

## Paper 96 — Yahweh—God of the Hebrews

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*This chart is a revision of the 2011 and 2015 versions.*

Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

### Sources for Paper 96, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) E. Washburn Hopkins, Ph.D., LL.D., *Origin and Evolution of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923)
- (2) Lewis Browne, *This Believing World: A Simple Account of the Great Religions of Mankind* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926)
- (3) “God,” by Right Rev. Arthur John Maclean, M.A., D.D., in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

*Note:* This source is coded **Hastings’ DB.**

- (4) James Henry Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1933)
- (5) “Israel,” by Rev. George A. Barton, A.M., Ph.D., in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

*Note:* This source is coded **Hastings’ DB.**

### Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.

- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)
- (f) **Light green** indicates Bible passages or fragments thereof.

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# P A P E R 9 6 — YAHWEH—GOD OF THE HEBREWS

XVI: RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY  
 (Hopkins 274)

96:0.1 In conceiving of Deity, man first includes all gods, then subordinates all foreign gods to his tribal deity, and finally excludes all but the one God of final and supreme value.

The Jews synthesized all gods into their more sublime concept of the Lord God of Israel.

Some sage of the Rig-Veda (c. 1000 B.C.) first speaks of “the one spirituality of the gods.” It follows (in India) that “all the gods are one,” forms of one power.

The Hindus likewise combined their multifarious deities into the “one spirituality of the gods” portrayed in the Rig-Veda,

Elsewhere all the other gods, who are still to be worshipped, are relegated to a place under one greater god and higher power, a Bel Marduk.

while the Mesopotamians reduced their gods to the more centralized concept of Bel-Marduk.

Or, again, all other gods and spirits are regarded as foes of one supreme god; hence they must be banished and he alone must be worshipped, Yahweh (Ho 275).

These ideas of monotheism matured all over the world not long after the appearance of Machiventa Melchizedek at Salem in Palestine.

[contd] Through these three paths, of inclusion, of subordination, of exclusion, men ascend from their first vague idea of objects as power-possessing and special powerful phenomena to the idea of one great power, who either embraces other powers or rules over them or drives them out (Ho 275).

In India, the first monotheistic trend did not pursue the process of elevating the sun or any other natural phenomenon to supreme place; that course led to pantheism. Rather it argued out first a creative power, then took that power as head of the pantheon, and finally recognized it as the Supreme God, to whom other gods were mere underling spirits (Ho 279).

[But the progeny of Abraham through Isaac as intermarried with the Kenites were the only line which long continued to nourish any clear concept of the Salem teachings (93:10.3).]

[[Melchizedek] came to achieve two tasks: to keep alive on earth the truth of the one God and to prepare the way for the subsequent mortal bestowal of a Paradise Son of that Universal Father (93:4:15).]

But the Melchizedek concept of Deity was unlike that of the evolutionary philosophy of

inclusion, subordination, and exclusion;

it was based exclusively on creative power

and very soon influenced the highest deity concepts of Mesopotamia, India, and Egypt.

96:0.2 The Salem religion was revered as a tradition by the Kenites and several other Canaanite tribes.

And this was one of the purposes of Melchizedek's incarnation: That a religion of one God should be so fostered as to prepare the way for the earth bestowal of a Son of that one God. Michael could hardly come to Urantia until there existed a people believing in the Universal Father among whom he could appear.

96:0.3 The Salem religion persisted among the Kenites in Palestine as their creed, and this religion as it was later adopted by the Hebrews was influenced, first, by Egyptian moral teachings; later, by Babylonian theologic thought; and lastly, by Iranian conceptions of good and evil. Factually the Hebrew religion is predicated upon the covenant between Abraham and Machiventa Melchizedek, evolutionally it is the outgrowth of many unique situational circumstances, but culturally it has borrowed freely from the religion, morality, and philosophy of the entire Levant. It is through the Hebrew religion that much of the morality and religious thought of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Iran was transmitted to the Occidental peoples.

## 1. DEITY CONCEPTS AMONG THE SEMITES

### BOOK SIX: WHAT HAPPENED IN ISRAEL: I. JUDAISM (Browne 223)

1. The cradle of the Hebrew people—the lure of the Fertile Crescent—Egypt and the Exodus. (Browne 223)

Like the Babylonians and Phoenicians, the Hebrews were Semites, for their cradle-land was that vast wilderness we call the Arabian Desert.... They imagined that all objects around them were possessed of terrible spirits, and their worship was no more than a dark magic-mongering (B 223-24).

96:1.1 The early Semites regarded everything as being indwelt by a spirit.

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The mental horizon widens; instead of one spirit-power in each grain to be urged, it is observed that all the grains stop growing and die at the same time; so there must be a grain-power in general, which dies when winter comes. Will it revive again? The clan with one accord do what they can to ensure this. The spirit of vegetation must live again. A great one power has arisen where before were many little powers.

The year-spirit or vegetation-spirit becomes lord of yearly productivity, Lord of Progeny (Prajapati).

But in the meantime, out of a thousand powers, others have become prominent, local powers of hill and storm, the distant sun-power (identified with Prajapati), the fire-power, the water-power, some generally, others locally important.

A pantheon is already in process of formation; it is accepted; there are many gods (Ho 274-75).

There were spirits of the animal and vegetable worlds;

annual spirits, the lord of progeny;

spirits of fire, water, and air;

a veritable pantheon of spirits to be feared and worshiped.

And the teaching of Melchizedek regarding a Universal Creator never fully destroyed the belief in these subordinate spirits or nature gods.

96:1.2 The progress of the Hebrews from polytheism through henotheism to monotheism was not an unbroken and continuous conceptual development. They experienced many retrogressions in the evolution of their Deity concepts, while during any one epoch there existed varying ideas of God among different groups of Semite believers.

**GOD.** (*Hastings' DB* 299)

2. **Names of God in OT.**—It will be convenient to gather together the principal OT names of God before considering the conceptions of successive ages. The names will to some extent be a guide to us (*HDB* 299).

[*Note:* See also 142:3.]

