the pseudepigraphal works ascribed to Moses. Outside of the Biblical accounts we find little of real value.

J. E. Lauterbach, a Rabbi of New York City, in writing on this traditions tells us that, "Moses is the most frequently of all Biblical personages subjected to legendary exegesis and poetic haggadah". The cause for this is because of the many sided proficiency of this liberator, lawgiver, and leader. Lauterbach says, "a cycle of legends has been woven around nearly every trait of his character and every event of his life; and groups of stories have been connected with his career".[3] For our purpose here it

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1. S. R. Driver, The Book of Exodus, xii
2. The Religion of Israel, p. 27
3. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. ix, p.46

would be almost impossible to winnow anything of value from this "wilderness of chaff". In the words of Dr. James Hastings, "Speaking generally, the student of the Old Testament history may set the whole on one side".[1]

C. Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament.

The importance of the personality to the prophets can hardly be overestimated. The Deuteronomist states well the consensus of opinion among the prophets, priests, and people, "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face".[2] As E. Kautzsch points out in his article "Religion of Israel" it has been felt to be very surprising that in the Old Testament, and especially in the Prophets, the references to Moses are so few in number and so late in date. Apart from an interpolation added in Hosea 12:14, "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved". We find allusions to Moses and Aaron as the deliverers of the people in Micah 6:4 (along with Miriam, and the attributing of this passage to Micah is strongly contested), 1 Samuel 12:6, 8 (in a Deuteronomic address), Psalms 105:26; 106:16. Moses, alone as leader of the people, is pointed to in two references.

1. Isaiah 63:11-13, "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people saying, 'Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flocks? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? that caused his glorious arm to go to the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? that let them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so

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1. Greater Men and Women of the Bible, p. 8
2. Deuteronomy 34:10

that they stumble not"?

In Psalms 106:32, "They angered him also at the waters of Meribah, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes". This instance of Moses becoming involved in the sins was because of his importance and want of faith as recorded in Numbers 20:12 and Deuteronomy 1:37; 4:21f. The power of Moses's intercession with God is mentioned in Psalms 106:23:

> "Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
> Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
> To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them".

As W. A. Shelton explains this is but to show how "over and over again they would have perished had it not been for Moses; Moses was their human saviour".[1] This instance of the worshiping of the Golden Calf is described in Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 9:8f, and Jeremiah 15:1 "Then said Jehovah unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind would not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight and let them go forth", which reference is to Exodus 32:11-14 and Numbers 14:13-20.

This latter passage shows full well the importance of Moses to Jeremiah, and that it is thus evidently a mere accident that he is not more frequently mentioned elsewhere.

More strange still is the fact that Moses is hardly known to the Prophets and Psalms as the founder of a religion. There are but two references. One is in Psalms 99:6 where Moses and Aaron are called "priests", and 103:7.

Let us point out here that over against this apparent failure to recognize Moses is the fact that throughout the whole of the Old Testament all

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1. Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 577

the various legislations, with the exception of Ezekiel 40-48 are said to be either introduced, or written down by him. E.Kautzsch points out that "This would be quite unintelligable unless there had been an indelible recollection which demanded his recognition as the real author of religious traditions and institutions, so that later codifications could obtain authority only if they were carried back to his weightier name.....So far from being looked upon as forgery, it was regarded as a sacred duty to give as Moses's own words anything that had to be promulgated for the good of the people in continuation of his work and in the sense and spirit of his laws (for instance, and very specially, the legislation of Deuteronomy). The idea of forgery is out of the question here".[1]

D. New Testament

In the New Testament are found frequent references to Moses, but as a whole there is nothing added to the Old Testament narrative. In some instances these are a variation from the Massoretic text, or the tradition found in the Pentateuch,[2] but these changes in no way enhance the general history of Moses. In still other cases the New Testament follows tradition in obtaining new features from the Old Testament interpretation. One good example of this is found in Hebrews 11: 24-26. "Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; according to the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured,

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1. Dictionary of the Bible, Extra Volume, p. 625a
2. II Corinthians 3:13; Hebrew 9:4 (Cf. Num. 17:10)

as seeing him who is invisible." Of course we know from the Old Testament narrative that Moses did not leave Egypt because of faith, but rather for "fear", "and Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known".[1] He had killed an Egyptian and Pharaoh found it out. "Now when Pharaoh heard this he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well".[2] J's account doesn't sound much like any refusal at being called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, nor yet of any faith in the invisible. The vision of the invisible did not come until the event of the burning bush after Moses was already in the land of Midian some time later.[3]

Similarly, St. Stephen,[4] in stating that Moses "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians", that he was 40 years when he fled from Egypt, that he spent 40 years in Midian, are obviously deducted from the Old Testament statements that Moses was brought up as the "son of Pharaoh's daughter", and from the chronology of the Pentateuch.

However, there are a few statements about Moses, found in the New Testament that we can scarcely attribute to any conjectural expansion of Old Testament narrative. These additions are for the most part derived from apocryphal works. In II Timothy 3:8, 9 we have this reference "Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses", and "their folly.....came to be evident unto men". W. H. Bennett points out that Origen said (on Matthew 27:8) that this is "taken from an apocryphal Book of Jannes and Jambres".[5] Also Jude 9 which speaks of "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses", is another reference to an apocryphal

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1. Ex. 2:14b
2. Ex. 2:15
3. Ex. 3:2
4. Acts 7:25-41
5. Hasting Bible Dictionary, Vol. iii, p. 447a

work, the Assumption of Moses.

"The New Testament constantly refers to the law of Moses", says W. H. Bennett, "and to Moses as the founder of Old Testament religion, and refers to the Pentateuch as 'Moses'(Luke 16:29)".[1] The prophetic status of Moses is maintained in the New Testament by a direct quotation from Deuteronomy 18:15 as found in Acts 3:22 "Moses, indeed said, a prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things, whatsoever he shall speak unto you". At the Transfiguration Moses and Elijah come down to minister unto Christ. They are representatives of the Old Testament dispensation, and with Christ they speak of his death as the "Exodus".[2] While the New Testament contrasts the law with the Gospel, and Moses with Christ,[3] yet it keeps appealing to the Pentateuch as predicting the dispensation of Christ,[4] so as to imply that what Moses was to the old so is Christ to the new dispensation. The comparison is well illustrated in Hebrews 3:5, 6 where Christ is considered as greater than Moses, or in another sense as a Great Moses: "And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be spoken; but Christ as a son, over his house; whose house we are, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end".

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1. Ibid, p. 447a
2. Lk. 9:31; Cf. II Peter 1:15
3. Jn. 1:17
4. Dt. 18:15-19 in Acts 7:37

5. Other Sources (Archaeological)

At best the archaeological sources are not very gratifying and offer little vindicative reward for the questioning mind relative to Moses. In fact, there is little in archaeology to justify any intensive survey regarding his character and work. Some few discoveries have been made regarding the topography of the land and its habitation during the time of Moses, but practically nothing remains to us relative to the person of Moses.

C.C.McCown, while making field trips with the Jerusalem School in 1930-31, came into the vicinity which has been greatly disputed as to whether or not it is the site of Kadesh Barnea. He makes the following observation as to the fertility of the land, "The presence of the ruins such as found at El-Auja, es-Sbeitah, and elsewhere in the Negeb is a sufficient guarantee of the ability of the land to support a larger population than it now does."[1] The Governor of the Egyptian district of Sinai is today developing the vicinity below 'Ain el-Qadeirat into lovely garden spots, and offering protection and commerce to the people of this section so devoid of natural resources.

The Woolley and Lawrence survey conducted before the war has almost discarded the "Turnbull" discovery that 'Ain Qadeis is to be identified with Kadesh Barnea. To this "The School Party", conducted by the Jerusalem School, "was quite agreed that 'Ain Qadeis is hardly a suitable place for an encampment of even a few hundred families." He goes ahead to say, "'Ain el-Qadeirat could supply a much larger number, but the place to W.T.Ellis seems only a little more likely. Qoseimeh is just as probable. The neighborhood of the three springs, Qoseimeh, Qadeirat, and Qadeis is the most probable gatheringplace for fugitive nomad tribes on the way from the

1. McCown, "The Field Trips of the Jerusalem School in 1930-31", p.28

east Delta to Canaan, lying as it does on an ancient route from Egypt, but not on the more travelled and doubtless better defended road along the coast. But this does not prove that the modern name 'Ain Qadeis, the weakest and most distant of the three springs is a reminiscence of Kadesh Barnea."[1] The location of these three springs is such that they form an equilateral triangle. It is about 20 kilometers from Qoseimeh to 'Ain Qadeis and about 10 kilometers from Qoseimeh to 'Ain el-Qadeirat forming the third side of the triangle, with 'Ain el-Qadeirat forming the apex.

Nelson Glueck, who accompanied the Jerusalem School on their "Explorations in Eastern Palestine and Negeb"[2] in 1934 came to the conclusion, in conjunction with Dr. Albright, that the sherds in the vicinity of 'Ain el-Qadeirat belong to transition Early Iron I-II, extending for the most part approximately from the tenth to the eighth centuries B.C.[3] This, too, is the conclusion drawn from the findings of Woolley and Lawrence.[4] Above the 'Ain Qadeirat, on the south side of the Wadi Qadeirat, they found a contemporary Iron Age site, probably a watch-tower, which they believe was occupied by the Nabataeans, judging from the sherds found there. At the other two sites, mentioned above, they found no trace of occupation during the Early Iron Age.

Of the three sources of water supply in this region, namely, 'Ain Qoseimeh, 'Ain Qadeis, and 'Ain Qadeirat, the last mentioned is the strongest. The fact that it was chosen as the site of a fortress during the Iron Age, between the tenth and eighth centuries B.C. leads Glueck to believe "that if any one site is to be identified with Kadesh Barnea, 'Ain Qadeirat seems to be the most logical choice." "The fortress," he says, "was built on the site where several centuries earlier the central encamp-

1. McCown, Field Trips, p.28
2. Glueck, No. 15, pp.3-21
3. Ibid., p.19
4. Bulletin No. 52, p.8

ment of the Israelites was located during their sojourn in Sinai.....all three springs of Qoseimeh, Qadeis, Qadeirat must have served the needs of the wanderers."[1] He ends his analysis of the findings by stating that "In all probability, the fortress of 'Ain Qadeirat represents the only Iron Age settlement in southwestern Palestine and adjacent Sinai in the area south of of the Beersheba line and west of the 'Aqobah."[2] Of course, he does not infer that this lack of evidence would depreciate the fact of the Hebrew residence here, for it is possible that such evidence may be later located, but it is only another example of the deaf ear turned by archaeology to those seeking evidence to vindicate the historicity of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt.

In this same research, Glueck found that the Edomite kingdom had a strangely organized military frontier, with an intricate system of fortresses. He says, "It becomes understandable why the Israelites could not go through Edom after transit permission had been refused them, but had to goaround it on their way to the Promised Land."[3] The frontier of the Moabites he found to be much weaker, so it was that the Israelites went through Moab rather than Edom, as recorded in the E narrative.[4]

It was during this journey that the Israelites murmured against Moses because of the difficulties of the way, and God sent the deadly serpents. When Moses interceded for the people,God told Moses to mount a bronze serpent on a pole, that those bitten who looked upon it might be cured. Glueck states, "Moses could have secured the ores to make the bronze serpent from copper and iron ore deposits and mines which have been discovered by the expedition in the vicinity of Mt.Horeb and in the 'Arabah on the way to

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1. Bulletin, No. 55, p.20
2. Ibid., p.21
3. Ibid., p.17
4. Numbers 21

the Red Sea."[1]

Let us now come to the region of Mt. Nebo. In this vicinity Professor Glueck has found two Early Iron Age sites dating from the thirteenth to the eighth century B.C. A few kilometers northeast of Mt. Nebo, at Khirbet Qurn Kibsh, he found an extensive Bronze Age site which could be dated by the pottery found on its surface between 2200-1600 BC. Thus, he ejaculates that between these two periods there was "a blank period," which extended down to the thirteenth century, when there was no occupation in the region.[2]

The soil of the Transjordan was and still is very rich. There are numerous springs, the soil is good, and the mineral wealth is considerable. It was in this fertile region that Moses stood to gaze upon the Promised Land across the Jordan, and to the west. Glueck believes that the Israelites would have remained here had it not been occupied, so he draws the following conclusion: "As a result of the discoveries last year and this year in Moab and Edom, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Exodus of the Israelites through southern Transjordan could not have taken place before the thirteenth century B.C. It will be recalled according to the Biblical account in Numbers 20, that Israel begged the Edomites in vain for permission to traverse their territory on the way to the Promised Land. This permission was refused the Ismaelites, who were compelled to go around the land of Edom. Had the Exodus through the Transjordan taken place before the thirteenth century B.C., the Israelites would have found neither Edomites nor Moabites who could have given or withheld permission to traverse their territories. Indeed, the Israelites, had they arrived on the

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1. Bulletin, No. 55, p. 17
2. Ibid., p. 13

scene first, would probably have occupied all southern Transjordan themselves, and left the Promised Land for later comers."[1]

George A Barton in dealing with Moses and the Exodus mentions only two sources which bear but a remote implication for this period. The first is the "Legend of Sargon of Agades," of which he says, "The parallelism between the secret birth, the exposure, the rescue, and the adoption of Sargon, and the account of the secret birth, exposure, rescue, and adoptaan of Moses in Exodus 2:1-10 is too close to be accidental."[2] Conservative scholars, however, hold that, if the legend of Sargon is historical, it merely affords an example of a striking coincidence of events of two independent lives.

The second, the "Pillar of Merneptha" is a source which adds confusion rather than aid to the story. It was in the fifth year of King Merneptha (1225-1215 B.C.), commonly thought the Pharaoh of the Exodus, that the pillar was thus inscribed:

> "The kings are overthrown, saying: 'salaam'!
> Not one holds up his head among the nine bows.
> Wasted is Temehu,
> Kheta is pacified,
> Plundered is Canaan with every evil,
> Carried off is Askelon,
> Seized upon is Gezer,
> Yenoam is made as a thing not existing.
> Israel is desolated, his seed is not;
> Palestine has become a widow for Egypt.
> All lands are united, they are pacified;
> Everyone that is turbulent is bound by King Merneptha,
> Who gives life like Ra every day."[3]

Since this is the only document that mentions Israel, outside the Bible, during this age, it is little wonder that only disruption results from it. The question is, how could he subject Israel in Canaan while she

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1. Bulletin, No. 55, p.16
2. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 338
3. Ibid., p. 336

was still in Egypt or some place in the wilderness? The answer is that we do not know. There are many theories. One of them is that there were two periods of Exodus: one in the eighteenth dynasty, and another under Merneptha in the nineteenth. Still another theory is that only the Joseph tribe was in Egypt, and the other tribes were in Canaan, and it was to these that the inscription refers. With Professor Barton we must say, "All scholars would welcome more information on these problems."[1]

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1. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p.339

I - MOSES DEALT WITH IN THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

A. Authorship of the Pentateuch.

1. Arguments Regarding Mosaic Authorship.

It is a tradition of old standing among both Jews[1] and Christians[2] that the History and Law Book, comprised under the name of "The Five Books of Moses", came from the pen of Moses himself. Matthews tells us, "Previous to the middle of the 18th century the answer seemed comparatively simple. Christian tradition affirmed, though not with unanimous voice, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and Joshua wrote the book that now bears his name....Theories arose explaining the relation between 'Moses and Ezra as law givers, as to how Moses wrote the account of his own death, as to why some books were anonymous and others were ascribed to definite authors.'"[3]

As Kittel and others readily contend "The assertion that Moses composed the Pentateuch cannot be proved. Along with this the belief that the Book of Joshua was written by its hero falls to the ground."[4] However, this does not discredit the internal evidence of portions of the Pentateuch which attributes its composition to Moses. It is true that Moses did possibly write portions of the Pentateuch, but "these passages never speak of anything beyond the individual sections of the

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1. Ezra 3:2; 7:6; IIChr. 34:14
2. Mt. 8:4; Mk. 7:10; Lk. 20:37; etc.
3. O.T. Life and Lit., pp.22,23.
4. Hist. of the Hebrew, Vol. I, p.28

whole.....This is the case with the defeat of the Amalekites, the Book of the Covenant, the history of the encampments (Exodus 17:14; 24:4,7; 34:27; Numbers 33:2, and the central part of Deuteronomy.[1]

The legal part of the Hexateuch puts it beyond doubt that the laws were neither written by one author nor at one and the same time. This alone makes it clear that the great body of the Hexateuchal laws cannot have been edited by Moses or have originated in his time.