[*Compare:*] (f) **Jehovah**, properly **Yahweh** (usually written **Jahweh**), perhaps a pre-historic name. Prof. H. Guthe ... thinks that it is of primitive antiquity and cannot be explained; that it tells us nothing about the nature of the Godhead. This is probably true of the name in pre-Mosaic times; that it was then in existence was certainly the opinion of the Jahwist writer (Gn 4:26, J), and is proved by its occurrence in proper names, *e.g.* in 'Jochebed,' the name of Moses' mother (Ex 6:20, P).... It became the common name of God in post-Mosaic times, and was the specially *personal* designation. [Etc.] (*HDB* 299)

[*Compare:*] (d) **El Elyon**, 'God Most High,' found in Gn 14:18ff (a passage derived from a 'special source' of the Pentateuch, *i.e.* not from J, E, or P), and thought by Driver ... perhaps to have been originally the name of a Canaanite deity, but applied to the true God.... That 'El Elyon' was a commonly used name is made probable by the fact that it is found in an Aramaic translation in Dn 3:26, 4:2, 5:18-21 and in a Greek translation in 1 Es 6:2 etc., Mk 5:7, Ac 16:17, and so in He 7:1, where it is taken direct from Gn 14:18 LXX (*HDB* 299).

From time to time numerous terms were applied to their concepts of God, and in order to prevent confusion these various Deity titles will be defined as they pertain to the evolution of Jewish theology:

96:1.3 1. **Yahweh** was the god of the southern Palestinian tribes, who associated this concept of deity with Mount Horeb, the Sinai volcano.

Yahweh was merely one of the hundreds and thousands of nature gods which held the attention and claimed the worship of the Semitic tribes and peoples.

96:1.4 2. **El Elyon**. For centuries after Melchizedek's sojourn at Salem his doctrine of Deity persisted in various versions but was generally connoted by the term El Elyon, the **Most High God of heaven**.

Many Semites, including the immediate descendants of Abraham, at various times worshiped both Yahweh and El Elyon.

[Compare:] (c) **El Shaddai**.—The meaning of *Shaddai* is uncertain; the name has been derived from a root meaning ‘to overthrow,’ and would then mean ‘the Destroyer’; or from a root meaning ‘to pour,’ and would then mean ‘the Rain-giver’; or it has been interpreted as ‘my Mountain’ or ‘my Lord.’ ... According to the Priestly writer (P), the name was characteristic of the patriarchal age (Ex 6:3, cf. Gn 17:1, 28:3). ‘Shaddai’ alone is used often in OT as a poetical name of God (Nu 24:4 etc.), and is rendered ‘the Almighty’ (HDB 299).

[Amenemope taught that riches and fortune were the gift of God, and this concept thoroughly colored the later appearing Hebrew philosophy (95:4.2).]

[Compare:] (b) **El**, common to Semitic tribes, a name of doubtful meaning, but usually interpreted as ‘the Strong One’ or as ‘the Ruler.’ It is probably not connected philologically with *Elohim* (Driver, *Genesis*, p. 404). It is used often in poetry and in proper names; in prose rarely, except as part of a compound title like *El Shaddai*, or with an epithet or descriptive word attached; as ‘God of Bethel,’ *El-Bethel* (Gn 31:13); ‘a jealous God,’ *El qannā*’ (Ex 20:5) (HDB 299).

96:1.5 3. **El Shaddai**. It is difficult to explain what El Shaddai stood for. This idea of God was a composite derived from the teachings of Amenemope’s Book of Wisdom modified by Ikhnaton’s doctrine of Aton and further influenced by Melchizedek’s teachings embodied in the concept of El Elyon.

But as the concept of El Shaddai permeated the Hebrew mind, it became thoroughly colored with the Yahweh beliefs of the desert.

96:1.6 One of the dominant ideas of the religion of this era was the Egyptian concept of divine Providence, the teaching that material prosperity was a reward for serving El Shaddai.

96:1.7 4. **El**. Amid all this confusion of terminology and haziness of concept, many devout believers sincerely endeavored to worship all of these evolving ideas of divinity, and there grew up the practice of referring to this composite Deity as El. And this term included still other of the Bedouin nature gods.



[Compare:] (a) **Elohim**, the ordinary Hebrew name for God, a plural word of doubtful origin and meaning. It is used, as an ordinary plural, of heathen gods, or of supernatural beings (1 S 28:13), or even of earthly judges (Ps 82:1-6, cf. Jn 10:34); but when used of the One God, it takes a singular verb. As so used, it has been thought to be a relic of pre-historic polytheism, but more probably it is a 'plural of majesty,' such as is common in Hebrew, or else it denotes the *fulness* of God. The **singular Eloah** is rare except in Job; it is found in poetry and in late prose (*HDB* 299).

[And side by side with [the] religious cults flourishing among the lower elements in the population of the [Roman] Empire, different schools of philosophic thought flourished among the more learned folk. One of these was the philosophy developed in the city of **Alexandria** by an Egyptian **Jew** named Philo. According to this philosophy, God, the Father of All, was too vast to have direct contact with the earth, and therefore manifested himself only through an intermediary called the *Logos*, the "Word." This *Logos*, which was sometimes called the "Son of God" or the "Holy Ghost," had created the earth, and was the sole mediator between it and heaven (**Browne** 278).]

In the period from the Exile to Christ ... there was a tendency greatly to exaggerate God's *transcendence*, to make Him self-centred and self-absorbed, and to widen the gulf between Him and the world ... The same tendency is seen in the almost constant use of '**Elohim**' rather than of 'Jahweh' in the later books of OT (*HDB* 301).

96:1.8 5. **Elohim**. In Kish and Ur there long persisted Sumerian-Chaldean groups who taught a three-in-one God concept founded on the traditions of the days of Adam and Melchizedek. This doctrine was carried to Egypt, where this Trinity was worshiped under the name of Elohim, or in the singular as Eloah.

The philosophic circles of Egypt and later **Alexandrian** teachers of **Hebraic** extraction taught this unity of pluralistic Gods,

and many of Moses' advisers at the time of the exodus believed in this Trinity.

But the concept of the trinitarian **Elohim** never became a real part of Hebrew theology until after they had come under the political influence of the Babylonians.

96:1.9 6. *Sundry names*. The Semites disliked to speak the name of their Deity, and they therefore resorted to numerous appellations from time to time, such as:

Above all, the *quasi*-personification of the 'Spirit of God' in the prophetic books (esp. Is 48:16, 63:10) and in the Psalms (esp. 51:11), and the expectation of a superhuman King Messiah, would [pave the way for the gospel teaching with regard to distinctions in the Godhead] (*HDB* 301).