Let us, however, not conjecture that the arguments of Mosaic authorship have no following. Dr. Eiselen has discussed these arguments at length.[2] He gives a summary of these arguments under the four headings: indirect evidence, external evidence, direct internal evidence, and indirect internal evidence, - which he considers the greatest of them all. Whatever weight or value these arguments may have for the student he sums up in the following statement: "The only conclusion warranted by these facts may be briefly expressed in these words: Whatever may be the time of the final composition or compilation of the Pentateuch, it contains elements, both historical and legal, which may have originated in the days of Moses. These elements were later modified in the spirit of the first great leader; and the result of this development,

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1. History of the Hebrews, Vol. I, pp.28,29
2. The Book of the Pentateuch, Chs. 4-7

continuing throughout several centuries, is embodied in the present Pentateuch."[1]

2. Theories of the Composition of the Pentateuch.

Through the tireless efforts of an investigation begun by Astruc and taken up by other scholars of the latter part of the 18th and first part of the 19th centuries - among whom were such men as J.G. Eichorn,, W.M.L. DeWette, T.Bleek, H.Ewald, F.Tuch, K.D.Ilgen, H.Hupfield, and K.H.Graf - various theories were proposed regarding the compilation of the Pentateuch. The first of these theories is the"Fragment Theory," which looks upon the compilation of the Pentateuch as "an agglomeration of longer and shorter fragments, between which no threads of continuous connection could be traced."[2] This theory was quite conceivably derived from the abrupt law sections of the Pentateuch. The second theory is the "Supplement Theory." This theory makes the Elohistic author first and the Jahvistic writer being a later writer who revised the Elohistic edition, and made various supplements. He placed the Deuteronomist as latest among the editors.[3] The third theory pointed out by Dr. Eiselen is the "Document Theory." He so designates it because it best suggests the characteristic of this theory, though in a sense the other two theories were also document theories. The discovery of a second Elohim

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1. Eiselen, The Pentateuch, Its Origin and Development, Abingdon Bible Commentary, pp.135,136
2. Ibid., p.136
3. Ibid., p.136

source by H.Hupfield in 1853, and a better interrelation of the different literary layers of the Pentateuch have led us to the belief that the materials there come from at least four documents. These four documents are most generally recognized by the symbols J, E, D, P. The Graf-Wellhausen Theory is the one most commonly accepted among scholars today. "The first, called J, i.e. the Jehovistic document, used in the sections narrating events prior to the call of Moses the divine name Jehovah; E, the Elohistic document, uses in the corresponding sections the divine name, Elohim; D, the Deuternnomic Code, furnishes the heart of the present book Deuteronomy; P, the priestly Code, is a document combining both history and law, which owes its name to the fact that it was written from a distinctly priestly point of view. These four documents are thought to embody material taken from still earlier sources which have an independent existence in written form."[1]

The Graf-Wellhausen Theory is the one most commonly accepted among scholars today. This theory substantiates the Document Theory. It fixes the dates of origin for these documents as follows: for J, about 850 B.C.; E, about 750 B.C.; D, about 650 B.C.; P, about 500-350 B.C.[2] The scholars in a great many instances are taking variance with this view that the documents were originated at these times. Kittel, Gunkel,

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1. Eiselen, The Pentateuch, Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.137
2. Ibid., p.137; cf. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, pp.1-2.

and others hold that much of the materials "originated very early and was handed down, orally or in written form, until finally it was given a place in the longer documents."[1]

The various documents as we have them in our Bible have, of course, to be separated. This involves a huge problem of higher criticism into which we cannot delve at this point. It is our purpose only to note these arguments in passing, and then to use these documents that we may discover the Moses of each document, and then, finally, to resurrect, so far as possible, the historical Moses.

B. Moses of the J Narrative.

Some have despaired of separating J and E because of their parallelism and union almost everywhere from Exodus to Joshua by the Deuteronomic editor. Wellhausen has called the JE document the R^{d}, or the Deuteronomic edition, as we have it in the Old Testament account today. Kittel states the most widely accepted view of the critic on the J and E accounts: "But as a matter of fact such abundant traces of these original sources come to light as to compel the historian to fix his attention on each by itself wherever the two oldest accounts can be distinguished."[2]

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1. Eiselen, The Pentateuch, Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.137b; Cf. Kittel, History of Hebrews, p.29f.
2. Kittel, History of the Hebrews, Vol. I, p.192

Moses from Egypt to Mount Sinai

1. The Israelites oppressed by Pharaoh.

Exodus 1:8-12, 20b.

J says nothing of the parentage of Moses. The reference to "Aaron the Levite my brother"is held by W.H.Bennett to be a title rather than a genetic name.[1] But the fact that J speaks of Jacob's descendants in Egypt and measures taken against them by Pharaoh, especially the measure of the slaying of the male children of the Israelites, does attest the fact that there was some original "fuller narrative, running parallel to the one we now have."[2] The J statement was omitted possibly because of its identity or contradiction with E.

2. Moses murders an Egyptian.

Exodus 2:11-14.

Moses' first appearance in J is as a young man who had just "grown up." He smites the Egyptian task-master for abusing his Hebrew kinsmen, and the Egyptian dies. When Moses rebukes a Hebrew the following day, to his dismay, the Hebrew rebukes him in turn for his deed the preceding day.

3. Moses in the land of Midian marries Zipporah.

Exodus 2:15, 16-22.

When Pharaoh heard of what Moses had done, he sought

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1. Hastings, Bible Dictionary, p.439a
2. Kittel, History of the Hebrews, Vol. I, p.193

to kill Moses, so Moses fled from Egypt and went to the land of Midian. As Jacob met Rachel at the well, to help her draw water for her father's sheep, so Moses meets the daaghters of Reuel, Priest of Midian, and helps them to water their sheep, in spite of the shepherds' flocks. He married Zipporah, one of the seven daughters, and had one son, Gershom.

4. Moses commissioned to free the Hebrews: the burning bush.

Exodus 2:23a; 3:2-4a,5,7,8,16-18; 4:1-16,19-20a, 22-23.

After some period of time the king who sought Moses' life died. Then one day the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a burning bush that was "not consumed." Moses turned aside to see this strange thing, and Jehovah spoke unto Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."[1] Jehovah told Moses of the sufferings of His people in Egypt, and His purpose to deliver them from the Egyptians and bring them to the land of Canaan.[2] Moses was to repeat this message unto the elders of Israel and was to go up to Pharaoh requesting that he permit the Israelites to make a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to Jehovah.

Moses feared that they would not believe that Jehovah had appeared unto him. Whereupon Jehovah gave Moses three

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1. Exodus 2:5
2. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.81 attributes Exodus 2:17 to Redactor.

signs with which to convince them: a rod turned into a serpent, and back again into a rod; his hand made leprous when placed on his bosom, and restored when it was a second time plucked out of his bosom; and water poured upon the ground from the Nile river was made blood. Then, at Jehovah's command, Moses performed the first two of these signs in Jehovah's presence.

Moses was still reluctant because he was not eloquent. Jehovah answered him, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. Moses was still not satisfied and begged Jehovah to send some other messenger. Jehovah in his anger gave Aaron as a spokesman to the people.[1] Jehovah then told Moses "in Midian" to take his wife and sons and return unto Egypt for all those who sought his life were dead.

W.H.Bennett believes there was only one son, because there was only one son mentioned in Exodus 2:22,[2] but I believe this is a baseless argument in that the account does not attempt to give perfect genealogy, the purpose here being to relate rather Jehovah's message unto Moses. He further contends that "on the way, or even after Moses reached Goshen, the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a burning bush..."[3] This, too, I believe is best answered by Exodus 2:19 which says, "Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go return unto Egypt!"

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1. Hastings, Bible Dictionary, p.439b
2. Ibid., p.439a
3. Ibid., p.439a

Another much disputed point here is the reference to Aaron as Moses' spokesman. Bennett thinks, "It is doubtful whether J, at any rate in its earliest form, mentioned Aaron."[1] Dillmann regards the prominent position given to Aaron as a mark of J; but Wellhausen[2] and Stade hold that J does not mention Aaron. Kittel argues the point at length.[3] "Both in J and E Moses himself is his own spokesman before Pharaoh, whereas in P Aaron speaks and acts for Moses as the latter directs." Aaron thus only appears when he is to act as an intercessor. His appearance is not consistent. "JE cannot have brought in Aaron as a pure invention." The ways by which Aaron is brought in, not consistently, would lead him to believe, "This proves that we have an original text to deal with, and not a designed editorial correction."[4]

5. The institution of circumcision.

Exodus 4:24-26.

At a caravanserai as Moses went on the way to Egypt, God sought to kill Moses because he was uncircumcised. Zipporah was able to avert the wrath of God by cutting off the foreskin from her son with a flint, and threw it at the feet of Moses. This is an ancient account of the origin of circumcision.

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1. Hastings, Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.439
2. Kittel, History of the Hebrews, Vol. I, pp.193-5
3. Ibid, p.194
4. Kittel, History of the Hebrews, Vol. I, pp.194-5

6. Moses in Egypt.

a. Appeal to Pharaoh.

Exodus 4:29-31; 5:3,5-23; 6:1

Moses (with Aaron) delivered Jehovah's message to the elders of the Israelites and showed them the signs. Moses (accompanied by Aaron) goes before Pharaoh to request the release of the Israelites for a three days' journey that they might sacrifice to Jehovah in the wilderness. Pharaoh refuses the request and increases their tasks instead. The people all turn to Moses (and Aaron) reproaching them. Moses then goes to Jehovah for counsel, which he receives. Jehovah declares, "Now shalt thou see what I will do unto Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." At the commend of Jehovah, Moses inflicted upon the Egyptians seven plagues.

b. **The first plague:** The Nile becomes foul.

Exodus 7:14-15a,16-17a,18,21a,24-25.

At Jehovah's command Moses sought Pharaoh's consent for the people to sacrifice, which was refused. So all the waters of Egypt became foul, so that the fish died. This lasted for seven days.

c. The second plague: Frogs.

Exodus 8:1-4,8-15a.

At Jehovah's command Moses (and Aaron[1]) again urged Pharaoh with the threat of a plague of frogs to let the people go. Pharaoh refused, whereupon the plague was sent by Jehovah. Pharaoh was so pestered by the frogs that he sent for Moses, and consented to let the Israelites go that they might sacrifice. When Moses entreated Jehovah, and the plague was stopped, Pharaoh again hardened his heart.

d. The third plague: Flies (J only).
Exodus 8:20-32.

Early in the morning Moses stood before Pharaoh in behalf of the people. Then came the swarm of flies as Moses had said, and Pharaoh sent again for Moses. Moses told him that the people would "sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to Jehovah their God." Pharaoh granted Moses his request with the entreaty, "Ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me." But again Pharaoh "hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

e. The fourth plague: Murrain (J only).
Exodus 9:1-7.

A fourth time Moses was commanded by Jehovah to appear before the Egyptians with a threat. This was a threat of murrain in which only Egyptian stock would be afflicted. And

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1. This is consistently used here but will be omitted; it may be the influence of a Redactor.

it was as Jehovah had spoken on the morrow. But Pharaoh would not let the people go.

f. The fifth plague: Hail.

Exodus 9:13-21,23b,24b,25b-34.

Again Jehovah sent Moses to Pharaoh on the same mission threatening the land with hail. The destruction of the hail and lightning was such that beasts and all vegetation were almost completely destroyed throughout the length and breadth of Egypt, except in Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt.

This time when Pharaoh sent for Moses, he had a confession to make. "I have sinned this time," he said; "Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."[1] Moses went out and prayed unto Jehovah that the storm might cease, and the storm ceased. But Pharaoh hardened his heart as Moses had anticipated. "But for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear Jehovah God."[2] Moses continually displays this peculiar insight into the nature of man, as well as that of God.

g. The sixth plague: Locusts.

Exodus 10:1-11,13b,14b,15a,15c-19.

When Moses made this entreaty, the servants of Pharaoh

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1. Exodus 19:27
2. Exodus 19:30

intervened and asked Pharaoh to let the people go. Pharaoh called Moses back to ask who was to go. Moses told him that flocks and herds, women and children, as well as men must go. Pharaoh answered that the men only might go. So the plague came. Pharaoh again asked forgiveness for his sin against not only Jehovah this time, but against Moses also. The locusts that came by the east wind were then driven back by the west wind and drowned in the Red Sea so that not one locust remained.

h. The seventh plague threatened: The first-born.
Exodus 10:24-26,28-29; 11:4-8.

Pharaoh called Moses this time and told him to go into the wilderness to worship Jehovah, but not to take the flocks. Moses told Pharaoh that it was essential to take the flocks also for sacrifice. Pharaoh threatened Moses if he came to him again about the Israelites that he would have him put to death. Thereupon Moses proclaimed a plague upon the first-born, that their lives should be taken, of both man and beast, throughout all Egypt. "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue."[1]

i. The Passover instituted in connection with the slaying of the first-born.
Exodus 12:21-27,29-34.

This is the origin of the Passover feast. The lamb

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1. Exodus 11:7

was slain and the blood sprinkled on the door post that the death angel might pass over the houses of the Israelites. At midnight the death angel smote all the first-born of the Egyptians. So great was the haste of the people for the Israelites to leave that the Israelites could not wait to bake their bread, but took it unbaked upon their shoulders still in the kneading-trought The laws given by Moses regarding the Passover are "mostly assigned to P. It may be J material, but owes its position to P."[1]

7. Exodus from Egypt.

Exodus 12:37b-39; 13:3-16,21-22.

It was a "mixed multitude" which went with the Israelites when they left Egypt. The 600,000 referred to in verse 37 is probably inserted by P. Guided by Jehovah in a pillar, by day a cloud, by night a fire, Moses led the Israelites into the wilderness toward the Red Sea. Some would make this peculiar phenomenon equivalent to the volcanic Mount Sinai which gave forth fire and smoke to direct the people. J.F.McLaughlin points out that it was an "ancient custom still in use by Arabian caravans, of carrying braziers with burning wood at the head of a marching army." He continues that this is possibly the "explanation of this phenomenon. If so, it was no doubt given a religious significance, and was regarded as an

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1. W.H.Bennett, Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.439b, Note 11.

altar fire, symbolizing the divine presence."[1]

8. Escape by Crossing the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:5,6,10a,11-14,19b-20,21b,24,25b,27b,28b, 30,31.

Pharaoh, recovering from his terror, pursued the Israelites with his army. At his appearance the panic-stricken Israelites turned upon Moses and upbraided him for bringing them out of Egypt. He replied, "Fear not, be still, and see how Jehovah will deliver you today. You shall never see again the Egyptians whom you saw today. Jehovah will fight for you, and you shall hold your place."[2] The pillar placed itself between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. Jehovah, by means of a strong wind from the east, drove back the waters, so that the Israelites passed over by night; while from the pillar he "discomforted" the Egyptians, so that they turned and fled; but they perished in the midst of the Red Sea. The next morning the Israelites saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians upon the seashore.

9. The waters of Marah and Elim.

Exodus 15:22-25a,27.

From this scene of the Red Sea Jehovah led the people into the wilderness, where they found no water until they came

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1. "Exodus", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.264
2. Exodus 14:13-14

to Marah ("bitter"), where the waters were bitter. The people murmured against Moses because of the bitter waters. Moses then prayed to Jehovah, whereupon He showed Moses how to make the waters sweet by using a certain tree. At their next camping place, Elim, they found twelve springs, and seventy palm trees.

10. Bread from heaven.

Exodus 16:4,5,13b-15a,21.

Jehovah sent this bread from heaven daily that the people might eat. It was small and round like hoar-frost, and melted like honey with the coming of the hot sun.

11. Massah: Tempting Jehovah.

Exodus 17, 1b,2,7.

At Massah the people murmured against Moses because they were again without water. He reproved them for tempting Jehovah. How the water was produced J does not relate. The place was called Massah ("temptation") because they tempted Jehovah.

Moses at Mount Sinai

1. Appearance of Jehovah on Sinai.

Exodus 19:3b-9,11b-13,18,20-25.

The next point in the narrative must be the arrival of the Israelites at Mount Sinai. There is considerable confusion

as to the site of the "Mount of God". The earlier sources of the Pentateuch use different names. J speaks of Sinai and E of Horeb. D follows E, and P follows J. Both names are found outside the Pentateuch; in the Song of Deborah we have Sinai,[1] and Elijah flees to "Horeb", the "Mount of God".[2] These references would clearly imply that it lay to the south of Palestine. "The traditional site is Jebel Musa, in the southern portion of the Sinai peninsula, but this identification cannot be traced further back than the 3rd century A.D."[3]

Here at Sinai they encamped before the mount. Jehovah came down upon Sinai, called Moses to Him, and bade him charge the people and the priests not to "break through unto Jehovah to gaze....lest he break forth upon them." Bounds were set about the mount; to pass over them meant death. Jehovah comes down upon the top of the mount in a dense cloud. He speaks to Moses only, and Moses delivers the message to the people.

2. Appearance of Jehovah to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy elders.
   Exodus 24:1-2,9-11.

Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu,and seventy elders went up, and beheld Jehovah afar off, and ate and drank a covenant meal. Most critics give this to E, but Brightman, Bacon, and Dillmann give it to J.

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1. Judges 5:4
2. I Kings 19:8
3. Robinson, History of Israel, Vol. I, p.82

3. Appearance of Jehovah unto Moses "Upon the Rock".
Exodus 33:1-3a; Numbers 11:11,12,15; Exodus 33:12-23

Jehovah bade Moses to take the people and depart to the land that he had promised to "Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed I give it."[1] Moses related Jehovah's commission and care of the people thus entrusted to him, saying, "And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."[2] Jehovah then comforted Moses with these words, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."[3] He furthermore told Moses that he knew him by name and would show his glory unto Moses. Only the back of Jehovah should he see, for no man could look upon Jehovah and live. So Moses was placed in the cleft of a rock which he covered with his hand until he had gone past. Then Moses beheld the back of Jehovah from his place on the rock.

4. The so-called J Decalogue: Covenant on Sinai.
Exodus 34:1-28.

At this point there is a great deal of confusion. Just how much belongs to J and how much to P is impossible to determine. Kittel states, "It is certainly a mistake to assert that the small lawbook which is preserved to us in Exodus 34: 11-26, is a corresponding code to that of the Decalogue, nay

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1. Exodus 33:1
2. Numbers 11:15
3. Exodus 33:14

that it is the original Ten Words."[1] Here we have only a surviving remnant of the "laws and statutes", which J as well as E placed after the Decalogue, an abbreviated analogue, that is, to chapters 31 to 33. Professor Brightman makes a consummate analysis of the different theories of the critics regarding what these ten words or commandments of the Decalogue were, but they wary so widely that they are of little value so far as any definite conclusions are concerned.[2]

The events on Mount Sinai may be conjectured to run about as follows: After arrival at Mount Sinai and the preliminaries mentioned in Exodus 19, Jehovah promulgates the Decalogue. Moses is then called upon the mountain, and takes with him two stones upon which the Decalogue is to be written. He stays there forty days and nights, while Jehovah writes for him upon the tables of stone the ten covenant-words of the Decalogue. As in E, God adds to the Ten Words the rest of the laws and the statutes, and commands Moses to write down these words, i.e. the content of these laws. "Write these words, for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee, and with Israel."[3]

5. Moses invites Hobab the Midianite to join him.
Numbers 10:29-32.

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1. Kittel, History of the Hebrew People, Vol. I, p.198
2. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, pp.96-7
3. Exodus 34:27

During his stay at Sinai Moses had visited his father-in-law, Hobab, the son of Reuel.[1] Now that Israel, in obedience to Jehovah's command, is leaving the holy mountain, Moses begged Hobab to act as guide to the people; he knows the camping grounds of the desert and could therefore be "their eyes". Moses promised him an abundant reward in Canaan. Hobab objected at first, but finally consented, for Israel in later days recognized the Kenite clan which traced its descent from Hobab.

From Sinai to Mount Pisgah

1. The story of the quails.

   Numbers 11:4-10,13,18-23,24a,31-34.

After leaving Sinai the people were again reduced to the manna which seemed to be plentiful here in the desert. The people began to weep, not blaming Moses, but simply asking the question, "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" And Moses heard their lusty cry for the meats they had in Egypt "as they wept .....every man at his tent-door." Moses remonstrated bitterly to Jehovah for assigning him to a task so much beyond his powers! Jehovah bade him tell the people that they should have meat for one month. Moses asked how they would find so much food for 600,000 men. Jehovah told him to wait and see. The following day Jehovah sent a wind that brought an immense flight of quails, but while the people were eating them,

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1. Exodus 18 (Bacon refers verses 7,10,11 to J)

Jehovah smote them with a plague. The people who had thus lusted were buried at this place called Kibroth-hattaavah.

2. The journey to the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 11:35; 12:16.

"From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hezeroth, and afterwards the people journeyed from Hezeroth and encamped in the wilderness of Paran."

3. The commission and report of the spies, and Jehovah's rebuke of the people.

Numbers 13:17b,19,22,27-29; 14:1c,3,8,9,11-21,31-33.

Moses sent Caleb and others into the southern highlands of Canaan as far as Hebron, to view the land. The spies reported that the land was fertile, but the inhabitants were powerful, and their cities fortified. Nevertheless, Caleb encouraged the people to invade the land, but his comrades dissuaded them. They became panic-stricken, and refused to go forward. Jehovah proposed to destroy them and make Moses the ancestor of a great nation; but He spared them at the intercession of Moses himself. Yet because they had tempted him ten times, none of the adults of that generation should enter Canaan, but should wander forty years in the wilderness. Moses promised Hebron to Caleb, we find in Joshua 14:6-14, as his future possession for his good report.

4. Forty years in the wilderness.

Numbers 21:1-3; 22:5-7,11,17,18,22-35,37,39; 24:1,2, 3-25; 25:1b,2,4.

The people at Kadesh begin to strive with Moses because there is no water. Israel then marches along the borders of Edom to Moab where they conquer Heshbon and other Amorite cities. Balak of Moab sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites, and he blessed them instead. Brightman says, "It is usually agreed that these parables are among the oldest elements of J, and were not composed by J, but taken from earlier sources."[1] When the Israelites sinned with the Moabite women, Moses, at the command of Jehovah, hung their chiefs before Jehovah's presence that his anger might be turned from the people.

Summary

The J narrative presents no early life of Moses, but presents him first as a fugitive in the land of Midian. Nearly all the after events of the life of Moses as given above have an interesting point of view. Critics differ as to whether Aaron had any place in the original narrative of J or not, Dillmann and Bacon assigning him an important role, while Wellhausen, Stade, Carpenter, and Brightman hold that such passages as Exodus 4:13-14 are later interpolations. Be this as it may, J represents Moses as holding the unique place of importance. For example, in J's description of the plagues,

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1. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.104

he pictures Moses as announcing the plagues; then he tells how Jehovah sends it, generally through some natural agency. Similarly, J tells how Jehovah "caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land." (Exodus 14:21). Thus he explains the passage of the Red Sea.

It is J who represents Moses as alone enjoying the privilege of intercourse with Jehovah face to face. He gives the account of the burning bush;[1] he relates that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, with seventy of the elders of Israel, went up into the mountain, and that Aaron and the seventy beheld Jehovah afar off and ate and drank in his presence, but Moses alone went near unto Jehovah.[2] In Exodus 34:5 Jehovah descended in a cloud, and stood to talk with Moses. In J the basis of Jehovah's covenant is the Ten Words contained in Exodus 34. One of Moses' best pictures as an intercessor for his people is found in J's account of him in Numbers 14, where he nobly intercedes the people's cause for Jehovah's honour. Jehovah was angry, and declared he would destroy Israel and raise up a nation from Moses. Unselfishly, the great leader pleaded against his own interests for forgiveness of the nation which had so frequently thwarted him, and the prayer was answered. Then follows a series of wanderings about in the wilderness because the people would not go over into Canaan and possess

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1. Exodus 3:2
2. Exodus 24:1,2,9-11

it, but preferred to take the word of those who brought unfavorable, rather than those who brought good reports.

C. Moses in the E Narrative.

In the E narrative Aaron and Miriam play a very conspicuous part. They appear to have been in the original E account, but Aaron does not appear in the narrative of the plagues, "the references in the present text being due to redactors, and his role is not clear."[1] Aaron scarcely seems to have been the brother and equal partner of Moses, possibly not even the priest. He is especially conspicuous in this narrative as opposing Moses and leading the people into sin.

1. Pharaoh and the midwives.

   Exodus 1:15-20a,21,22.

After Jacob died, the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives that they kill all the male children. The Hebrew midwives "feared God", and did not as the king had commanded them, but answered him treacherously on the matter. So when Pharaoh saw that he was outdone, he ordered all male children to be cast into the river.

2. Moses, a youth in Egypt.

   Exodus 2:1-10.

Moses was born to parents of the house of Levi, at the

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1. W.H.Bennett, Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.441

time when all male children were ordered by Pharaoh to be slain. After hiding him for three months at home, his mother took him down to the Nile and placed him an an ark of bulrushes among some flags. Pharaoh's daughter found the weeping babe and hired Moses' mother as a nurse for him. Moses was then trained in the princess's court as an Egyptian noble.

3. Moses in the land of Midian.

a. Moses, tending Jethro's flock, is commissioned of God.

Exodus 3:1,4b,6,9-12.

While Moses was keeping the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, on Horeb, the mount of God, God called to him and announced Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." God told him that he had heard the cry of the oppressed Israelites, and would send Moses to Pharaoh that they might be released. Moses pleaded his inability, but God promised to be with him, and gave him a sign; "And this shall be a token unto thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of the land of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

The words of God, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob", were used by our Lord to prove to the Sadducees the proof of the resurrection.[1] They "are true for all time. They imply a personal

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1. Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37

relationship between God and man which carries with it the germ of eternal life. He is the God of the living, not the dead; therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living" is the argument of A.H.McNeile here.[1] There is another implication also that it is well to note. The statement may lead us to believe that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob each worshipped a God, but in this statement they are brought together as the one and only God of the Hebrew people. Monotheism is first suggested, if this is true, here.

b. God revealed to Moses His Name.

Exodus 3:13-15,19-22; 4:17.

God revealed his name to Moses as Yahweh, which is explained as equivalent to Ehyeh in the Hebrew. The American Revised Version shows the translation and interpretation here to be very uncertain: I AM THAT I AM, or I AM BECAUSE I AM, or I AM WHO I AM, or I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. W.H.Bennett in the New Century Bible gives this name several interpretations: "Thus, I AM WHO I AM, God is an ultimate fact; He cannot be explained by anything else, but only Himself....I am - always - that which I am - now, and always have been, as in the New Testament, 'Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and for ever'. Then, too, I AM WHO I AM, God is pure and essential being. And, again, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE, or I become that which I will, or choose to become; God is lord of his own

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1. McNeile, The Book of Exodus, p.17

destiny."[1] I think, however, that A.H.McNeile puts about the right slant on the whole thing in this comment: "The writer seems to have striven to express the thought that the Divine name revealed to Moses was a summing up of the entire Divine character and attributes. These could not be fully understood by any one generation of Israelites, and so God would continually manifest all that He would be to his people."[2]

God warned Moses that Pharaoh would not let the people go until Egypt had been smitten by "all my wonders". He directed Moses that when the women and children left the land of Egypt that they borrow jewels and raiment from their Egyptian neighbors. To Moses He gave a rod with which all the wonders were to be worked. There is something of the ancient magic religion and worship about this.

c. Moses leaves Midian.

Exodus 4:18,20b,21,27,28.

Moses went to his father-in-law, Jethro, and secured his consent to depart unto Egypt to see how his people fared in the land of Goshen. Then Moses took the rod that God had given him in his hand. From this time forward E calls God Jehovah as does J.

Let us view here the three main authorities in our present text. They differ as to the amount of knowledge Moses

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1. McNeile, The Book of Exodus, p. 58, Note
2. Ibid,, p.18

had of Jehovah before the theophany. J (Exodus 4:1) assumes that Israel is already familiar with the divine name Jehovah; E suggests that it was unknown, and that it was revealed only now, though Jehovah had, as a matter of fact, been the God of the patriarchs (Exodus 3:6,15); the theory of P is that though Jehovah was the God of the patriarchs, He had never allowed them to know his real name, permitting Himself to be worshipped under the title El Shaddai(Exodus 4:2,3), as a modification of the view expressed in E.[1]

At the "Mount of God", Aaron, sent by Jehovah, met him; and Moses told Aaron of Jehovah's words.

4. Moses in Egypt.

a. An appeal to Pharaoh.

Exodus 5:1,2,4.

After Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt, they went before the king and demanded that Pharaoh should let Israel go "that they may feast in the wilderness." The king refused, reproaching them with keeping the Israelites from their labor. Moses and Aaron were rebuked, and told to get back to their burdens.

b. The plagues.

Exodus 7:15v,17b,20b,23; 9:22,23a,24a,25a,35; 10:12,13a,14a,15b,20,21,23,27; 11:1

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1. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, p.83

At the command of Jehovah, Moses inflicted upon the Egyptians five successive plagues: the turning of the Nile into blood, hail, locusts, three days' darkness, and the death of the first-born. All of these except the plague of darkness are mentioned in the J account. Robinson makes a chart that shows the parallelism quite well.[1] In each of these plagues Moses raises the rod given him by Jehovah to work the miracle except in the plague of darkness. Brightman and Bennett both attribute the phrase, "which was turned into a serpent", referring to the rod, as added by P, for this instance was not related to us by E.[2] But after each plague subsided Pharaoh's heart "was hardened", or as in the locust and darkness plagues, "Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart". In the case of the hail, both man and beast were destroyed.

c. The spoiling of the Egyptians.
Exodus 11:2,3; 12:35-35.

Jehovah spoke unto Moses before the infliction of the final plague that he speak to the people, and instruct them that they borrow silver and gold jewelry, both men and women, from their neighbors. Jehovah made the Egyptians look favorably upon the Israelites, and the servants of Pharaoh thought Moses a great man. The final plague is omitted here in E, but the threat was made.

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1. Robinson, History of Israel, Vol. I, p.83
2. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.150f; cf. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.441a

In the night Pharaoh sent for Moses (and Aaron), bidding them to leave Egypt. The Israelites borrowed much jewelry and raiment from the Egyptians, and started on their journey. So great was this ravaging that the Egyptians were "despoiled".

d. The Exodus from Egypt.

Exodus 13:17-19.

When the people left Egypt, they were armed for battle, but they went not the way of the Philistines so as to avoid a war. So the people went the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. As they went thus arrayed, they carried with them the bones of Jacob, because he had afore sworn that God would again visit them.[1]

5. Escape by crossing the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:3,7,10b,15a,16a,19a,25a.

Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with 600 chariots, for he thought it easy to catch them in the wilderness. When the Israelites cried unto Jehovah, he ordered them to go forward. Moses took the rod, and lifting it up watched the glory of Jehovah: the angel of God which went before Israel, came behind, between the Egyptians and the Israelites; and the wheels of the Egyptian chariots were taken off.

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1. Genesis 50:25

6. Songs of triumph.

a. The song of Moses.

Exodus 15:1-19.

It is generally believed that this psalm was not composed by Moses nor by a contemporary of his, but is a later expansion of the Song of Miriam.[1] On this view it is no original part of E, but, rather, a poetic development of E's theme by a much later hand, who had Exodus 15:21 before him. This song is a Passover Psalm, and belongs to about the same general literary type as psalms 78,105,106,114, and 68. McNeile places it about 450 B.C.[2] Stark expresses the opinion that Exodus 15 is universally regarded as one of the best productions of Hebrew poetry.

b. The song of Miriam.

Exodus 15:20-21.

Miriam the prophetess (the sister of Aaron) led the women in a triumphal dance, while they sang:

"Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Julius A. Bewer believes, "From Moses' time, it may be, comes the original paean of Miriam after the great deliverance at the Sea of Reeds. It was in just such manner as the ancient

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1. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.152
2. McNeile, The Book of Exodus, p.89

Arabs also celebrated their victories."[1] He makes this one of the oldest literary productions coming to us from the hands of the Hebrews. If this can be considered authentic, it has no small importance for our interpretation of the character they ascribed to Jehovah, and the prominence of his hand in behalf of his people.

7.Moses and the Israelites at Horeb.

a. Moses smites the rock.

Exodus 17:3-6.

When the people reached Horeb, they were thirsty but found no water to drink. The people there murmured against Moses for bringing them and their cattle out into the wilderness to die of thirst. God bade Moses to take the rod He had given him, and going before the people with the elder, he was to smite the rock, which he did.

b. Joshua's defeat of Amalek.

Exodus 17:8-16.

The story of Joshua's defeat is quite fanciful and imaginative. So long as Moses would hold up the rod over the Israelites, they would prevail over the enemy. When his arm got tired and he could not hold up the rod, then the enemy would prevail. Finally, Aaron and Hur provided a rock stool

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1. Bewer, Literature of the Old Testament in Its Historical Development, p.2

for Moses' comfort, and they held up the arm of Moses, and Israel won the battle.

c. Jethro visits the camp of Israel.

Exodus 18:1-27.

When Jethro heard of Moses' success in the exodus from Egypt and in battle, he came to Horeb bringing Moses' wife and two sons to him, Then Jethro and all Israel sacrificed unto Jehovah. Jethro proclaimed, "Jehovah is greater than all gods," which is a definite evidence of polytheism at that time.

Moses was acting as judge over all the people, so Jethro counseled him to appoint rulers over the people to judge in small matters, but the "hard cases they brought to Moses." This is Israel's first movement toward judicial organization.

d. Appearance of God on the mount.

Exodus 19:2b-3a,10-11a,14-17,19; 20:18-21.

Moses went up to Horeb to receive instruction of Jehovah for the people to purify themselves for the Theophany on the third day. This was done. On the third day there was a great thunderstorm. God descended upon the mount in a thick cloud to the sound of a trumpet. When Moses brought the people close to the mount to meet God, he"spoke and God answered him by a voice."

The sound of the thunderstorm and the trumpet frightened the people so that they fled. They begged that Moses

intercede for them. Moses reassured them, "Fear not: God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you that you sin not." Then, as the people stood afar off, "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."

e. The E Decalogue.

Exodus 20:1-7.

That "all the critics agree that the Decalogue belongs to E literature except C.Steuernagel, and owes its present form to the Deuteronomic movement," is Dr. Brightman's decision.[1] They also agree that the Ten Words are also contained here, but omit the reasons of obedience as additions. The arguments relative to origin vary from attributing them to Moses to a period in 700 B.C.