The Spirit of God,

The old narratives of the Theophanies, of the mysterious 'Angel of the Lord' who appeared at one time to be God and at another to be distinct from Him, would prepare men's minds in some degree for the Incarnation, by suggesting a personal unveiling of God ... (*HDB* 301).

The Lord,

The Angel of the Lord,

[See 96:1.5, above.]

The Almighty,

He is the 'Holy One' of Israel' (Is 1:4 and often) (*M* 301).

The Holy One,

[See 96:1.4, above.]

The Most High,

(e) **Adonai** (= 'Lord'), a title, common in the prophets, expressing dependence, as of a servant on his master, or of a wife on her husband (Ottley, *BL2* p. 192 f.) (*HDB* 299).

Adonai,

[I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire (Dan. 7:9 [*et al.*]).]

The Ancient of Days,

[And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let me people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness (Exod. 5:1 [*et al.*]).]

The Lord God of Israel,

We notice, lastly, that ‘Jahweh’ and ‘Elohim’ are joined together in Gn 2:4-3:22, 9:26, Ex 9:30, and elsewhere. Jahweh is identified with the Creator of the Universe (Otley, *BL2* p. 195) (*HDB* 300).

The Hellenistic Jews, in Greek, substituted ‘Kyrios’ (Lord) for the sacred name, and it is thus rendered in LXX and NT (*HDB* 300).

(g) **Jah** is an apocopated form of *Jahweh*, and appears in poetry (e.g. Ps 68:4, Ex 15:2) in the word ‘Hallelujah’ and in proper names. For *Jah Jahweh* see Is 11:2, 26:4 (*HDB* 300).

(h) **Jahweh Tsēbāōth** (‘Sabaoth’ of Ro 9:29 and Ja 5:4), in EV ‘**LORD of hosts**’ (wh. see), appears frequently in the prophetic and post-exilic literature (Is 1:9, 6:3, Ps 84:1 etc.). This name seems originally to have referred to God’s presence with the armies of Israel in the times of the monarchy; as fuller conceptions of God became prevalent, the name received an ampler meaning (*HDB* 300).

[See Matt. 5:16, 45; Luke 11:2; *et al.*]

‘**Jehovah**’ is a modern and hybrid form, dating only from A.D. 1518. The name ‘Jahweh’ was so sacred that it was not, in later Jewish times, pronounced at all, perhaps owing to an over-literal interpretation of the Third Commandment. In reading, ‘Adonai’ was substituted for it; hence the vowels of that name were in MSS attached to the consonants of ‘Jahweh’ for a guide to the reader, and the result, when the MSS are read *as written* (as they were never meant by Jewish scribes to be read), is ‘Jehovah.’ Thus this modern form has the consonants of one word and the vowels of another.... This explains why in EV ‘**the LORD**’ is the usual rendering of ‘Jahweh’ (*HDB* 300).

The Creator of Heaven and Earth,

Kyrios,

Jah,

The Lord of Hosts,

and The Father in Heaven.

96:1.10 **Jehovah** is a term which in recent times has been employed to designate the completed concept of Yahweh which finally evolved in the long Hebrew experience. But the name Jehovah did not come into use until fifteen hundred years after the times of Jesus.

## XVII: THE SOURCES OF OUR MORAL HERITAGE (Breasted 336)

This region from Sinai northward ... abounds in geological evidences of relatively recent volcanic action.... The peculiar manifestation of Yahveh as “a pillar of fire” or “a pillar of cloud,” and his appearance on Mount Sinai *by day* with “thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud” are obviously volcanic phenomena. It has long been recognised therefore that Yahveh was a local volcano god, who had his localised seat in Mount Sinai (Br 351).

96:1.11 Up to about 2000 B.C., Mount Sinai was intermittently active as a volcano, occasional eruptions occurring as late as the time of the sojourn of the Israelites in this region. The fire and smoke, together with the thunderous detonations associated with the eruptions of this volcanic mountain,

all impressed and awed the Bedouins of the surrounding regions and caused them greatly to fear Yahweh. This spirit of Mount Horeb later became the god of the Hebrew Semites, and they eventually believed him to be supreme over all other gods.

[Note: What about Baal?]

96:1.12 The Canaanites had long revered Yahweh, and although many of the Kenites believed more or less in El Elyon, the supergod of the Salem religion, a majority of the Canaanites held loosely to the worship of the old tribal deities. They were hardly willing to abandon their national deities in favor of an international, not to say an inter-planetary, God. They were not universal-deity minded, and therefore these tribes continued to worship their tribal deities, including Yahweh

[See 96:4.3, below.]

and the silver and golden calves which symbolized the Bedouin herders' concept of the spirit of the Sinai volcano.

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The Syrians believed in Yahweh also ("their god is a god of the hills," I Kings 20:23) (Ho 282).

96:1.13 The Syrians, while worshipping their gods, also believed in Yahweh of the Hebrews,

[And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they (1 Kgs. 20:23).]

for their prophets said to the Syrian king: "Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them on the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they."

For man, as he rises, lets fall the gods he cannot raise with him.

96:1.14 As man advances in culture, the lesser gods are subordinated to a supreme deity;

The twin Dioscuroi live a long time, but at last the Gemini exist only in "Jimminy"; as great Jove himself exists today only in a meaningless exclamation (Ho 280).

the great Jove persists only as an exclamation.

Christian Greeks still believe in the Fates and the Nereids;

The monotheists keep their subordinate gods as spirits, demons,

fates, Nereids,

the Kelts have not quite renounced the old mythology of those now called fairies, brownies, dwarfs, and banshees;

fairies, brownies, dwarfs, banshees,

magic rites, implying belief in spiritual powers, the evil eye, and other remnants of an older general faith, still survive in a so-called monotheistic religion (Ho 281).

and the evil eye.

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

The Hebrews as a people were reluctant to worship one god exclusively and it never even occurred to them that there were no other gods than their own. They perpetually reverted to the polytheistic attitude.

**Chemosh** of the Moabites was to the Israelites as real as Yahweh (Judges 11:23-24), though they did not worship Chemosh; but they gladly worshipped Tammuz and other gods, despite the prophets (Ho 282).

[See 94:11.8.]

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The Hebrews passed through henotheism and long believed in the existence of gods other than Yahweh,

but they increasingly held that these foreign deities were subordinate to Yahweh.

They conceded the actuality of **Chemosh**, god of the **Amorites**,

but maintained that he was subordinate to Yahweh.

96:1.15 The idea of Yahweh has undergone the most extensive development of all the mortal theories of God. Its progressive evolution can only be compared with the metamorphosis of the Buddha concept in Asia, which in the end led to the concept of the Universal Absolute even as the Yahweh concept finally led to the idea of the Universal Father. But as a matter of historic fact, it should be understood that, while the Jews thus changed their views of Deity from the tribal god of Mount Horeb to the loving and merciful Creator Father of later times, they did not change his name; they continued all the way along to call this evolving concept of Deity, Yahweh.

## 2. THE SEMITIC PEOPLES

### I: JUDAISM (Browne 223)

1. The cradle of the Hebrew people—the lure of the Fertile Crescent—Egypt and the Exodus. (Browne 223)

Before the dawn of history [the Fertile Crescent] was populated in large part by non-Semitic peoples called the Sumerians and the Hittites. But later it became a region belonging almost exclusively to Semites.

Certain tribes out of the desert inundated the eastern tip of the Crescent and became the Babylonians.

Others smashed their way into the middle of the Crescent, and became the Arameans. Still others conquered the coastal plain, and became the Phoenicians and Canaanites (B 224).

Perhaps for many centuries the Hebrews roamed about on the borders of the verdant region, awaiting their chance to break in. Time after time they may have made desperate lunges, murdering and pillaging until they were well inside the Crescent,

96:2.1 The Semites of the East were well-organized and well-led horsemen who

invaded the eastern regions of the fertile crescent and there united with the Babylonians.

The Chaldeans near Ur were among the most advanced of the eastern Semites.

The Phoenicians were a superior and well-organized group of mixed Semites who held the western section of Palestine, along the Mediterranean coast.

Racially the Semites were among the most blended of Urantia peoples, containing hereditary factors from almost all of the nine world races.

96:2.2 Again and again the Arabian Semites fought their way into the northern Promised Land,

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

[And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a **land flowing with milk and honey** ... (Exod. 3:8 [*et al.*]).

and then recoiling beneath the blows of the recovered natives.

They seem to have gone through such experiences first in Babylonia, then in Haran, later in Canaan, and finally in Egypt. But out of Egypt they were never ejected; they fled! For when they broke their way into Egypt, they got more than they bargained for. They had entered the land in search for food—

but instead they got **slavery**. From loose-footed bedouins they had been violently changed there into sweating **laborers** who in chain gangs were forced to build pyramids for the mummified bodies of dead emperors (B 225).

[?]

[See 93:6.3.]

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the **land that “flowed with milk and honey,”**

but just as often were they ejected by the better-organized and more highly civilized northern Semites and Hittites.

Later, during an unusually severe famine, these roving Bedouins entered Egypt in large numbers

as contract laborers on the Egyptian public works,

only to find themselves undergoing the bitter experience of **enslavement** at the hard daily toil of the common and downtrodden **laborers** of the Nile valley.

96:2.3 **It was only after the days of Machiventa Melchizedek and Abraham** that certain tribes of Semites, because of their peculiar religious beliefs, were called the children of Israel and later on Hebrews, Jews, and the “chosen people.” Abraham was not the racial father of all the Hebrews; he was not even the progenitor of all the Bedouin Semites who were held captive in Egypt.

True, his offspring, coming up out of Egypt, did form the nucleus of the later Jewish people,



**ISRAEL.** (*Hastings' DB* 393)

Perhaps, as several scholars have suggested, another solution is more probable, that not all of the Hebrews went to Egypt. Wildeboer (*Jahvedienst en Volksreligie Israel*, 15) and Budde (*op. cit.* 10) hold that it was the so-called Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, that settled for a time in Egypt, and that Moses led forth (*HDB* 395).

Probably we shall not go far astray, if we suppose that the Leah tribes were roaming the steppe to the south of Palestine where Menephtah defeated them, while the Rachel tribes, enticed into Egypt by the opportunity to obtain an easier livelihood, became entangled in trouble there, from which Moses emancipated them, perhaps in the reign of Menephtah himself....

... After [the escape from Egypt] the Rachel tribes probably allied themselves more closely to the Leah tribes, and, through the aid of Moses, gradually led them to adopt the worship of Jahweh (*HDB* 395).

but the vast majority of the men and women who became incorporated into the clans of Israel had never sojourned in Egypt.

They were merely fellow nomads who chose to follow the leadership of Moses as the children of Abraham and their Semite associates from Egypt journeyed through northern Arabia.

96:2.4 The Melchizedek teaching concerning El Elyon, the Most High, and the covenant of divine favor through faith, had been largely forgotten by the time of the Egyptian enslavement of the Semite peoples who were shortly to form the Hebrew nation. But throughout this period of captivity these Arabian nomads maintained a lingering traditional belief in Yahweh as their racial deity.

96:2.5 Yahweh was worshiped by more than one hundred separate Arabian tribes, and except for the tinge of the El Elyon concept of Melchizedek which persisted among the more educated classes of Egypt, including the mixed Hebrew and Egyptian stocks, the religion of the rank and file of the Hebrew captive slaves was a modified version of the old Yahweh ritual of magic and sacrifice.

### 3. THE MATCHLESS MOSES

#### I: JUDAISM (Browne 223)

2. Moses—the covenant with Yahveh. (Browne 226)

[contd] It was out of crisis of the flight from Egypt that the beginnings of a distinctive Hebrew religion arose. Before that time the faith of the Hebrews must have been quite like that of most other Semite bedouins prowling in the desert. It must have been a vague and inconstant animism in which the spirits of various mountains and heavenly bodies and oases were placated with sacrifices and spells. Not until the Exodus did it become a definite and differential cult (B 226).

[contd] The leader in that Exodus was a man named Moses, one of the most fascinating and bewildering of the great men of antiquity (B 226).