The original E Decalogue is supposed to be the following:

I THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

II THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE A GRAVEN IMAGE.

III THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF JEHOVAH THY GOD IN VAIN.

IV REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

V HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

VI THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

VII THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

VIII THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

IX THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR.

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1. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.158

X THOU SHALT NOT COVET.

f. The Code (or Book) of the Covenant.

Exodus 20:22-23:33.

The Code of the Covenant is unanimously recognized today as E literature. All agree that it contains groups of laws, ancient but not homogeneous in origin. Brightman from a consensus of opinion of the critics states, "The period of the Judges or that of the United Kingdom is coming to be widely accepted as the date of the oldest laws in the Code of the Covenant."[1] The content of this will be more fully discussed in a later portion of this treatise.[2]

g. Moses builds an altar.

Exodus 24:3-8.

Now when Moses had heard all the words of Jehovah, he came down from the mount and told them to the elders of Israel. When the people heard them, they promised to do them. Moses wrote the words down. The following day he built an altar unto Jehovah, setting up twelve mazzeboth (one for each tribe), and sacrificed oxen thereon. Here young men were chosen to do the sacrificing. Moses himself sprinkled the blood and read the words of Jehovah unto the people, a priestly function. As he did so he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which

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1. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.160
2. See IV, C, 2

Jehovah hath made with you concerning these words."

h. Moses and Joshuareceive the tables of stone:
The golden calf.
Exodus 24:12-15a,18b; 31:18; 32:1-35; 33:3b-6.

Moses and Joshua stayed on the Mount forty days and nights while Jehovah wrote with his own finger upon two stones, probably, the Ten Commandments. Upon returning to the camp, Moses found the people worshipping a golden calf. In his incensed anger the stones containing the covenant were broken. The people were reproved, and Moses returned to Jehovah pleading, "This people have sinned a great sin; and have made them a god of gold! Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their --; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written." And Jehovah answered: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. And now go lead the people into the place whereof I have spoken unto thee. Behold, mine angel shall go before thee. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sins upon them."[1] "And Jehovah smote the people because they had made the calf." When the people heard these things, they mourned, and put off their ornaments "from Mount Horeb onward."

8. The "Tent of Meeting".
Exodus 33:7-11.

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1. Exodus 32:31-33

At this point, apparently, some account was given of the construction of the "Tent of Meeting", and perhaps the "Ark", for we are now told that Moses used to pitch the tent outside the camp, and the worshippers used to go out to it. When Moses went out to the tent, the people stood in the door of their tents to watch him. As he entered, the pillar of Jehovah descended, and stood at the door of the tent; and the people prostrated themselves. Meanwhile, within, "Jehovah spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." When Moses returned to the camp, Joshua, his minister, remained as attendant, at the "Tent of Meeting".

9. The Ark.

Numbers 10:33,35-36.

The Israelites guided by the Ark, departed from the mount of Jehovah. When the Ark set forth, Moses used to pronounce the blessing:

> "Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered;
> Let them that hate thee flee from before thee;"

And when it returned to its resting place, he would say:

> "Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the
> thousands of Israel."

Bewer says this ancient cultic formula was uttered when the ark was removed from its resting place to go before the army to battle, "especially when the situation was critical, for in it Yahweh manifested His presence in visible form to His

people."[1] Thus Jehovah was a God of battle unto Moses.

10. The wilderness wanderings after leaving Horeb.

Now follows a series of wilderness wanderings, for the people leave Horeb to go into the promised land. The series of events that follow are a series of intercessions of Moses for the Israelites who go from one sin to another.

a. The Fire of Jehovah descends upon the people for murmuring at Taberah. Moses interceded for the people and the fire was abated.[2]

b. Moses' complaint: The seventy elders chosen. Numbers 11:14,16-17,24b-30.

Moses complained because the work was too much for him, so Jehovah commanded Moses to take seventy elders to the "Tent of Meeting". And Jehovah came down in a cloud and spoke to him, and "took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the elders", so that they prophesied. Eldad and Medad, two of the elders, who remained in the camp prophesied though they did not go to the "Tent of Meeting". When a young man came to the tent to tell Moses of it, Joshua wanted Moses to stop them, but Moses answered, "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that Jehovah's people were prophets, and that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them."

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1. Bewer, Literature of the Old Testament, p.3
2. Numbers 11:1-3

c. The leprosy of Miriam.

Numbers 12:1-15.

Miriam and Aaron attacked Moses, saying, "Has Jehovah spoken only to Moses, and not also by us?" Jehovah suddenly summoned Moses, Miriam, and Aaron to the Tent of Meeting, and declared to them that while He made Himself known to the prophets in visions and dreams, He would speak plainly to Moses face to face, and Moses should behold the form (temunah) of Jehovah. Miriam was smitten with leprosy, and was healed only after the intercession of Moses in her behalf.

d. The commission and report of the spies.

Numbers 13:17c-18,20,23,24,26b,30-32,32b,33.

When they reach the south-east frontier of Canaan, Moses dispatches from Kadesh twelve spies, Caleb amongst them, to the promised land. Joshua remains with Moses. The spies go as far as Cluster Brook, not far from Hebron, and return with a huge cluster of grapes and other fruit which they show the people. Caleb calms the people about the giants that the eleven report, but of no avail. Jehovah punishes the people for not entering the land as he directed, whereupon they repent and decide to press on into Canaan. Some time has elapsed and Moses appeals to them unsuccessfully. The Amorites who inhabit the mountain-range, come down and drive the Israelites back to Homah.

e. Destruction of Dathan and Abiram.

Numbers 16:1b-2a,12-15,25-26,27b-31,32a,33,34.

The two Reubenite chiefs, Dathan and Abiram, rebelled against Moses because he had sought to make himself a prince over Israel, and had failed to fulfil his promise to bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey. Summoned to appear before Moses, they refused, so Moses went to them. Moses appealed to Jehovah to punish them by a hitherto unknown chastisement, when he had separated them from the other people. As a sign that he had Jehovah's authority for leadership the earth opened and swallowed them up with their households at Moses' bidding to Jehovah.

f. Edom refuses passage.

Numbers 20:14-21.

As they pass through Kadesh, Miriam dies.[1] Moses sought peaceable permission to pass through Edom, but it was not granted him. In the course of their journey from Kadesh, Aaron died.[2]

g. The serpents of brass.

Numbers 21:4b-9.

From the murmuring at hardships of this renewed march

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1. Numbers 20:1b
2. Deuteronomy 10:6

through the desert, the people were plagued with fiery serpents. Moses again prayed in behalf of the suffering people. Jehovah instructed that a brass serpent be made and all who looked upon it would be healed.

h. The march toward Canaan.

They marched along the borders of Edom to Moab where they encamped at Arnon, "for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites." At this point there is taken from the book of the Wars of Jehovah a song concerning their campaign against the Amorites:

> "Vaheb in Suphah (we passed through)
> And the valleys of the Arnon,
> And the slope of the valleys
> That inclineth toward the dwelling of Ar,
> And leaneth upon the border of Moab."[1]

North of Arnon, Israel resumes its march on the edge of the desert of Beer, where there is a well-station, of which the people used to sing in later times in these antique strophes:

> "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
> The well, which the princes digged,
> Which the nobles of the people delved,
> With the sceptre, and with their staves."[2]

And now E makes use once more, by anticipation, of the above-mentioned ancient list of stations. From the wilderness (on the border of which the well lay), they journeyed to

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1. Numbers 21:14f
2. Numbers 21:16-18a

Mattanah, thence to the Brook of God, thence to Bamoth, thence to the valley in the field of Moab on the top of Pisgah, "which looketh down upon the desert."[1] Kittel suggests that "Pisgah is probably the Nebo of the priestly writing; this brings Israel to the north end of the Dead Sea, over against the mouth of the Jordan."[2]

Israel had previously sent messengers from Arnon to Sihon, king of the Amorites, making request to pass through their land. Sihon, however, marches against Israel and they join in battle at Jahaz. The Israelites conquered the territory of Sihon.[3] Balaam who was sent for by Balak of Moab to curse the Israelites, blessed them.[4] Israel worshipped Baal-peor, and Moses bade the judges slay the offenders.[5]

Jehovah one day told Moses that it was approaching the day for him to die. He told him to bring Joshua and come to the Tent of Meeting. Joshua was appointed as Moses' successor.[6]

11. The blessing of Moses.

Deuteronomy 33:1-29.

This "Blessing" appears as an independent poem, the introductory verses connecting it but loosely with the rest of the book. The introductory verses (2-5) describe the advent of Jehovah, the giving of the Law, and the establishment of the kingdom; the main part (6-25) consists of eulogistic sayings

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1. Numbers 21:18b-20
2. Kittel, History of the Hebrew People, Vol. I, p.213
3. Numbers 21:12-20
4. Numbers 22-24
5. Numbers 25:1a,3,5
6. Deuteronomy 31:4-15,23

(no curses are made as in Genesis 49) concerning eleven tribes. Simeon is omitted. The concluding verses emphasize the uniqueness of Jehovah and the blessedness of his chosen people. The "blessings" characterize each tribe by some salient feature in its history, situation, or character. Professor D.R.Scott says, "The favorable comment on the tribe of Levi has led some scholars to conclude that the author or collector was a member of that tribe."[1]

Internal evidence has made it impossible to consider this "Blessing" as coming from Moses. Professor Scott thinks it must have been written before 722 B.C. when the northern kingdom fell, since he attributes it to Levi. Brightman writes, "Since Graf, critics have been practically unanimous in ascribing this blessing to E, and dating it in the reign of Jeroboam II."[2]

The following statement of Blessing upon Levi has attracted much comment:

> "And of Levi he said,
> Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy godly one, -
> Whom thou didst prove at Massah,
> With whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah."

The "Thummim" and the "Urim" were "the two sacred lots used by the priests in making decisions," says Professor Scott.[3] "What the Urim and the Thummim were is not certainly known,"[4] says Professor J.F.McLaughlin. "The words are plurals

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1. "Deuteronomy", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.343.
2. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.181
3. "Deuteronomy", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.343, Note 2
4. "Exodus", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.274a

in the Hebrew language and may be used as abstract or intensive nouns, meaning 'light' and 'perfection', or 'beauty'. They may have been names given to small carved objects, or precious stones used in casting lots one of which would give a favorable or affirmative, and the other an unfavorable or negative answer."[1] Moses' religion of casting lots in this conception would be the most highly regarded. God is thence a God of chance as E would make him here through the Blessing of Moses.

12. The death of Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:1b-6,10.

Jehovah took Moses to the top of Mount Pisgah to show him the promised land, "which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed." Moses diâd in the land of Moab, and Jehovah buried him in Moab over against Beth-peor. "And there hath not arisen since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face."

D. Moses in the D Narrative.

"The additions made by the Deuteronomic writers and the various editors to the Pentateuch simply expound, interpret, and harmonize the information given by the older sources, and add nothing to our knowledge of the character and work of Moses."[2]

Brightman omits D entirely from his "Sources of the

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1. "Exodus", Abingdon Bible Commentary, p.274a
2. W.H.Bennett, Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.444b

Hexateuch" stating, "D is omitted because the book of Deuteronomy may be read consecutively in any Bible."[1] He places Deuteronomy, as written in its original form, about 650 B.C., and publication in 621.

Wheeler Robinson believes there were four different stages in the development of the book: the book of law before 621 B.C.;[2] the historical introduction about 600 B.C.;[3] the exilic introduction and conclusion;[4] and the appendix and redactional additions and alterations.[5] Matthews says that it was a "religious movement that reached its earliest literary expression some time before the reform of Josiah (II Kings 22-23), in 621 B.C., when the "book of law" was accepted by the king and the people as authoritative."[6]

The "book of law" has long since been accepted as the nucleus of the original Deuteronomy.[7] Certain of the laws contained in Deuteronomy belong to antiquity. The laws of the Code of the Covenant are found here in somewhat altered form. The whole enactment of the Code of the Covenant is strongly flavored with tendencies relevant to the agricultural era from which it came; while we know the Hebrews of Moses' time were pastoral. The whole book is modified by its Canaanitic industrial influences. An example of this influence is dis-

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1. Brightman, Sources of the Hexateuch, p.10
2. Deuteronomy 5:1 -9:7; 10:12-11:1ff; 12-26,28
3. Deuteronomy 1-3;9:8-10:11
4. Deuteronomy 4:1-40; 29:1ff
5. "Deuteronomy", The Century Bible, p.13
6. Robinson, Old Testament Life and Literature, p.29
7. Deuteronomy 12-19; 28

closed well in a comparison of the law for slaves, male and female, as found in Exodus 21:1-11 and Deuteronomy 15:12-18. In E's account when the man is freed, "he shall go out free for nothing." In D's account, "thou shalt not let him go empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press." Of course, we know that no nomadic peoples would have such stationary articles as a threshing-floor nor a wine-press; it is another effect of the age from which it came.

The ruling idea in Deuteronomy is the command that there shall be only one legitimate sanctuary.[1] We can see vividly present the prophetic influence,and priestly influence too, that made legitimate only at Jerusalem offering of sacrifices and celebration of festivals. The forces of history - the fall of Samaria in 722, the repulsion of Assyria in 701, and Isaiah's contemporary message of the inviolability of Jerusalem - all consummated to result in this Deuteronomic reform.

In the sweeping influence, the Deuteronomic schools collected and edited many of the existing stories and documents. The JE history was the chief source of information, so little of importance was added to our already existing documents related above. Matthew sums up the contribution of Deuteronomy; "To the 'book of law' (Deuteronomy 12-19,28) were added miscellaneous regulations (Deuteronomy 4:41-43; 5:6-21), hortatory

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1. Deuteronomy 12:13-16; 16:5-7

discourses (Deuteronomy 4:1-40; 6:1-9:6; 27,29-31), two poems (Deuteronomy 32,33), and the Deuteronomic summary of the journey from Mount Sinai to the Jordan (Deuteronomy 1:6-3:29), which is based almost entirely upon E."[1] The Moses of the D narrative is a repetition of the Moses in the E narrative, plus a coloring resulting from the period from which it came.

E. The Moses of the P Narrative.

Aaron is the brother of Moses, and the two are consistently coupled together in the P narrative. Miriam is constantly ignored, if we follow W. H. Bennett's conclusion, "Miriam in Numbers 20:1 is E, and 26:59 is Rp."[2] Moses and Aaron are the children of Amram and Jochebed; Amram was the son of Kohath, the son of Levi.[3] The wife and sons of Moses are completely ignored.

The writer of the Priestly Code, like the two older writers, includes in his account the chief events in the life of Moses, but in accordance with his usual habit tells these events in order to make a setting for his history of the sacred institutions. The great and miraculous power of Moses and Aaron is increased. P traces every sacred institution to Moses: "The Levitical Law was communicated by Yahweh to Moses; Moses received on the Mount the pattern of the Tabernacles, which was constructed under his direction; even the duties of

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1. Matthews, Old Testament Life and Literature, p.30
2. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, 443a
3. Exodus 6:14-27; Numbers 26:58b-61

the Levites were arranged by him."[1]

1. Moses and the Israelites in Egypt.

The sons of Israel, having gone into Egypt, multiplied there exceedingly. The Egyptians consequently embittered their lives by forced labor.[2] They groaned, and their cry reached to God; He remembered His covenant with their fathers.[3] When Moses was eighty and Aaron was eighty-three years old,[4] God spoke to Moses in Egypt, and revealed His name as Jehovah. He tells Moses, "I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Jehovah I was not known unto them."[5]

At Moses' reluctance to speak to Pharaoh, Jehovah answered him, "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.... I will harden the heart of Pharaoh.... Pharaoh will not listen unto you....so I will bring forth my people by great judgments."[6] This shows the institutionalizing effect upon the character and work of Moses.

Moses is to give orders to Aaron, who will thereupon work the miracles with his rod. At Moses' bidding Aaron performs the first miracle by turning the rod into a serpent. The Egyptian magicians do likewise.[7] In like manner the

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1. Barton, "Moses", The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p.56b
2. Exodus 1:1-5,7
3. Exodus 2:23b-25
4. Exodus 7:7
5. Exodus 6:2-3
6. Exodus 6:11,12; 7:1-5
7. Exodus 7:1-13

magicians could perform the second sign of changing the water in Egypt into blood and the third sign of frogs they performed,[1] but they failed on the plague of lice, and the sixth plague (boils) fell upon them so that they fled. The first four wonders were performed by Aaron's rod, but the fifth by the appearing of Moses, who threw soot into the air. When the magicians failed they said, "The finger of God is there," but Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites depart. The account of the death of the first-born is omitted here, but it is implied in Exodus 12:12.