[Compare Exod. 2:5, 2:10, and 5:14; contrast Exod. 2:1 and 6:20.]

96:3.1 The beginning of the evolution of the Hebraic concepts and ideals of a Supreme Creator dates from the departure of the Semites from Egypt

under that great leader, teacher, and organizer, Moses.

His mother was of the royal family of Egypt; his father was a Semitic liaison officer between the government and the Bedouin captives.

[Compare 95:5.3, regarding Ikhnaton's lack of versatility, etc.]

[By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; (Heb. 11:24-25)]

[See 96:4.4, below.]

[12. *Moses*, the emancipator of a remnant of the submerged violet race and the instigator of the revival of the worship of the Universal Father under the name of "The God of Israel" (45:4.14).]

Moses thus possessed qualities derived from superior racial sources; his ancestry was so highly blended that it is impossible to classify him in any one racial group. Had he not been of this mixed type, he would never have displayed that unusual versatility and adaptability which enabled him to manage the diversified horde which eventually became associated with those Bedouin Semites who fled from Egypt to the Arabian desert under his leadership.

96:3.2 Despite the enticements of the culture of the Nile kingdom, Moses elected to cast his lot with the people of his father.

At the time this great organizer was formulating his plans for the eventual freeing of his father's people, the Bedouin captives hardly had a religion worthy of the name; they were virtually without a true concept of God and without hope in the world.

96:3.3 No leader ever undertook to reform and uplift a more forlorn, downcast, dejected, and ignorant group of human beings.

But these slaves carried latent possibilities of development in their hereditary strains,

and there were a sufficient number of educated leaders who had been coached by Moses in preparation for the day of revolt and the strike for liberty to constitute a corps of efficient organizers.

These superior men had been employed as

And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore? (Exod. 5:14ff)

native overseers of their people;

they had received some education because of Moses' influence with the Egyptian rulers.

96:3.4 Moses endeavored to negotiate diplomatically for the freedom of his fellow Semites.

[*Contrast:*] And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. [Etc.] (Exod. 5:1ff)

He and his brother entered into a compact with the king of Egypt whereby they were granted permission peaceably to leave the valley of the Nile for the Arabian desert.

They were to receive a modest payment of money and goods in token of their long service in Egypt. The Hebrews for their part entered into an agreement to maintain friendly relations with the Pharaohs and not to join in any alliance against Egypt. But the king later saw fit to repudiate this treaty, giving as his reason the excuse that his spies had discovered disloyalty among the Bedouin slaves.

[*Compare:*] Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land (Exod. 1:10).

He claimed they sought freedom for the purpose of going into the desert to organize the nomads against Egypt.

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

1. The cradle of the Hebrew people—the lure of the Fertile Crescent—Egypt and the Exodus. (Browne 223)

[contd from 96:2.2] It was only by taking advantage of a moment when Egypt was desperately trying to fight off hordes of savage invaders from Libya and pirates from the Aegean Islands,

that the Hebrews managed to escape (B 225-26).

[See Exod. 12:42.]

[And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon (Exod. 14:8-9).]

[And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them (Exod. 14:28).]

[Compare Exod. 12:35-36.]

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96:3.5 But Moses was not discouraged; he bided his time, and in less than a year,

when the Egyptian military forces were fully occupied in resisting the simultaneous onslaughts of a strong Libyan thrust from the south and a Greek naval invasion from the north,

this intrepid organizer led his compatriots out of Egypt

in a spectacular night flight.

This dash for liberty was carefully planned and skillfully executed. And they were successful, notwithstanding that

they were hotly pursued by Pharaoh and a small body of Egyptians,

who all fell before the fugitives' defense,

yielding much booty, all of which was augmented by the loot of the advancing host of escaping slaves as they marched on toward their ancestral desert home.

#### 4. THE PROCLAMATION OF YAHWEH

2. Moses—the covenant with Yahveh. (Browne 226)

What alone is relevant is the elemental task which Moses accomplished: the giving to the Hebrews of a god. For thereby he founded what was destined to become one of the most exalted and influential of the religions of all mankind. Over eight hundred millions of people—full half the population of the believing world—claim to cherish a religion that in definite respects grew out of the religion proclaimed by Moses! (B 227-29)

[And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds (Acts 7:22).]

[The members of the family of Katro, with whom Melchizedek lived for more than thirty years, knew many of these higher truths and long perpetuated them in their family, even to the days of their illustrious descendant Moses, who thus had a compelling tradition of the days of Melchizedek handed down to him on this, his father's side, as well as through other sources on his mother's side (93:3.5).]

96:4.1 The evolution and elevation of the Mosaic teaching has influenced almost one half of all the world, and still does even in the twentieth century.

While Moses comprehended the more advanced Egyptian religious philosophy,

the Bedouin slaves knew little about such teachings, but they had never entirely forgotten the god of Mount Horeb, whom their ancestors had called Yahweh.

96:4.2 Moses had heard of the teachings of Machiventa Melchizedek from both his father and his mother, their commonness of religious belief being the explanation for the unusual union between a woman of royal blood and a man from a captive race.

Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite worshiper of El Elyon, but the emancipator's parents were believers in El Shaddai. Moses thus was educated an El Shaddaist;

[[*Contrast with "Kenite Hypothesis":*] ... (b) The account of the institution of the covenant (Ex 18:12ff.) makes it clear that [Moses' father-in-law] Jethro, the Kenite priest, offers the sacrifice. He really initiates the Hebrews into the worship of Jahweh. This is confirmed by the underlying thought of all the documents that it was in this Midianite or Kenite country (the Kenites were a branch of the Midianites) that Moses first learned of Jahweh.... We are therefore justified in holding that Jahweh was the god of the Kenites, that some of the Hebrew tribes entangled in Egypt were ready to abandon their old gods for one that could deliver them, and thus He became their God (*HDB* 410).]

through the influence of his father-in-law he became an El Elyonist;

and by the time of the Hebrew encampment about Mount Sinai after the flight from Egypt, he had formulated a new and enlarged concept of Deity (derived from all his former beliefs), which he wisely decided to proclaim to his people as an expanded concept of their olden tribal god, Yahweh.

96:4.3 Moses had endeavored to teach these Bedouins the idea of El Elyon, but before leaving Egypt, he had become convinced they would never fully comprehend this doctrine. Therefore he deliberately determined upon the compromise adoption of their tribal god of the desert as the one and only god of his followers.