Before narrating the exodus, P introduces the institution of the Passover, after which he briefly sketches the march out of Egypt. They journey from Rameses to Succoth, 600,000 men strong, after dwelling in Egypt for 430 years.[2] The dedication of the first-born is commanded also immediately after their setting out.[3]

2. Crossing the Red Sea.

At the command of Jehovah, Israel turned back and encamped at the Red Sea, that Jehovah might entice Pharaoh to pursue Israel. When Pharaoh approached the camp of the Israelites, at the command of Jehovah Moses stretched out the rod over the Red Sea and the waters parted, and the Israelites "went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters

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1. Exodus 7:19,20a,22-23; 8:1-3
2. Exodus 12:1-20,28,43-51
3. Exodus 13:1-2

were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." When the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the sea, Moses stretched forth the rod over them and they were engulfed, but the Israelites reached the other side in safety.

3. The wilderness march to Sinai.

Departing thence they came to the desert of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. The people murmured against Moses and Aaron, longing for the Egyptaan fleshpots. The glory of Jehovah came to them in a cloud, and He promised them bread in the morning and flesh in the evening. He sent manna and quail to them.[1] J places this event after rather than before reaching Sinai. Rephidim is the next encampment before they come to Sinai.[2]

4. Moses in P at Mount Sinai.

As Kittel points out, "the events at Sinai also are, in the first instance, reported quite on the line of the other sources. There can be hardly any doubt that, P, like the rest, contained the Decalogue. The same assertion could hardly be made concerning the Book of the Covenant,...rather...P had the description of the Tabernacle and the detailed priestly legislation."[3]

Moses was summoned to ascend Sinai on the seventh day

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1. Exodus 16:1-3,9-13,14,16-18a,22-26,31-35
2. Exodus 17:1a; 19:1-2a
3. Kittel, History of the Hebrews, p.217

after his arrival there,[1] where he received the description of the Tabernacle,[2] the Decalogue having not yet been promulgated. Then follows the description of the Tabernacle and its construction.[3] Before being dismissed from the mountain, however, Jehovah gives Moses two stones upon which the testimony is written.[4]

After receiving the instructions about the Tabernacle and its furnishing, and the priests and their vestments, Moses came down from Sinai with the two tables. His face so shone when he appeared before Aaron and the congregation that they veiled it. He gave them all the instructions of Jehovah which they set about to do. The Tabernacle was constructed, furnished, and consecrated. The glory of Jehovah came in a cloud and covered the Tabernacle when it was thus completed.[5] Aaron and his sons were consecrated priests that they might do the work about the Tabernacle, but Nadab and Abihu were devoured with fire because of an offense to Jehovah.[6] From time to time Jehovah continued revealing his laws to Moses on Mount Sinai, which makes up the book of Leviticus.

5. Moses in P from Sinai to Pisgah.

As Moses and Aaron endeavored to organize the nation

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1. Exodus 24:1-3,9-11
2. Exodus 24:15b-18a
3. Exodus 25:1-31:17; 35:1-40:38
4. Exodus 31:18a
5. Exodus 34:9-40:38
6. Leviticus 1:1-10:10

and the worship, a census of the males was taken. There were 603,505 apart from 22,000 Levites.[1] On the 20th day of the month in the second year, the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, so at the command of Jehovah they departed from Sinai.[2]

The next problem Moses had to deal with was Korah and 250 priests who attacked Moses and Aaron for claiming superior priesthood to the rest of the congregation. Moses to settle the matter asked that Korah and the 250 priests officiate before Jehovah to find his will. Jehovah was greatly incensed at the nation for preferring Korah and the 250 priests, and would have destroyed all Israel but for the intercession of Moses. Instead Jehovah devoured Korah and his priests with a strange fire. Aaron's atoning oblation of burning incense stayed a ravaging plague sent on the people for their murmuring about the matter.[3] By the budding of Aaron's rod his tribe was made the priesthood.[4]

At Zin when the people murmured because they had no water, Moses faithlessly upon striking a rock before the people as Jehovah had directed, said, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?" Jehovah punished Moses and Aaron for this deed by denying them the right to lead the people into Canaan.[5]

Twelve spies were sent into Canaan by Moses as Jehovah

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1. Kittel, History of the Hebrew People, p.217
2. Numbers 10:11-28
3. Numbers 16:1a,2-10,18-24,35,41-50
4. Numbers 17
5. Numbers 20:1a,2-13

had directed. After forty days the spies returned reporting that the land ate up its inhabitants, and the people were giants. Caleb and Joshua, however, reported a good land. The people murmured again against Moses and Aaron, and would have stoned them except for the glory of Jehovah appearing about the tabernacle. Jehovah proclaimed that none of the grown men living should enter into Canaan except Joshua and Caleb. Thereupon the other ten spies were smitten of a plague, so that they died.[1]

Israel then marched on from Paran to Mount Hor, where Aaron died.[2] His place was taken by Eleaser. Marching along the borders of Edom, they came to Moab.

Because an Israelite brought in a Midianite wife, all Israel was plagued. Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, executed the evil couple, and was granted an everlasting priesthood by special request of Jehovah for his stupendous bloody deed.[3]

After Moses and Joshua had taken another census,[4] Jehovah informed Moses that it was about time for him to die. Moses, then, as Jehovah directed, appointed Joshua as his successor.[5] The Israelites were successful in defeating the Midianites in battle and slew Balaam.[6] Moses alloted the territories of Sihon and Og to Reuben and Gad[7] before he was at

1. Numbers 13:1-17a,21,25,26a,32; 14:1a,2,5-7,10,26-30,34-38
2. Numbers 20:22b-29
3. Numbers 25:6-15
4. Numbers 26
5. Numbers 27
6. Numbers 31
7. Numbers 32:1-38

last called of Jehovah to Mount Nebo to die at the age of 120 years, still possessing all of his faculties. The Israelites mourned him for 30 days; and Joshua succeeded him, "full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hand upon him."[1]

1. Deuteronomy 34:1a,7-9

II - HISTORICITY OF MOSES

A. Those Who Deny the Historicity of Moses.

There is a wide range of opinion regarding the historicity of Moses. Wallis believes that the Torah documents do not give an authoritative history of the wilderness, because they are "further from the times which they profess to describe than we are today from the Pilgrim fathers who journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean to America in 1620."[1] He further argues his point in that the objective of the writers was not a historical one; each having some point of view he wished to inculcate in the minds of the people. He does concede, however, "We cannot absolutely deny the existence of Mosheh, or Moses."[2]

Professor George A. Barton describes this view pretty well as follows: "Moses was the intermediary by whom the primitive anthropological cult of Yahweh entered the stream of Hebrew tradition; and then, centuries later, an ethical movement was initiated in the time of Elijah, which at length came to full fruitage in the literary prophets."[3]

T.K.Cheyne is another representative of those who deny the historicity of Moses. His latest and clearest statement is as follows: "If we are to be really strict in our criticism, the historicity of Moses must be abandoned. The force of personality in the religious as well as the political sphere

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1. Wallis, God and the Social Process, p.59
2. Ibid., p.60
3. Barton, Semitic and Hamitic Origins, p.350

I heartily admit, but the wielders of this great weapon are not always easily discovered except by romancers."[1]

B. Time of Bondage in Egypt.

Budde says of the bondage in Egypt, "All that can be considered doubtful is whether it is the whole people of Israel that fell under the Egyptian bondage or Joseph alone."[2] Harris takes up the argument here and says that we can accept the historicity of the Israelites enslaved in Egypt, for "no nation would keep a record of their bondage to another country unless it were true."[3] The problem that remains is to find the time of this slavery and the exodus.

Of the duration of their stay in Egypt and the date of the Exodus we are left primarily to conjecture. The Biblical writers do not agree on this. Some say the duration of stay in Egypt was 430 years, and others four generations, 160 years.

Regarding the date of departure, evidence derived from the reference to the Hebrews building Pythom and Rameses would lead us to believe that the time was about 1225 B.C. when Rameses II was ruler of Egypt. A discovery made by Petrie in 1896 in Thebes of a stele rendered the following information:

"Plundered Canaan, with every evil,
Carried off Ashkalon,
Seized upon is Gezer.
Yenoam is made a thing not existing,
Israel is desolate, her seed is not."

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1. Cheyne, The Two Religions of Israel, p.71
2. Budde, Religion of Israel to the Exile, p.10
3. Harris, The Hebrew Heritage, p.124

Palestine has become a defenseless widow in Egypt."[1]

Along with this information, the reference to the Habiru in the Tel-el-Armana writing of about 1402 B.C. leads Garstang to place the Exodus about 1400 B.C.[2]

C. General Statements of the Historicity of Moses.

As W.H.Bennett says, "we can take as our starting-point certain facts as to which the ancient sources and most modern writers agree - (a) that Moses was the leader under whom Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt and from the peril of the annihilation by the Red Sea, and was governed during its sojourn in the wilderness; (b) that through him Israel received a revelation, which was a new departure in the national religion, and the foundation of Judaism and Christianity; and (c) -- practically another aspect of the last point -- that he originated or formulated many customs or institutions from which the later national system was developed; that thus (d) Israel owed to Moses its existence as a nation; and (e) Moses is a unique personality of supreme importance to Old Testament history."[3]

Peritz also follows this same mood of argument for the historicity of Moses in the Biblical tradition. He ascribes to Moses the source of laying the foundation of the Hebrew

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1. Harris, The Hebrew Heritage, p.126
2. Ibid., p.125
3. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.445

nation and their religion: "While many details are uncertain, the essential parts have become remarkably confined, namely, the residence of the Hebrew tribes in Egypt, the personality and leadership of Moses, the exodus, with the crossing of the Red Sea, the covenant at Horeb-Sinai, and the political and religious organization at Kadesh."[1]

D. Specific Arguments for the Historicity of Moses.

While there are a few that deny the historicity of Moses, either on the ground that the accounts were written too long after he lived, or on any other premise, we cannot deny the feasibility of Andrew C. Zenos' statement: "For a just estimate of the character and work of the hero, it is necessary to take into account not only what he appears to be in the outward events of history, but also what he became in the beliefs of his people."[2]

It seems inevitable that we must accept Moses as a historical character, for it is impossible to understand the rise of a nation or worship apart from him. So essential is his character to the Israelites, that if his existence had "been blotted out of the mind of his countrymen, we should have been obliged to postulate a personality such as his."[3] In fact, the character of the Hebrew revelation demands no less than Moses. The definite transition from some form of

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1. Peritz, Old Testament History, p.64
2. "Moses", A Standard Bible Dictionary, p.559
3. W.E.Addis, Hebrew

animism to the service of a personal God, who chooses the tribes of Israel, making them one with each other because they were loyal to Him, and revealing to them his character in the way by which He led them, cannot have been effected save by a great religious genius. J. S. Banks also expresses the same opinion, "Every one today at all acquainted with the matter of historical religion knows that historical and ethical religions - such as the Israelite religion undoubtedly was - always go back to a historical personality in their founder."[1]

Another of the critics, W.Robertson Smith, wrote, "Moses ....is the father of the priests as well as the father of the prophets....He was a prophet as well as a judge. As such, he founded in Israel the great principles of the moral religion of the righteous Jehovah."[2]

We can see readily that Moses is an historical personage in the mind's eye of the critics. Whatever of value this may have for us does not lie in accurate or correct order of dates. A bare record of past events is of little use to the present. What the reader of history needs above everything else is to learn the meaning of these events - their effect on the life of nations, on the life of individuals, on the relation of one country or race to another. He wants to know the place which actions held with regard to development, social progress, religious advance; how they influenced the character of the

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1. Hastings, Greater Men and Women of the Bible, p.12
2. Hastings Bible Dictionary, p.445

actors; the motives which led the actors to do what they did - and so forth. Thus true history is written not for mere information but for instruction, that the reader may learn what to imitate and what to avoid, how to act under given circumstances and how not to act. For this purpose a list of events is useless. The writers select their material, then arrange and comment. They present history as it appeals to them in its character of a guide for the future. This is a true generalization for all history; and the history of Israel is no exception.

III - TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LIFE OF MOSES

A. Israelites Enslaved in Egypt.

Some time in the past at about the same time that the Tel-el-Amarna letters were written, the tribe of Jacob separated from their Edomite brother-tribes in Palestine and went to the land of Goshen in Egypt. There they dwelt for a period ranging from four generations to 430 years. They retained their own language, their nomadic customs, and their ancestral religion. The tenacity with which they clung to their national and religious peculiarities is attested to by their constant reference to "the God of thy Fathers."[1]

While here Pharaoh puts the Israelites to doing task-work, possibly making bricks. Being a nomadic rather than an industrial people they mourned and lamented, crying unto their God each day until they were finally heard by Him. They were not able to shake off the yoke, however, that was placed on them by Pharaoh, probably Rameses II, so God raised up for them a deliverer from among them, and gave him the cultural advantages of Pharaoh's own court through some divine providence.

That there was any large group of Israelites in Egypt is not to be expected for only two midwives were necessary to care for the births. In Judges 5:8, a century later, there were only 40,000 warriors in Israel. These statements are to

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1. Exodus 3:6; 15:2; 18:4

be preferred to that of Exodus 12:37, which gives the number of men in Israel at the time of the exodus as 600,000, implying a total population of one and a half million. Such a number is contradictory to the geographical and historical background, and probably rests upon a characteristic exaggeration of a later source.

B. The Birth and Early Life of Moses.

The connection of Moses with the Levites is vouched for not only by the statement of his birth in E and P,[1] but also from the fact that the Levites of the sanctuary of Dan claimed to be the descendants from Moses.[2] Another reference is a designation made by the Levites of themselves in Deuteronomy 33:8 as"the people of thy holy one", i.e. Moses. Perhaps also the Mushi in the P account of Exodus 6:19, as the name of a division of the Levitical clan Merari, denotes another group of Levites, who at one time claimed descent from Moses.

The E statement[3] that Moses grew up in Egyptian surroundings, is to be supported by the apparent connection of his name with the Egyptian "Mesu". However, Renan supposes that it was not likely that he was greatly influenced in his work as a medium of divine revelation to Israel, by any Egyptian training.[4] The main reason for holding this is the fact that the pre-prophetic religion has little in common with that of

1. Exodus 2:2; 6:20
2. Judges 18:30
3. Exodus 2:10
4. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. III, p.445

Egypt, and also he received that training later under the instruction of the Midianite priest, Jethro, his father-in-law. But this need not discount the effect and value of this training in the courts of the Pharaohs.

C. Moses the Emancipator.

1. The call of Moses.

Exodus 2 - 4:6

The historical character of Moses is not bound up with the details of his childhood and life. It is altogether probable that later tradition wove about their favorite hero a great deal of fanciful tradition, much as we do today with our heroes. His name does attest to his Egyptian connections, and he appears to have shared in their oppression. His contact here in Egypt with the culture and learning of the day did not make him forget his origin as he might easily have done. Dr. Bhimaro R. Ambedkar, born of outcast parents in India, tells us that he faced the same problem when he returned from his studies abroad: "In the hour of his deep despair he faced the temptation to break completely with his past, deny his outcast origin, and lose himself in some great city."[1]

Of vital importance is the stay of Moses in the desert land of Midian where he received his source of information from his priest fatherpin-law. Like Jacob, he too married a girl

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1. L.O.Hartman, "India's Lincoln", Zion's Herald, Vol.114, p.248, March 11, 1936

from this Kenite tribe. Here Moses received three essential things: environmental inspiration, the name of Jehovah, and a personal religious experience with Yahweh that he must transmit to his people in bondage in the land of Egypt. The problem as to whether this name had before been revealed to the Israelites is a minor one, for all three sources agree that it is the god of the fathers who appears to Moses. So Moses was to go then to his enslaved brothers in the land of Goshen to revive in them their ancestral religion, which they had almost forgotten during these days of enslavement.

The mission was conferred on Moses in the form of a theophany - a burning bush. All the symbolism suggest the precincts of a sanctuary, possible when he was serving his father-in-law at the "Mountain of God." He was so impressed by the presence of Jehovah in this place and filled with the longing to help his embondaged brethren in Egypt, that under the influence of Jethro, he caught the vision. His people too could be free, know Jehovah, and worship Him on this mountain as did their Kenite relatives. Thus inspired with the vision, the call of God, encouraged by relatives, he set out for Egypt to deliver them.

2. The plagues.

Exodus 5:1-6:1; 6:28-7:7.

The accounts of the execution of Moses' commission, his hesitancy, his encouragement by the promise of divine aid and

the association of Aaron his brother with him, the unbelief of his people, the opposition of Pharaoh, and the series of divine interpositions, all bear witness to and reflect the recognition of the magnitude of the task and God's gracious providence in Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

From the accounts it has been computed that ten plagues came upon the Israelites at the time when Moses was seeking deliverance for the people. Of these, ten plagues, two different pairs are possible duplicates, thus reducing the number to eight. How they were brought about cannot be accurately contemplated, whether by natural phenomena or by divine intervention. Assuming that either could be right, we know that something must have happened to make Pharaoh consent to their departure. These plagues may well have happened at this particular time much as do like plagues today, with the allowance for the extent of death of the first-born. Just what part Moses played in this we do not know.

3. The Passover and the Exodus.

Exodus 12:1-13:16.