[contd from 96:4.1] It was far from a perfect faith—this cult instituted by Moses.... It was just as crude and savage as were the Hebrews themselves. At its root lay the idea that there was but one god—for the Hebrews. For other tribes, there might be other gods,

Moses did not specifically teach that other peoples and nations might not have other gods,

but for the Hebrews there was only Yahveh. [contd next pg.]

but he did resolutely maintain that Yahweh was over and above all, especially to the Hebrews.

This Yahveh (or Jehovah, as his name is usually mispronounced) was probably the spirit dwelling in a certain desert volcano called Sinai or Horeb; and from time immemorial he had been worshipped by a bedouin tribe called the Kenites. Now Moses, according to tradition, had once dwelt among the Kenites, and had married the daughter of their chief priest. When it became necessary for his band of runaway Hebrews to be provided with a god, it was therefore only natural for Moses to choose Yahveh.

[See Exod. 32, regarding Aaron and the Golden Calf.]

He took his **forlorn** followers to the very foot of the **Holy Mountain** of Yahveh located somewhere in the desert, and solemnly there committed them to this god (B 229).

**Ten commandments** were given as the basis of the worship of the deity; and it was understood that so long as they were observed, the Hebrews could be assured of his divine protection (B 229).

[See Exod. 25-31, 35-40; Leviticus; Num 1-10.]

But always was he plagued by the awkward predicament of trying to present his new and higher idea of Deity to these ignorant slaves under the guise of the ancient term Yahweh, which had always been symbolized by the golden calf of the Bedouin tribes.

96:4.4 The fact that Yahweh was the god of the fleeing Hebrews explains why they tarried so long before

the **holy mountain** of Sinai,

and why they there received the **Ten Commandments**

which Moses promulgated in the name of Yahweh, the god of Horeb.

During this lengthy sojourn before Sinai the religious ceremonials of the newly evolving Hebrew worship were further perfected.



And it came to pass on the **third day** in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood **at the nether part of the mount** (Exod. 19:16-17).

And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: **and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly** (Exod. 19:18).

For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a **mighty**, and a **terrible**, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: (Deut. 10:17)

And the sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like **devouring fire** on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel (Exod. 24:17).

For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God **hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself**, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth (Deut. 7:6 [*et al.*]).

96:4.5 It does not appear that Moses would ever have succeeded in the establishment of his somewhat advanced ceremonial worship and in keeping his followers intact for a quarter of a century had it not been for

the violent eruption of Horeb during the **third week** of their worshipful sojourn **at its base**.

“The mountain of Yahweh was consumed in fire, **and the smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.**”

In view of this cataclysm it is not surprising that Moses could impress upon his brethren the teaching that their God was

“**mighty, terrible,**

a **devouring fire**, fearful, and all-powerful.”

96:4.6 Moses proclaimed that Yahweh was the Lord God of Israel,

who **had singled out the Hebrews as his chosen people;**

he was building a new nation, and he wisely nationalized his religious teachings, telling his followers that Yahweh was a hard taskmaster,

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

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Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

(For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous god among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth (Deut. 6:14-15 [*et al.*]).

And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? (Num. 16:22, 27:16, *et al.*)

The eternal God is *thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them* (Deut. 33:27).

(For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;)

he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers

which he swore unto them (Deut. 4:31).

*He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he (Deut. 32:4).

a “jealous God.”

But nonetheless he sought to enlarge their concept of divinity when he taught them that Yahweh was

the “God of the spirits of all flesh,”

and when he said,

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Moses taught that Yahweh was a covenant-keeping God;

that he “will not forsake you, neither destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers

because the Lord loves you and will not forget the oath

by which he swore to your fathers.”

96:4.7 Moses made a heroic effort to uplift Yahweh to the dignity of a supreme Deity when he presented him as

the “God of truth and without iniquity, just and right in all his ways.”

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

[See Exod. 22:24, 33:5; Num. 11:1, 12:9, 16:20, 25:3, 25:11, 32:10-13; Deut. 6:14, 9:13-20, 32:21-22, *et al.*]

## XVI: RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY (Hopkins 274)

One advance made, perhaps perforce, by the Israelites was in thinking that their god **went with them through the desert**; he was not after all a god of the hills solely; Sinai could not contain him (Ho 282).

**The Exile freed Yahweh as much as it enslaved the people**; he became a god without bounds and hence without bonds (Ho 282).

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And yet, despite this exalted teaching, the limited understanding of his followers made it necessary to speak of God as being in man's image, as being subject to fits of anger, wrath, and severity, even that he was vengeful and easily influenced by man's conduct.

96:4.8 Under the teachings of Moses this tribal nature god, Yahweh, became the Lord God of Israel,

who **followed them through the wilderness**

and even into exile, where he presently was conceived of as the God of all peoples.

**The later captivity that enslaved the Jews in Babylon finally liberated the evolving concept of Yahweh** to assume the monotheistic role of the God of all nations.

96:4.9 The most unique and amazing feature of the religious history of the Hebrews concerns this continuous evolution of the concept of Deity from the primitive god of Mount Horeb up through the teachings of their successive spiritual leaders to the high level of development depicted in the Deity doctrines of the Isaiahs, who proclaimed that magnificent concept of the loving and merciful Creator Father.

## 5. THE TEACHINGS OF MOSES

96:5.1 Moses was an extraordinary combination of military leader, social organizer, and religious teacher.

[See 95:5.3.]

He was the most important individual world teacher and leader between the times of Machiventa and Jesus.

Moses attempted to introduce many reforms in Israel of which there is no record. In the space of one man's life he led the polyglot horde of so-called Hebrews out of slavery and uncivilized roaming while he laid the foundation for the subsequent birth of a nation and the perpetuation of a race.

96:5.2 There is so little on record of the great work of Moses because the Hebrews had no written language at the time of the exodus. The record of the times and doings of Moses was derived from the traditions extant more than one thousand years after the death of the great leader.

[?]

[The great organization built up at Salem nearly disappeared, though the traditions of these days were what Moses built upon when he led the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt (93:9.1).]