It is quite generally assumed that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Rameses II (1290-1220 B.C.) and Merneptah, his son (1220-1210), was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. During the reign of Merneptah many subjects attempted to throw off their yokes and burdens given them by the great conqueror and builder, Rameses II. Following his death Egypt was thrown into

political turmoil, the subsequent plagues adding to the noisomeness and chaos which would have made possible a flight about 1200 B.C.

The Passover connected with the Exodus involves in its present form much of the later additions and stages of development through which it passed. The slaying and eating of the lamb is possibly a nomadic practice dating beyond Moses. Possibly this was the feast he wanted to celebrate when he aproached Pharaoh. The feast of the unleavened bread has a Canaanitic, agricultural origin that is foreign to Israel at this time. The third characteristic of the festival as recorded is the feast of the deliverance from Egypt. Historically all the characteristics of the feast tie up to the Exodus event: the Passover lamb with the last plague, and the unleavened bread with the haste with which they left the land.

4. Crossing the Red Sea.

Exodus 13:17-15:21.

The character of the documents is well disclosed in this event. The chief character of J is the anthropomorphism of God. To E an intermediary is necessary. In P the whole is a climactic event to point out the direct agency of God. Pushing aside the theology of the day in which the accounts were written, we see here a historical situation.

There are two possible routes, but the Israelites choose the wilderness route because they fear hostile tribes in the

open country. About the time they reach the Red Sea, Pharaoh hears of the escaping Hebrews and pursues them. When he reaches the Red Sea, he sees the Israelites crossing over the basin of the shallow neck of water, possibly located about in the position of the Suez Canal today. The wind that had blown all night had blown the water back so that the Israelites could cross the muddy swamp all right on foot, but when Pharaoh entered it with his chariots, they mired down. With the receding of the water Pharaoh was forced to leave the chase. The exact place where this occurred is possibly in the region of the Suez Canal, which was probably at that time covered with shallow water. The real historical character of the deliverance is evidenced in the short poetic utterance:

> "Sing to Jehovah, for he exulted himself mightily,
> Horse and chariots he cast into the sea."[1]

D. Moses, the Wilderness Leader.

1. Biblical data.

Exodus 15:2 - 18.

For constructing a historic account of Israel's life in the wilderness, the Biblical references are at their best only scanty and scattered. Most of these, too, come from P, who is interested in placing all institutions and customs of his time back in the period of Moses. To do this he elaborates accounts

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1. Exodus 15:21

of the tabernacle,[1] laws as to priests and worship,[2] a highly artificial organization of tribes, and an extensive list of encampments.[3] These accounts lose much of their value because of the P objective, and also the fact that the stopping-places can no longer be identified.

2. Provisions in the desert.

Exodus 15:22-16:35; Numbers 11:4-10,13,18-24a,31-35.

The vital problem of these wanderers was their source of food and water. The people were greatly dependent upon the nomadic experiences of Moses, having lost much of their nomadic instincts during the Egyptian bondage. So when food or water failed, Moses had to bear the responsibility. At Marah the springs were brackish, but were sweetened; at Elim, Massah, and Meribah (Kadesh), there was sufficient water supply.

The manna and quail provided bread and food. The quail, a migratory bird, well-known in the Sinaitic peninsula, often flies in huge flocks until exhausted. It thus becomes an easy prey for man. One of two products may be identified as the manna which the Hebrew people ate. One is an exudation of the tamarisk tree. It is of a waxy consistency, white in color, palatable, and sweet like honey. Under the sun's rays it melts quite readily. This is one possible food, or manna, that the Hebrews ate. The other, a lichen growing on the surface of

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1. Exodus 25-31; 35-40
2. Book of Leviticus
3. Numbers 1-10:29

rocks, rolls up into white balls about the size of a pea or nut during storms or rains. These blow or wash into heaps. They are tasteless, but are ground and baked into a bread.[1]

These Hebrew people of necessity were not continually upon a march, for they had to find water and pasture for their flocks.[2] These flocks, too, no doubt were a source of food during this exodus, supplying meat and milk. We are thus led to believe that much of the forty years in the wilderness was spent in the fertile Kadesh valley, following a semi-agricultural mode of life.

3. Hebrew residence in Kadesh.

The Biblical accounts of Meribah and Kadesh are believed today to be the same place.[3] This information has led us to believe that Ain Kades, about fifty miles south of Beersheba, is the place referred to. Near to this are two other springs, Ain-El-Kederat (probably the older Meribah), and a poorer spring, Ain Kuseme (perhaps Marah). Henry Clay Trumbull reported of this place in 1881: "Judging from this description, it was a region well suited to serve Israel, if it didnot number over 5,000 persons, as a place where they might find, for a time at least, sustenance and a residence for the development of the intermediate stage between Egypt and Canaan." We may believe that it was over this spot that

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1. Peritz, Old Testament History, p.81
2. Ibid., p.81
3. Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13

the Israelites fought with the Amalekites at the Biblical place called Rephidim.

4. The judicial organization.

Exodus 18:1-27; Numbers 11:11,12,14-17,24b-30

Somewhere near Horeb-Sinai, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came to visit Moses and the Hebrews. It is under his influence that Moses forms the first judicial organization of the tribe. The influence of the Midianite priest upon Moses and the Hebrews cannot be over-estimated. Jethro was definitely the teacher of Moses. Moses, as priest and judge, at this time started sharing his responsibilities. No doubt these harder disputes that Moses settled by bringing them to God was by the use of the sacred lots, mentioned in the Blessing of Moses, the Urim and the Thummim. The other cases to be decided by chieftain officials were to be given to men endowed with the spirit of God. Here then is the origin of two classes: priest and prophet, the priest to be guided by the use of the material lots, the Urim and Thummim; the prophet to be guided by a spiritual dream or vision. Moses then belonged to both classes. He knew God "face to face", and also he was the high priest for settling disputes. Many religious disputes arose over the superiority of these offices. Disputes arose between Aaron and Miriam and Moses; between Dathan and Abiram against Moses; and also a rebellion of Korah and 250 followers against Moses and Aaron.

5. Location of Horeb-Sinai.

The destination of Moses and the people as they left Egypt was evidently the "Mountain of God", called Sinai by J and P, and Horeb by E. Of the many places for the possible location of this spot, Mount Araif, a mountain in the desert of south-west Edom, near to Kadesh, is probably the one meant.[1] The best argument for this location is this quatrain taken from Deuteronomy 33:2.

"Jehovah came from Sinai,
He arose from Seir unto them,
He shined forth from Mount Paran,
And he came from Meribah-Kadesh."

E. Moses, the Law-Giver at Horeb-Sinai.

1. The Covenant at Horeb-Sinai.

We are not to be misled that Moses did not have an educational background. His studies in Egypt, and especially the instruction of Jethro, were of inestimable value to him. Neither did the Code of the Covenant grow up over night. It was many generations in achieving its total significance in the minds and lives of the Hebrew people. The process is one of deliverance by Jehovah, and then moral obligation on the part of the people to serve Him. It is summarized as follows: "Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now,

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1. Judges 5:4f; Deuteronomy 33:2; Exodus 8:27; Habakkuk 3:3a

therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my possession from among all peoples."[1]

2. Moses, the originator of Hebrew laws at Horeb-Sinai.

Moses has been considered the great law-giver by the Hebrews down through the ages, and the occasion for his development was at Horeb-Sinai. Scholars recently have had to abandon such theories, for Babylonian and Egyptian sources refer to many of these laws long before the time of Moses. That Moses was a legislator is the uniform tradition, and it has become increasingly more probable that such was his function by the findings of the high state of civilization with which he was surrounded.

Peritz has attributed the starting of the tradition which ascribed this collection of laws to Moses; then he traces it down through nine centuries to the time of Ezra in seven different codes as follows: "(1) The Decalogue, Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21, found in two slightly varying rescensions, and embodying moral requirements; (2) The Ritual Decalogue, Exodus 34:1-26, consisting of simple requirements relating to the religious cult; (3) The Social Code, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, relating chiefly to social duties; (4) The Book of Covenant, so-called, Exodus 24:7), Exodus 20:22 - 23:19, containing both civil and ritual laws in greater detail; (5) The Deuteronomic Law, Deuteronomy 12:1 - 26:28, - which is an evident expansion of the Book of Covenant; (6) Law of Holiness, Leviticus 17 - 26, containing mainly ritual legislation, and characterized by en-

1. Exodus 19:4f

forcing the requirements on the grounds of Jehovah's holiness (19:2); (7) The Priestly Code, embracing all the other legislation in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers not already assigned, being the most extensive, and supplementing them all."[1]

3. The Decalogue.

Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

The Decalogue as written out in the E narrative of this paper is probably Mosaic. A great contribution of Moses was the establishment of the conception of monotheism. As we have already pointed out, there was implicit in the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," a polytheism in the Hebrew worship before the time of Moses. Other traces of polytheism are presented in the names of places, sanctuaries, trees, pillars, towns, streams, and so forth, that bore these names with the suffix "El", meaning God. The second commandment implies their simple desert life; the third, a further avoidance of the misuse of Jehovah's name; the fourth is an adaptation or earlier development; other commandments all bear the social implications of any unitary social order. The seventh commandment is a threat at heathen orgies practiced by the Baalizers.

4. The Ark of Jehovah.

Exodus 25:10-22.

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1. Peritz, Old Testament History, p.25

The chief Mosaic cultic practice was the use of the Ark of Jehovah in worship and in war. As a priest Moses said the cultic utterance as the Ark went out to war. And he also with the people, likewise, repeated a cultic cry when the Ark returned to rest. From the departure from Horeb-Sinai onward the Ark, rather than Mount Horeb-Sinai, became the source of the presence of Jehovah for the Hebrew people. So we hear Moses cry as the Ark departs:

> "Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered;
> And let them hate thee, flee before thee."

And when it rested, he said:

> "Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel."[1]

5. The Tent of Meeting.

While P designates the grandeur of the tent of meeting, it is to be believed that this tent where the Ark resided, and where Moses answered the harder problems by the Urim and Thummim, was only a simple tent like the others in the camp, but holding a central place. These two lots containing the yea and nay were cast in a linen garment or pocket called an Ephod. The veil worn by Moses has been suggested to be the one worn at all times when representing Jehovah in these decisions.

F. Moses from Horeb-Sinai to Pisgah.

After leaving Sinai events are rapid and almost un-

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1. Numbers 10:35-36

traceable. As to the priesthood, Moses clearly places the care of the Ark and the Tent of Meeting in the hands of his own family. Joshua, indeed, was left in charge of the tent, but only as the deputy of Moses, who was the high priest. Moses appeared to have left the succession of the priesthood to his children; it is not clear how far P's statement that the family of Aaron was entrusted with the priesthood is derived from the ancient tradition, but the ordinary analysis supports this view.by giving Deuternnomy 10:6 and Joshua 14:33 to E, but on the other hand, they may belong to Rp.

It was perhaps over a generation before the Hebrews were permitted to pass over the Jordan into Canaan. During this time many of the older people died. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam also died before entering Canaan. It was only after conquering Sihon that the way was open for Israel to approach the Trans-Jordan vicinity. Moses, according to the J account was buried in an unmarked grave at some place in the valley of Moab, opposite Beth-peor.

IV - THE WORK OF MOSES

Regarding the work of Moses, and especially regarding the extent and content of the laws promulgated by him we have varied accounts in the different sources of the Pentateuch. But there are certain points which are taken for granted as firmly established by tradition. These facts are related by E. Kautzsch as follows: "Moses, of the tribe of Levi, was the first to proclaim Jahweh as the God of the whole people of Israel, and as their Deliverer from the bondage of Egypt; that at Sinai he brought about the conclusion of the covenant between Jahweh and Israel; that he at least laid the foundation of the judicial and ceremonial ordinances of Israel, and that he left behind him more or less copious notes."[1]

A. The Creator of a Nation.

The escape from Egypt was but a preliminary to the great work of Moses. To him fell the task of binding together into a single political unit the various tribes, who, it seems, had hitherto maintained a real independence, though they had recognized a kinship of blood. "The only force that could have achieved this," says Professor Robinson, "was that of a new religion, and it was a new religion that Moses had to offer his people."[2]

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1. "Religion of Israel", Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, p.624a
2. Robinson, History of the Hebrew and Jewish People, p.62a

Professor Robinson says, "Israel came into existence with Moses, but she was far from reaching her full nature when she entered Canaan. It is with the exodus that her history begins, but we can regard this only as the commencement of a process which was not complete until the establishment of the monarchy."[1] Some have preferred to call Moses a great leader in preference to a creator of a nation, for it is true that he only began a process that did not achieve its end in his life time, but many generations later.

Let us see what the elements contributed by Moses were, that out of a chaotic slave class of people, a great independent Hebrew nation came to be built. Professor Louis Wallis believes that in searching for this answer to the problem, "we unexpectedly get light upon the central problem of the Bible."[2] In the traditional view found in the Old Testament, the Hebrew clan originally consisted of twelve tribes that were welded by Moses into a mighty social organism rather suddenly at Mount Sinai, in the desert of Arabia. To the nation he gave a rather elaborate written constitution. According to the constitution the Israelites were all to conduct religious services at one central meeting house, or kind of church building. This was called the "Tent of Meeting," and was centrally located for religious and judicial purposes. This portable sanctuary, a tent, was carried about over the desert. It contained the

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1. Robinson, History of Israel, p.67
2. Wallis, Sociological Study of the Bible, p.15

Ark of the Covenant, and possibly an altar upon which sacrifices were made. Wallis declares that according to the traditional view, "the Tent of Meeting was a vital proclamation that here, in the wilderness of Arabia, a new social group had come into existence. The desert sanctuary was thus the central symbol of the nation's political integrity."[1] This centralization of Jehovah worship was the first centralization of the twelve tribes into a socialized, unified whole, or a"Hebrew nation."

Moses planted the first of the seeds for a crop that Saul harvested. The great leadership of Moses has never been seriously questioned, but Wallis believes that the social group known as "the Hebrew nation" came slowly into existence, in the land of Canaan, at the point of junction between two previously hostile races, the Israelites and the Amorites.[2] This would make the organized group of Hebrews at the time of Moses only a potential nation, which for all practical purposes we could well afford to concede, seeing that much that these people did was dependent upon Moses. When trouble came, Moses was blamed; the same was true if they were hungry or thirsty. Moses not having been permitted to cross the Jordan was not able to develop the nation to which he definitely gave impetus.

Implicit in the development of national consciousness is another seed planted in the covenant idea, that Israel is the chosen people, and Jehovah is their God. "Now, therefore,

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1. Wallis, Sociological Study of the Bible, pp.17-18
2. Ibid., p.23

if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples, for all this earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."[1] Without this national consciousness Israel could never have withstood the sturdier heathen civilizations into which they migrated with which they and/coalesced. Moses it was who by the sheer force of his personality and leadership wove into the woof and fiber of these nomadic tribes the seeds of nation consciousness.

Kent and Jenks in their little book, "The Making of a Nation", see in Moses the real Creator of the Hebrew Nation. "Although the traditions regarding him have been transmitted from mouth to mouth, they portray the character and work of Moses with remarkable clarity and impressiveness. Moses was primarily a patriot. He was also a prophet-statesman, able to grasp and interpret the significance of the great crises in the life of his people and to suggest practical solutions. Moreover, he was able to inspire confidence, and to lead as well as direct. In the harsh environment of the wilderness he was able to adjust himself to the most difficult conditions. In leading the Hebrew serfs from the land of Egypt, he became indeed the creator of the future Hebrew Nation. As judge and counsellor, he taught concretely the broad principles which became the foundation of later Hebrew law."[2]

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1. Exodus 19:5
2. Kent, The Making of a Nation, p.87

Moses could never have achieved this success, were it not for the discipline of the desert and the influence of his father-in-law. Harris signified the importance of Moses' preparation for leadership in founding the Hebrew nation as follows: "He needed the discipline of the desert, if he would identify himself fully with the fortunes of his people...What is more important is the significance of his alliance by occupation and marriage with an important desert tribe. The Kenites, obscurely related to the tribe of Judah, were a nomadic tribe who acted as smiths to the scattered peoples of the Sinaitic peninsula."[1] He goes on to stress as important in the work of Moses for the founding of a nation, the "adoption of Yahweh as Israel's God," the "ratification of the Covenant," and the "codification of the moral law."[2] The whole work of Moses then, we might say, was important to the founding of the Hebrew nation.

B. <u>The Inaugurator of Justice</u>.

The E account of Jethro's advice to Moses throws quite a bit of light upon Hebrew judicial legislation and Moses as its inaugurator. The P account puts this event after the receiving of the covenant,[3] but we can safely take E's account in the matter that it was before receiving the covenant at

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1. Harris, The Hebrew Heritage, p.127
2. Ibid., pp.128-9
3. Deuteronomy 1:9-18

Sinai.[1] While they were encamped at the foot of the sacred mountain, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, a Midianite priest, came to the camp, bringing his daughter Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his two sons to him. "And Jethro took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."[2] Just preceding this we see the source of this fidelity to Jehovah expressed in the polytheistic statement of Jethro, "Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods."[3] Jehovah was but another God to Jethro. However, he made a timely recommendation to Moses about jurisdiction and judgment over his people at this time.