96:5.3 Many of the advances which Moses made over and above the religion of the Egyptians and the surrounding Levantine tribes were due to the Kenite traditions of the time of Melchizedek. Without the teaching of Machiventa to Abraham and his contemporaries, the Hebrews would have come out of Egypt in hopeless darkness. Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro, gathered up the residue of the traditions of the days of Melchizedek, and these teachings, joined to the learning of the Egyptians, guided Moses in the creation of the improved religion and ritual of the Israelites.

[Compare Exod. 18 and Num. 10:29.]

Moses was an organizer; he selected the best in the religion and mores of Egypt and Palestine and, associating these practices with the traditions of the Melchizedek teachings, organized the Hebrew ceremonial system of worship.

[See 96:1.6, above.]

96:5.4 Moses was a believer in Providence; he had become thoroughly tainted with the doctrines of Egypt concerning the supernatural control of the Nile and the other elements of nature. He had a great vision of God, but he was thoroughly sincere when he taught the Hebrews that, if they would obey God,

And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee:

“He will love you, bless you, and multiply you.

he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee (Deut. 7:13).

He will multiply the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land—the corn, wine, oil, and your flocks.

Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle (Deut. 7:14).

You shall be prospered above all people,

And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee (Deut. 7:15).

and the Lord your God will take away from you all sickness and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt upon you.”

He even said:

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day (Deut. 8:18).

“Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth.”

For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow;

“You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee (Deut. 15:6).

You shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.”

96:5.5 But it was truly pitiful to watch this great mind of Moses trying to adapt his sublime concept of El Elyon, the Most High, to the comprehension of the ignorant and illiterate Hebrews. To his assembled leaders he thundered,

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: (Deut. 6:4)

Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; *there is none else beside him* (Deut. 4:35).

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exod. 15:11)

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: (Deut. 4:15)

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (Exod. 20:4)

For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: (Deut. 10:17)

“The Lord your God is one God;

there is none beside him”;

while to the mixed multitude he declared,

“Who is like your God among all the gods?”

Moses made a brave and partly successful stand against fetishes and idolatry, declaring,

“You saw no similitude on the day that your God spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire.”

He also forbade the making of images of any sort.

96:5.6 Moses feared to proclaim the mercy of Yahweh, preferring to awe his people with the fear of the justice of God, saying:

“The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty and terrible God, who regards not man.”

Again he sought to control the turbulent clans when he declared that

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me: **I kill**, and **I make alive**; I wound, and **I heal**: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand (Deut. 32:39).

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt **give ear to his commandments**, and **keep all his statutes**, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee (Exod. 15:26 [*et al.*]).

**The LORD is a man of war**; the LORD *is* his name (Exod. 15:3).

[He had to be a Lord of Hosts, a **god of battle**, or else he could be of no value to the embattled hosts of Israel (**Browne** 232).]

Thy right hand, O LORD, is become **glorious in power**; thy right hand, O LORD, hath **dashed in pieces the enemy** (Exod. 15:6).

For **the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee**, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee (Deut. 23:14).

And he **hardened Pharaoh's heart**, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said (Exod. 7:13 [*et al.*]).

And the LORD thy God will **put all these curses upon thine enemies**, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee (Deut. 30:7).

## URANTIA PAPER 96

**“your God kills when you disobey him; he heals and gives life when you obey him.”**

But Moses taught these tribes that they would become the chosen people of God only on condition that they

**“kept all his commandments and obeyed all his statutes.”**

96:5.7 Little of the mercy of God was taught the Hebrews during these early times. They learned of God as “the Almighty;

**the Lord is a man of war,**

**God of battles,**

**glorious in power, who dashes in pieces his enemies.”**

**“The Lord your God walks in the midst of the camp to deliver you.”**

The Israelites thought of their God as one who loved them, but who also

**“hardened Pharaoh's heart”**

and **“cursed their enemies.”**

96:5.8 While Moses presented fleeting glimpses of a universal and beneficent Deity to the children of Israel, on the whole, their day-by-day concept of Yahweh was that of a God but little better than the tribal gods of the surrounding peoples. Their concept of God was primitive, crude, and anthropomorphic; when Moses passed on, these Bedouin tribes quickly reverted to the semi-barbaric ideas of their olden gods of Horeb and the desert. The enlarged and more sublime vision of God which Moses every now and then presented to his leaders was soon lost to view, while most of the people turned to the worship of their fetish golden calves, the Palestinian herdsman's symbol of Yahweh.

[Compare Num. 1 and Jos. 24.]

96:5.9 When Moses turned over the command of the Hebrews to Joshua, he had already gathered up thousands of the collateral descendants of Abraham, Nahor, Lot, and other of the related tribes and had whipped them into a self-sustaining and partially self-regulating nation of pastoral warriors.

## **6. THE GOD CONCEPT AFTER MOSES' DEATH**

96:6.1 Upon the death of Moses his lofty concept of Yahweh rapidly deteriorated. Joshua and the leaders of Israel continued to harbor the Mosaic traditions of the all-wise, beneficent, and almighty God, but the common people rapidly reverted to the older desert idea of Yahweh. And this backward drift of the concept of Deity continued increasingly under the successive rule of the various tribal sheiks, the so-called Judges.



96:6.2 The spell of the extraordinary personality of Moses had kept alive in the hearts of his followers the inspiration of an increasingly enlarged concept of God;

# I: JUDAISM (Browne 223)

3. How the nature of Yahveh changed in Canaan.  
(Browne 230)

[contd] But in Canaan

the nature of Yahveh was subjected to a great change—for a great change came over his followers. The nomad Hebrews became **farmers**; from tending sheep they turned to ploughing fields.

And since a god is worshipped only because he helps make life less troublous and insecure, because with his aid men believe they can more successfully fight off fear and death, therefore he must **change** with every change in their life and needs (B 230-31).

**Almost** he did die. Throughout the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, we see signs of the fierce war of the gods that ensued. Hebrew conquered Canaanite far more easily than Yahveh conquered Baal (B 231).

but when they once reached the fertile lands of Palestine,

they quickly evolved from nomadic herders into settled and somewhat sedate **farmers**.

And this evolution of life practices and change of religious viewpoint demanded a more or less complete **change** in the character of their conception of the nature of their God, Yahweh.