It was the practice in the time of Moses, so the critics point out, that the heads of families should be the judges, and the law of judgment was "custom." E. Kautzsch says, "As in the cultus of the Mosaic age, so also in the social life of Israel, controlling the factors was not a 'body of definite prescriptions, but the power of custom - custom, it is true, upon which from the first an ever-increasing influence was exerted by the religious uniqueness of Jahwism."[4] Theodore Robinson points out the same thing: "The responsibility of dealing with the differences between the individual members

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1. Exodus 18:1-26
2. Exodus 18:12
3. Exodus 18:11
4. E. Kautzsche, "History of Israel," Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, p.663b

would naturally fall upon the senior members of each family, and here we would find the germ of much larger and more complicated organization."[1]

When Jethro saw Moses overtaxing himself with the customary judicial duties of a leader, which Kent says are still probably practiced by nomadic tribes, -"then, as today, the head of the tribe was one to whom all questions of dispute were referred,"[2] - he made a suggestion that has influenced the whole world. Kent says, "Even in ancient Babylon there does not appear to have been a distinct class of judges, but instead, every man in authority was called upon to discharge at certain times judicial as well as administrative functions."[3]

Jethro suggested that Moses act as the supreme judge, and as such he was to exercise the regular functions of the priesthood. Robinson says, "In the last resort one of the essential duties of the tribal God was judicial."[4] Moses was to be "the people's advocate with God, and bring the cases to God, and make known to them the statutes and decisions, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." Furthermore, since the work was too great for himself alone, he was "to provide out of the people, God-fearing, reliable men, hating unjust gain; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, ruler s of hundreds, rulers

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1. Robinson, History of Israel, Vol. I, p.103
2. Kent, Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History, p.201
3. Ibid., p.201
4. Robinson, History of Israel, Vol. I, p.103

of fifties, and rulers of tens, and to let them judge the people at all times."[1] Then Moses would himself be given more time for his priestly duties and communication with Jehovah; "the hard cases were brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

Professor Robinson believes that Moses used the Urim and Thummim for deciding Jehovah's will. "Cases which could not be decided otherwise were brought to him, and he would make his will known to each. His method was usually through the application of sacred lot, or some other means which was clearly beyond human control."[2] Granting the probability of this, we, however, cannot discount the fact that at the same time Moses did make known also at such times the laws and principles which they were to observe.

As a priest of Jehovah, looked upon as one who should promulgate civil law, he handed down precepts which in time "inevitably developed into fixed customs which regulated the life of the nation."[3] As new needs arose, the principles underlying these customary laws were applied, and the resulting decisions supplemented still further the constantly growing body of customary law. The present literary form of these customary laws indicate that in time the more important of them were crystallized into Decalogues, each containing ten

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1. Exodus 19:20-22a
2. Robinson, History of Israel, Vol. I, p.103
3. Kent, Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History, p.202

short words, which were originally treasured in the minds of succeeding generations. As these decalogues and customary laws increased in number, they were difficult to remember. When the Hebrews acquired the art of writing, these decalogues were recorded, but the development of written codes is undoubtedly a later stage in the history of Hebrew law.

Whether or not Moses wrote is questioned. The two stones upon which Jehovah is supposed to have written with his own finger is sometimes considered fictitious. Whatever may have been written on these stones - if anything - is not important. The important thing is that he is traditionally considered the Hebrew lawgiver. Kent well outlines the truth of Moses as the inaugurator of justice, "as Jehovah's prophet, Moses proclaimed those germinal principles which underlie the Old Testament laws. As judge, he formulates these principles in definite decisions which in time grew into customary law, and then by slow stages was expanded into the ever-growing body of legislation. The process of growth was so gradual and the connection with Moses so close that each succeeding generation naturally and inevitably regarded Moses as the author of each and every code."[1]

In conclusion E. Kautzsch sums up our whole problem. He says, "What does all of this mean, it is asked, but that Moses made acquaintance at Sinai with Jahweh, and proclaimed him thenceforth as the God of Israel?.....Might not Sinai (or

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1. Kent, Heroes and Crises of Hebrew History, p.202

Horeb) have been for long the 'Mount of God' also for certain Israelitish tribes, as appears to be implied in Exodus 4:27?.. ..The work of Moses would thus have consisted in proclaiming and securing recognition for the special god of certain tribes as the God of the whole nation."....for "even in the oldest sources of the Pentateuch it is always implied that Jahweh was not proclaimed to Israel as an absolutely new, and therefore unknown God."[1]

C. The Religious Teacher of Israel.

1. Promotion of Yahweh worship.

As to who Yahweh was and his origin we have three accounts by the narrators. According to the approximate source, Jethro, the leader of the Kenites, was a priest of Jehovah at the time when Israel was even yet serving "other gods;" and this document speaks of "the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the (Euphrates) river and in Egypt."[2] Accordingly, the E document avoids the name "Jehovah" in Genesis, and also in Exodus "until the point is reached where Israel entered into covenant with the Kenites."[3]

The Judahite writer, however, refers to the Jehovah as the God worshipped by the fathers from the time of Adam when even Gentiles were in the habit of calling upon his name.[4]

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1. E. Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel," Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, pp.626-7
2. Joshua 24:2,14
3. Wallis, God and the Social Process, p.53; cf. Exodus 3:13-15
4. Genesis 4:26

The Priestly writer tries to correlate this discrepancy by the explanation that the Israelite forefathers knew not Jehovah by his name, but knew him as "El Shaddai." This has been translated as "God Almighty," but such translation is questioned by some.[1]

Budde comes to our aid here to explain that even after Israel became settled in the land of Canaan, Jehovah came from His abode on Mount Sinai to help Deborah and Barak win a battle over the Canaanites in the valley of Kishon.[2] Then three centuries later Elijah makes a journey to the "Mount of God, to Horeb," to see Jehovah in His home, which he did.[3] This long-held concept of the place and origin of Yahweh (Jehovah) is conclusive evidence to Budde as to whom God belonged. "The God of Sinai must have been worshipped by the people which dwelt in His territory, at Sinai.....Yahweh, therefore, is the God of the tribe to which Moses, on his flight from Egypt, joined himself in marriage; the mountain-God of Horeb, who appears to him and promises him to lead his brethren out of Egypt."[4] This is quite a common tendency, and well-justified it seems, that Yahweh worship did come into existence for Israel at the point of coalescence.between Israel and her relatives, the Kenites. The fact that Jethro was the priest who did the sacrificing and quoted the covenant between

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1. Wallis, God in the Social Process, p.53
2. Judges 5:4f
3. II Kings 19
4. Budde, Religion of Israel to the Exile, pp.18-19

himself and Yahweh when he greeted Moses and the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai[1] is significant.

The ancient song chants the origin of Yahweh:

"Yahweh came from Sinai,
And rose over Sier,
He shone from Mount Paran,
He came to Meribath-Kadesh."[2]

Olmstead believes, "All this implies that Yahweh was a desert god whose home was outside the later settlements of his worshippers; whether he was originally non-Hebrew is not so sure, though this has been confidently asserted. His characteristics were those of the desert, simple and austere; he was connected with the storm, on whose wings he rode; the phenomena of the epiphany at Sinai have suggested to some that there was also connection with volcanoes. His ritual was equally simple. As other nomadic deities, no image set forth his appearance. His abode was a tent, from which he went forth in a cloud by day and a fire by night to lead his people. Desert feasts and sacrifices and burnt offerings from the flocks and herds completed the worship."[3]

What did all this have to do with Moses? Moses had a deep religious experience at Horeb, and vowed to bring all Israel there to worship. This was done, and into the religious customs of Israel were codified the religious concepts of the Kenites. Moses was so intimate with Jehovah that he came to

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1. Exodus 18:11-12
2. Deuteronomy 33:2
3. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria, p.252

know him "face to face." Budde says that Israel had but one objective, "deliverance from bondage in Egypt. If it became converted to the new God, Yahweh, and took this step, it gave credence to Moses' preaching that God was able and willing to grant its wish."[1] It was this religious zeal in the heart of Moses that "Moses' Yahweh must become Israel's Yahweh,"[2] that made Moses the real promoter of Yahweh worship.

After the covenant at Mount Sinai, the ark became the source of God's presence, and He was worshipped because he was a war-God and could protect Israel. Moses sang the cultic war cry at the issuance of the ark to war and again when it returned.[3] That Jehovah is their God, protector, and they are his people is of no small significance to these primitive worshippers. Budde says, "What Yahweh-worship signified at this time is apparent. Israel needed a God mighty in war, and found Him here. So Yahweh remained henceforth...."[4]

2. Development of the Covenant idea.

a. Meaning of the covenant idea.

It is still a practice in certain parts of Arabia for individuals or tribes to join themselves together by covenant. "A covenant is the strongest bond that can bind together men

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1. Budde, The Religion of Israel to the Exile, p.25-6
2. Knopf, The Old Testament Speaks, p.84
3. Numbers 10:35
4. Budde, The Religion of Israel to the Exile, p.28

or tribes.....a covenant is established between two individuals when they have drunk their mingled blood."[1] At Sinai would be the proper place for Israel to make its covenant with Jehovah, for it was the covenant binding together those tribes which regarded the sacred mountain as Jehovah's abode. In the two earlier accounts of the making of the covenant, oxen were sacrificed and blood was sprinkled upon the people, as in later Hebrew ritual. "The essential element, however," says Professor C.F.Kent, "in the covenant was not the symbolism but the terms of agreement to which each of the contracting parties subscribed."[2]

Jehovah had already fulfilled his promise in the covenant by deliverance of the people from their bondage. As the E narrator sets forth in Jehovah's first appearance to Moses on Mount Sinai, "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a covenant unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."[3] Now that the people were delivered and serving Jehovah upon the mountain, he was to give them the covenant that he had formerly declared to them. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples."[4] Now the obligation upon the part of the people to keep the

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1. Kent, Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History, p.190
2. Ibid., p.190
3. Exodus 3:12
4. Exodus 19:5

covenant that Jehovah was to declare unto them was falling due. The oldest traditions state that the obligations assumed by the people were formulated in ten brief commandments, the Decalogue.

According to the early Judean narrative in Exodus 34, these commands were inscribed by Moses on two stone tablets which he had prepared by divine command. In the later versions of the story, Jehovah himself is represented as having inscribed them with his own finger.

b. The Decalogue.

Exodus 20:34; Deuteronomy 5.

Three days were set apart upon arriving at Sinai for preparation before Israel would be prepared to meet Jehovah. After washing of garments, adequate preparation, and instructions were given to the people not to go toward, nor touch, Sinai, the great approach of Jehovah upon the mountain brought forth wonders. It was amid thunderings, lightnings, volcanic tremblings of the earth, and smoke going up from the mountain like a furnace,[1] that Jehovah began proclaiming to the people His Ten Words or Commandments.

There are two separate Ten Commandments: those which were delivered on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20), which were preserved by E (also paralleled by D in Deuteronomy 5), and those found

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1. Exodus 19:18

in Exodus 34:14-26 which was recorded by J. Dr. Driver considers that the Commandments were "derived by E from a pre-existing source, the substance at least being engraved on the tablets in the Ark."[1] He thinks the hortatory parts in the fourth and fifth are of a later date, and that the original commandments were bare prohibition laws.[2]

Of the commandments which are best known and accepted today, there are many varied divisions:

(1) The Jews make the preface "I am the Lord..." the first commandment, and make the second and first into a single commandments.

(2) The Roman Catholics and Lutherans make the first and second as we have them into a single commandment, and our tenth into two.

(3) Our arrangement is that of Philo, Josephus, and Origen, and of the venerable Greek Church.[3]

Kent believes, "The content of the decalogue given in Exodus 34 at once suggests that it is the older of the two."[4] This decalogue demands absolute loyalty to Jehovah much as would be characteristic of such a time. The loyalty is to be in the form of sacrifices, observation of festivals, and conformity to ritual. It contains in outline the ancient popular definition of religion which prevailed until the time of the

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1. Driver, Introduction to Old Testament, p.30
2. Ibid., p.30
3. Carpenter, Composition of the Hexateuch, p.233
4. Kent, Heroes and Crises in Early Hebrew History, p.191

8th century prophets, who placed the emphasis upon spirit, deeds, and personal responsibility to both man and God. It is, therefore, in harmony with the point of view of the Mosaic Age. Thus we would have as the earliest conceived decalogue something about as follows:

I THOU SHALT WORSHIP NO OTHER GOD.

II THOU SHALT MAKE THEE NO MOLTEN GODS.

III THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD SHALT THOU OBSERVE.

IV EVERY FIRST-BORN IS MINE.

V SIX DAYS SHALT THOU TOIL, BUT THE SEVENTH THOU SHALT REST.

VI THOU SHALT OBSERVE THE FEAST OF WEEKS AND INGATHERINGS AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

VII THOU SHALT NOT OFFER THE BLOOD OF MY SACRIFICE WITH LEAVEN.

VIII THE FAT OF MY FEAST SHALL NOT BE LEFT UNTIL MORNING.

IX THE BEST OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THY LAND SHALT THOU BRING TO THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH THY GOD.

X THOU SHALT NOT SEETHE A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK.[1]

In this Decalogue we have the final essence of the Covenant of Yahweh with Israel, His people, in as nearly its original form as can be had today. The other attempts at a consummation of the original Ten Words are too much affected by later prophetic movements. Peritz, as we have already quoted, picks out seven different aspects, or developments of this Decalogue.[2]

1. Exodus 34
2. Peritz, Old Testament History, p.25

That Moses did promulgate some primitive concise form of Decalogue is upheld by E.Kautzsch. His only problem is a "formidable difficulty presented by the prohibition of the use of images." He believes that this idea was contributed by the 8th century prophets. He even ascertains a probability "that originally another commandment stood in the place of this one, or that Moses promulgated not ten but seven commandments."[1]

We can again accept Kautzsch's opinion with a great deal of confidence; the result of the above discussion is that the Mosaic origin of some rudimentary form of the Decalogue (apart from the command against it) does not appear to be absolutely excluded."[2] We are more definitely decided on this than most any other point. The great fact is: The Hebrew nation owes its present origin, development, and contribution to something more than a mere tale, fiction, or tradition. Moses laid a foundation which was so inculcated into the consciousness and customs of the people that it was, or became, a covenant with Jehovah.

While Moses laid the foundation, God did give the inspiration and power to Moses in a peculiar and unique sense. "The work of Moses is traced to Divine revelation.....pon the foundation laid by him there has arisen in the course of three thousand years the building which includes also the Christian nations. But the laying of a foundation like this is beyond

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1. Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel", Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, p.634b
2. Ibid., p.634b

a man's power; the capacity must have been given him by God. And on this very account the importance of the personality of Moses cannot be exaggerated."[1]

D. The Character of Moses.

A man as great as Moses, of whom we know so little, except as we depict it from tradition, we can scarcely characterize by any one trait or system of traits, but we must consider the whole trend of his life. The first thing we notice about the character of Moses is his whole-hearted, unselfish devotion to a cause, as the servant of Jehovah.

Jehovah came to Moses in Midian to call him to a task for which Moses was promised nothing. The covenant was to be with the people whom he should deliver. Moses already knew Jehovah, and he was serving him evidently at the time. The people whom Moses were to deliver were serfs, common brick layers, who lacked imagination and initiative of their own. It was Moses' task to deliver them from slavery, lead them in the desert, protect them from starvation and thirst, teach them laws of organization and religion, direct them into a spiritual realization of the presence of God, and finally drive out hostile nations from the land so the Hebrews could have a place to settle. No wonder Wade says that Moses "occupies a foremost place"[2] among all Hebrew characters.

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1. Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel," Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, p.624b-625a
2. Wade, Old Testament History, p.132

My Servant Moses

1. The unswerving fidelity of Moses.

Even as Abraham received in the Scriptures as his special designation the title of "Friend of God,"[1] so Moses bears the title of "The Servant of the Lord."[2] The special quality which this epithet marks is his unswerving faithfulness -- that absolute unshaken fidelity to God which characterized him through his entire career. This almost absolute fidelity came from the heart of a man that was consecrated in his totality - not only himself, but his entire family - to God.

In Midian, upon the birth of his second son, Moses gave to him the name "Eliezer," for he said: "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."[3] The name of his son, "Eliezer," meaning "God helps," was to be a constant reminder to himself and family of that help. In his dealings with Pharaoh, Moses from first to last follows exactly all the directions that God gave him. And likewise, in his leadership of the Hebrews there was little less than a constant reminder and pleading to them of God's claims, God's will to bless, and God's power to punish. Moses was "faithful to God in all his house"[4] - i.e., in the entire government and administration which he exercised for forty years over Israel, God's "house" or "household."