During the times of the beginning of the transmutation of the austere, crude, exacting, and thunderous desert god of Sinai into the later appearing concept of a God of love, justice, and mercy,

the Hebrews **almost** lost sight of Moses' lofty teachings.

They came near losing all concept of monotheism; they nearly lost their opportunity of becoming the people who would serve as a vital link in the spiritual evolution of Urantia, the group who would conserve the Melchizedek teaching of one God until the times of the incarnation of a bestowal Son of that Father of all.

96:6.3 Desperately Joshua sought to hold the concept of a supreme Yahweh in the minds of the tribesmen,

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee (Josh. 1:5).

“As I was with Moses, so will I be with you; I will not fail you nor forsake you.”

Joshua found it necessary to preach a stern gospel to his disbelieving people, people all too willing to believe their old and native religion but unwilling to go forward in the religion of faith and righteousness. The burden of Joshua’s teaching became:

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* an holy God; he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (Josh. 24:19).

“Yahweh *is* a holy God; he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.”

The highest concept of this age pictured Yahweh as a “God of

*Touching* the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he *is* excellent in *power*, and in *judgment*, and in plenty of *justice*; he will not afflict (Job 37:23).

*power, judgment, and justice.”*

96:6.4 But even in this dark age, every now and then a solitary teacher would arise proclaiming the Mosaic concept of divinity:

[repeated from 96:6.3] And Joshua said unto the people, *Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins* (Josh. 24:19).

“*You children of wickedness cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God.*”

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? (Job 4:17)

Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? (Job 11:7)

Behold, God *is* great, and we know *him* not, neither can the number of his years be searched out (Job 36:26).

[repeated from 96:6.3] *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is* excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict (Job 37:23).

## URANTIA PAPER 96

“Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?”

“Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty to perfection?”

Behold, God is great and we know him not.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.”

## 7. PSALMS AND THE BOOK OF JOB

96:7.1 Under the leadership of their sheiks and priests the Hebrews became loosely established in Palestine. But they soon drifted back into the benighted beliefs of the desert and became contaminated with the less advanced Canaanite religious practices.

[contd from 96:6.2] Indeed, though Yahveh did triumph in the end, still he never quite crushed his old enemy. The Bible declares: “And they **served idols** whereof Yahveh had said to them: ‘Ye shall not do this thing.’ ... The **licentious** festivals of the Canaanitish cults were made part and parcel of the cult of Yahveh, and these agricultural rites became dominant in what had once been altogether a bedouin religion (B 231).

They became **idolatrous** and **licentious**,

and their idea of Deity fell far below the Egyptian and Mesopotamian concepts of God that were maintained by certain surviving Salem groups,

[See 95:1.10, 95:2.10, 95:4.5, 95:5.7.]

and which are recorded in some of the Psalms and in the so-called Book of Job.

96:7.2 The Psalms are the work of a score or more of authors; many were written by Egyptian and Mesopotamian teachers. During these times when the Levant worshiped nature gods, there were still a goodly number who believed in the supremacy of El Elyon, the Most High.

96:7.3 No collection of religious writings gives expression to such a wealth of devotion and inspirational ideas of God as the Book of Psalms. And it would be very helpful if, in the perusal of this wonderful collection of worshipful literature, consideration could be given to the source and chronology of each separate hymn of praise and adoration, bearing in mind that no other single collection covers such a great range of time. This Book of Psalms is the record of the varying concepts of God entertained by the believers of the Salem religion throughout the Levant and embraces the entire period from Amenemope to Isaiah. In the Psalms God is depicted in all phases of conception, from the crude idea of a tribal deity to the vastly expanded ideal of the later Hebrews, wherein Yahweh is pictured as a loving ruler and merciful Father.

96:7.4 And when thus regarded, this group of Psalms constitutes the most valuable and helpful assortment of devotional sentiments ever assembled by man up to the times of the twentieth century. The worshipful spirit of this collection of hymns transcends that of all other sacred books of the world.

[?]

96:7.5 The variegated picture of Deity presented in the Book of Job was the product of more than a score of Mesopotamian religious teachers extending over a period of almost three hundred years. And when you read the lofty concept of divinity found in this compilation of Mesopotamian beliefs, you will recognize that it was in the neighborhood of Ur of Chaldea that the idea of a real God was best preserved during the dark days in Palestine.

96:7.6 In Palestine the wisdom and all-pervasiveness of God was often grasped but seldom his love and mercy. The Yahweh of these times

Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: (Judges 9:23)

“sends evil spirits to dominate the souls of his enemies”;

he prospers his own and obedient children, while he curses and visits dire judgments upon all others.

He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform *their* enterprise.

“He disappoints the devices of the crafty;

He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong (Job 5:12-13).

he takes the wise in their own deceit.”

96:7.7 Only at Ur did a voice arise to cry out the mercy of God, saying:

He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness (Job 33:26).

“He shall pray to God and shall find favor with him and shall see his face with joy, for God will give to man divine righteousness.”

Thus from Ur there is preached salvation, divine favor, by faith:

Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom (Job 33:24).

“He is gracious to the repentant and says, ‘Deliver him from going down in the pit, for I have found a ransom.’

## SOURCE OR PARALLEL

He looketh upon men, and *if any* say, I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right, and it profited me not;

He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light (Job 33:27-28).

Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job (Job 32:2-3ff).

Only through the preaching of a long line of mighty prophets did this Thunderer out of the desert, this ruthless Yahveh of a nation of ruthless marauders, become God. . . (B 232).

## URANTIA PAPER 96

If any say, 'I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not,' God will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and he shall see the light."

Not since the times of Melchizedek had the Levantine world heard such a ringing and cheering message of human salvation as this extraordinary teaching of

Elihu, the prophet of Ur and priest of the Salem believers, that is, the remnant of the onetime Melchizedek colony in Mesopotamia.

96:7.8 And thus did the remnants of the Salem missionaries in Mesopotamia maintain the light of truth during the period of the disorganization of the Hebrew peoples until the appearance of the first of

that long line of the teachers of Israel who never stopped as they built, concept upon concept, until they had achieved the realization of the ideal of the Universal and Creator Father of all, the acme of the evolution of the Yahweh concept.

96:7.9 [Presented by a Melchizedek of Nebadon.]