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1. II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 51:8; James 2:23.
2. Exodus 14:31; Numbers 12:7; Deuteronomy 34:5; Joshua 1:1; Hebrews 3:5
3. Exodus 18:4 4. Hebrews 3:5

Moses, in his constant awareness of his prophetic mission to the Hebrew people, was continuously witnessing to them for God. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets: the Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"[1] As such a prophet he was a witness for Jehovah unto the Hebrews upon numerous occasions: "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord;"[2] "the Lord shall fight for you;"[3] "at even you shall know that the Lord hath brought you out;"[4] "this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat;"[5] "wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?"[6] "wherefore do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord?"[7] "the Lord your God, which goeth before you, he shall fight for you;"[8] "the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God;"[9] ""the Lord thy God is a merciful God, He will not forsake thee;"[10] "thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him shalt thou name, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and swear by His Name."[11]

This faithfulness, however, was somewhat marred by the impetuous and hasty action of this Servant of God. At the waters of Meribah[12] Moses became tired out at the unfaithfulness of his followers, and in an impetuous impotence cried out unto them, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And as a consequence of this failure to give God

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1. Amos 3:7
2. Exodus 14:13
3. Exodus 14:14
4. Exodus 16:6
5. Exodus 16:15
6. Exodus 16:15
7. Numbers 14:41
8. Deuternnmmy 1:30
9. Deuteronomy 4:24
10. Deuteronomy 4:36
11. Deuteronomy 10:20
12. Numbers 20:10-13

the glory, and the taking of credit for the miracle unto himself, he was not permitted to enter into the Promised Land.

2. The social passion of Moses.

Human society has rarely presented a more baffling social problem than that which confronted Moses in Egypt. And it is no small tribute paid to him by C.F. Kent: "Moses is the first man in human society with a well-developed social consciousness."[1] We have seen how Moses was trained for this great and baffling problem. Each factor in his training was essential to his final work. His birth and upbringing as a child aligned him with his race. His later culture gave him a large outlook and enabled him to understand the baffling social and economic problems which he sought to solve. The supreme crisis of his life came to him in his young manhood - the period when most prophets awake to their mission. A cruel act of oppression suddenly aroused his loyalty to his kinsmen and so stirred his social consciousness that he awoke to a vivid realization of the injustice of Pharaoh's policy.

Hot-headed and red-handed Moses attacked the perpetrator of this injustice and slew the Egyptian overlord.[2] This rash impulsiveness of the youthful Moses brought a painful experience. He who had been a noble in the king's court, now became a fugitive from justice - for justice. Such violence

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1. Kent, Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, p.7
2. Exodus 2:11-12

is always certain to bring hurt to a just cause, and so it did in this case. Moses had to flee to the land of Midian for his life, and probably increased the woe upon his kinsmen. Not only that, but we see that he was misunderstood and mistrusted by his kinsmen, when they openly resented his interference on the following day. Kent points out, "The only true method is that of Moses:" the one he adopted upon returning to Egypt from Midian, "education and organization of those industrially oppressed; clear presentation of their claims and rights; patient, persistent agitation in order to protect their interests. Those are the methods which won in Egypt in the twelfth century before Christ, and they alone will secure justice for the same classes today."[1]

All through his life Moses quickly and violently reacted to the ill-doings of others, but was characterized as being "meek" himself. His great social passion is verified not only by his rash act in Egypt when he "slew the Egyptian,"[2] but in his chivalrous deliverance of the daughters of Reuel from the rude Midianite shepherds,[3] in his hasty breaking of the Tables of the Law on his first descent from Sinai,[4] in his command to the Levites to take their swords and "slay every man his brother,"[5] again in his wrath against Korah and his company, who wished to degrade Aaron,[6] as well as his con-

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1. Kent, Social Teachings of Jesus and the Prophets, p.12
2. Exodus 2:12
3. Exodus 2:17-19
4. Exodus 32:19
5. Exodus 32:27
6. Numbers 16:5-15

duct at the "waters of strife," where he himself had to be reprimanded by God.

It was only in his own case, when he was individually concerned, that Moses was "meek," that he did not resent wrong-doing, or inflict punishment on the wrong-doer. He interceded for the people and obtained pardon when they rejected his authority;[1] he besought God to heal Miriam, when her sin was against him had caused her to be smitten with leprosy.[2] He was mild in his rebuke of Aaron, when Aaron had grievously failed in the trust that he had reposed in him.[3] Once only was he angered at a slight offered to himself, when Pharaoh bade him "see his face no more."[4] We may feel sure that his anger at this time was less on his own account than on account of the insult offered to God in the person of His messenger, for Moses was "the Servant of the Lord."

3. Moses, the man of faith.

Into the catalogue of Old Testament saints set forth as examples to Christians by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Moses enters by reason of his faith. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."[5] "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him

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1. Numbers 14:4-20
2. Numbers 12:1-13
3. Exodus 32:21
4. Exodus 28; 9:8
5. Hebrews 11:24

that is invisible."[1] The faith of Moses almost never wavers. When Pharaoh threatens his life,[2] or the Red Sea and the Egyptian host shut him in,[3] or the people are "almost ready to stone him,"[4] or Amalek meets him in the way and seeks to destroy both him and his people,[5] or for the people's sin he is condemned to eight and thirty years of aimless wandering in the wilderness,[6] or his tribe rises up and seeks to shake off his rule,[7] or his dearest forsake him,[8] or the entire nation proposes to put itself under another leader,[9] or Sihon blocks his entrance into Palestine,[10] or Balak "seeks enchantments" against him,[11] or Og the giant comes out to battle against him in Edrei,[12] Moses remains firm, unmoved - he has "put his trust in God, and does not fear what flesh can do unto him." He is certain that God will interpose, that He will not suffer His purpose to be frustrated, that He will come down to vindicate His own honor, that nothing will be able to stand against Him. He sets before his face always "Him that is invisible;" in every difficulty he flies to Him, entreats Him, beseeches Him, implores His mercy, His protection, His gracious favor, His forgiveness, and receiving His vindication Moses turns to the people with a countenance that literally glows from the glory of God - "but Moses wist not that his face did shine."

It is true that his faith is sustained in a miraculous

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1. Hebrews 11:27
2. Exodus 10:28
3. Exodus 14:9
4. Exodus 17:4
5. Deuteronomy 25:17,18
6. Numbers 14:28-35
7. Numbers 16:1-32
8. Numbers 12:1-11
9. Numbers 14:4
10. Numbers 21:23
11. Numbers 24:1
12. Numbers 21:33

way; we, then, are prone to excuse our faithlessness with the supposition that the same strain was not put on him as on other men. Moses saw God, or at least saw "his similitude,"[1] and conversed with him face to face "as a man speaketh unto his friend."[2] But still his faith is something marvellous, something almost without parallel. It takes him to God at every moment; it sustains him under every trial and disappointment; in a lifetime of a hundred and twenty years, it fails him perhaps three or four times; otherwise it is a constant support and stay. To the last he has the eternal God for his refuge and feels underneath him the everlasting arms.[3] Not even Abraham, "the father of the faithful," is more a man of faith than he.

4. The unselfishness of Moses.

Of all his qualities, of all his many excellences, the most remarkable and the most characteristic of Moses is his unselfishness. His own interest, his own advancement, is never his motive. He does not seek greatness; greatness is thrust upon him. In Egypt he abdicates his princely rank, and throws himself into the almost hopeless cause of his oppressed brethren; in Midian he is quite content to be a shepherd, and aims at no higher condition; when the time for his call comes, all his efforts are directed towards escaping compliance with

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1. Numbers 12:8
2. Exodus 33:11
3. Deuteronomy 33:27

the call. In the early portion of his ministry, he pushes Aaron to the front and remains himself in the background; at Sinai he declines to be put in the position of Abraham, and to become the father of all the faithful; later on he prays that his name may be blotted out from God's book rather than that God's favor and guidance should be withdrawn from the people.[1] This is perhaps the greatest of all traditions about the unselfishness of Moses.

Forced to the front himself when troubles thicken, he assumes no state, takes no titles of honor, claims no position for his sons, either in his own lifetime or afterwards; he assigns the succession to a worthy and noble man (but a stranger), who feared God, the faithful Joshua. An ambitious man, a self-seeking man, would, in the position which Moses occupied, have established a dynasty. Moses, under divine guidance, gave his tribe a certain preeminence, but asked nothing for his descendants.[2]

5. The humility and meekness of Moses.

Moses' unselfishness suggests another trend in his character: humility and meekness. An epithet applied to Moses in Numbers 12:3, "Now the Man Moses was very meek, above all men on the face of the earth," is spoken of as characteristic, which "seems to have been one of the secrets of his success."[3]

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1. Exodus 33; Numbers 14
2. Judges 18:30; I Chronicles 23:16,17; 24:24
3. Foakes-Jackson, Biblical History of the Hebrews, p.70

This idea has been carried out at considerable length in the Psalms to designate the "humble" or "afflicted" in Israel.

He shows his humility and meek disposition when he is called by Jehovah to deliver Israel from Egypt. His problem is that he cannot "speak" to people. "And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent (a man of words), neither heretofor, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."[1] The text tells us that God had to teach Moses and "be with his mouth" because of his meekness and humility.[2] This ability of Moses to keep silent, to overlook the weaknesses of his people, their shortcomings and backslidings, won for him the designation of "the most enduring of men."[3]

Jesus said in his time-transcending Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."[4] Moses was just such a man. He coveted no power for himself, yet power was thrust upon him; he desired not to have his name perpetuated by a great nation coming from his loins, but the Hebrew nation which he served in meekness and humility heaped upon him great laud, honor, praise, and glory. A man hardly regarded during his lifetime, after his death he was to his people the "man of God,"[5] the "Servant of the Lord,"[6]

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1. Exodus 4:10
2. Exodus 4:12
3. Wade, Old Testament History, p.70
4. Matthew 5:5
5. Deuteronomy 33:1
6. Deuteronomy 34:5

the prophet like to whom none ever after arose,[1] the "chosen one of God,"[2] "Moses, beloved of God and men, whose memorial is blessed,"[3] "in intelligence surpassing all men,"[4] "as a general equalled by few,"[5] "great in all respects,"[6] "king, lawgiver, high-priest, prophet in one,"[7] and "in all that he did or said a pattern to all men."[8] Nor was his popularity limited to Hebrews alone. George Rawlinson records that Manetho, the Egyptian, knew Moses and spoke of him as the founder of Jewish polity, and the author of the Jewish law; besides him other Egyptian historians, Greek and Roman authors, attribute like power, wisdom, and courage to the meek and humble Moses.[9]

6. The patriotism of Moses.

The next characteristic of Moses with which I wish to deal is that of single-hearted patriotism. This is one of the great tributes paid to Moses through all ages, that he was the promoter of the Hebrew people's nation-consciousness. Perhaps this characteristic is included in the many-sidedness of his character, Peritz states. "He appears as a leader, organizer, legislator, judge, priest, and prophet. It would seem as if the last term comprises all his functions, at any rate, it predominates in them all."[10] If as priest Moses was most truly patriotic, we do not say, but we do know from his constant

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1. Deuteronomy 34:10
2. Psalms 106:23
3. Ecclesiastes 45:1
4. Josephus, "Ant. Jud." IV, 8:49
5. Ibid., 8:49
6. Philo, II, p.280
7. Ibid., p.179
8. Ibid., pp.383-4
9. Moses, His Life and Times, p.204
10. Wade, Old Testament History, p.93

devotion to his people he rendered an unspeakable service at a great sacrifice to himself. Educated amid all the splendors of an Egyptian palace, married into a priestly family, and settled in a prosperous land as he was, it took a great deal of real fidelity to Jehovah as well as tribal patriotism to uproot himself as he did for his people.

The true praise and the true glory of Moses is that, bred from infancy under circumstances that might well have attracted him to idolatry and to laxity of living, he turned from them by a strong will and effort, and chose the better part. He chose to abide by the One God, "the God of his father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."[1] He chose to cling to his brethren, and "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."[2] In this"great decision" all was involved. It was for this that God exalted him and "recompensed" him.[3] His reward, however, was not after that of worldly men, power and honor and riches, a soft easy life of worldly enjoyment, a position of dignity and repose among the great of the earth, but a life of long toilsome service for the Lord. Often he was fatigued, constantly troubled, bereaved, disappointed, and scantily nourished, but inspired by the consciousness of an inner light, he cheerfully continued in close communion with Jehovah. He emancipated an enslaved, ignorant, thankless, and

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1. Exodus 3:6
2. Hebrews 11:25
3. Hebrews 11:26

jealous tribe of kin; instructed, guided, trained, and fitted them for the inheritance that was theirs, so that within a comparatively few years, this nomadic tribe was able to bear witness of God to all the nations.

7. Summary of the character of Moses.

Let us sum up the character of the life of Moses in the words of another grand and ardent soul, subdued like his own by the marvellous dealings with him of the Highest: "This Moses, humble in refusing so great a service; resigned in undertaking, faithful in discharging, unwearied in fulfilling it; vigilant in governing his people; resolute in correcting them, ardent in loving them, and patient in bearing with them; the intercessor for them with the God whom they provoked - this Moses - such and so great a man - we love, we admire, and so far as may be, we imitate."[1]

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1. Augustine, Contra Faustum, viii, p.162; cf. J.Hastings, The Greater Men and Women of the Bible, p.312

A SUMMARY

Moses, a child of enslaved Hebrews living in Egypt during the reign of the Pharaohs in the 13th century, possibly during the reigh of Rameses II, was given an Egyptian name, "Mesu," meaning "child" or "son." For our information concerning Moses we are dependent upon documents and traditions recorded three or four centuries or more after his death. From some of the poetry and references incorporated in the Pentateuch we are confident that the J, E, D, and P narratives did have some original sources to which they referred. These narrators, however, all reflect the theologies and purports of their own interests in interpretation and quotation of Moses, which requires extensive critical genius in restoring the historicity of Moses. The belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is universally discredited, but rather that he inspired its writing. The Pentateuch has gone through the hands of the redactor many times. The Old Testament narrative we now possess of Moses is an incorporation of the J, E, D, and P. narratives, plus the redactors.

Moses is dealt with in each document in the light of the age in which the narrator lived. The J and E documents are far more authoritative than the D or P accounts. While many of the more minute details cannot be accepted as authoritative, these are some facts about his life and work which are beyond serious challenge. (1) Moses received his call from Yahweh to

deliver Israel from Egyptian slavery while he was serving as an apprentice under his Midianite priest father-in-law upon Mount Horeb-Sinai. (2) Moses was an instrument in the hand of Jehovah by which Israel escaped from Pharaoh in Egypt, led the people through the perils of the Red Sea, supplied food and water, and was their guide across the desert to Mount Horeb-Sinai. (3) Through Moses Israel received Jehovah's revelation of His Divine Will, which was a new aspect in their religion, the foundation of Judaism and Christianity, the essence of which we have in the Decalogue.[1] (4) Furthermore, Moses planted the seeds of nationalism that unified the chaotic classes of slaves into a nation-conscious, Yahweh-conscious people of promise. (5) Israel actually owes its existence to the consecrated devotion of its unselfish patriot, leader, and founder who interpreted to them Yahweh through his own personality.

Naturally tradition has seized upon the significance of the character and work of Moses, and it has woven about the elements of mystery in his life something of legend. Because of this, Jewish tradition is of little value in that it is too fanciful. New Testament references are but a reiterationof Old Testament conceptions, possibly stated in New Testament context. On the other hand, it seems only natural that this national hero, standing as he does at the beginning

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1. Exodus 34

of the united life of Israel, and furnishing for that life fundamental principles, should become increasingly the center of later religious and literary interpretations.

As Creator of his nation, he laid the first principles of a unified government in the Tent of Meeting. All the people had been inseparably joined together in a covenant with Jehovah by his deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Jehovah's requirements were that He should be their God, and they should be his people. This Covenant was established upon the ethical, as opposed to a naturalistic basis, "It was not Israel that had first chosen Jehovah, but Jehovah that had chosen Israel."[1] In fulfillment of his part of the covenant by the force of the law of custom Israel must keep Jehovah's Decalogue. Justice was established through organisation of a system of judges to answer the easier problems, but the harder problems were to be brought to Moses, their high priest. One method of settling these problems was for him to find Jehovah's will in the matter. The Urim and Thummim were possibly cast to discover His will in some of these problems.

In the capacity of religious instructor of his people Moses promoted the worship of Jehovah as it had never been done hithertofore. Moses no doubt received much of his religious instruction from the Kenites. Jehovah worship was performed on Mount Horeb-Sinai. That was a part of Jehovah's

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1. E. Kautzsch,"Religion of Israel," Hastings Bible Dictionary, Extra Volume, p.632

covenant with Moses that after delivering the Israelites they should "serve God upon this mountain."[1] Jethro instigated the first sacrificing at the foot of Horeb, showing his worship of Jehovah formerly. Moses transmitted to Israel knowledge of Jehovah as their God, as he had been the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With Jehovah they through Moses made a covenant saying, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do."[2]

Throughout the whole of his life there appears in Moses definite qualities which contribute to his success and greatness, though they appear at first paradoxical. The chief qualities of Moses are unselfishness, humility, and single-hearted patriotism. He was furthermore a leader, organizer, legislator, judge, priest, and prophet. It would seem that this latter function predominates in them all, for in him we have the greatest of all prophets. In the words of E, "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face."[3]

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1. Exodus 3:12
2. Exodus 19:8
3. Deuteronomy 34:10

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