

## Introduction

According to biblical thought, a person or an object is known by its *name*. The name identifies, not only by distinguishing one reality from another, but by bearing, revealing and thereby communicating the inner nature of the one who possesses it.

By inviting Adam to name living creatures, God grants him dominion over them. If God divulges His own name to Moses on Mt Sinai, He does so in order to enable Moses and Israel to “know” Him and to enter into a covenantal relationship with Him. By revealing Himself as “Yahweh” — “He who is,” “the Existing One” (*ho ôn*) — God becomes the object not only of knowledge, but of communion. Similarly, the name “Jesus” is given to the incarnate Son of God to express both His embodiment of the divine presence (“His *name* shall be called Emmanuel, ‘God with us,’ ” — Mt 1:23; Is 7:14) and His saving work: the name Jesus means “Yahweh is salvation.” By invoking His name, those who adhere to Him in faith call upon God to fulfill the promises of the New Covenant by bestowing life upon His people and upon His world.

Throughout the Old Testament, however, the Spirit remains unnamed. His personal identity is hidden as He manifests Himself solely through His acts. To speak of the Spirit in that period as “He” is in fact anachronistic. As a divine power that reveals and accomplishes the will of God, Spirit is personally unknown and unfathomable. If, as the Church Fathers affirm, the Spirit is the only *hypostasis* or “person” of the Trinity whose image or “face” (*prosôpon*) is not revealed in another, the same can be said of His name. We come to know God as “Abba,” “Father,” through the Son who reveals and communicates His paternal love to us. In a similar way the Spirit, through the voice of the angel or the voice of the Church, can be said to reveal to us the deeper meaning of the name Jesus. But the name of the Spirit, like His image or “face,” remains shrouded in a darkness impenetrable to the intellect. To be known at all, He must be encountered and received at the level of the heart.

As true as this may be, however, the Spirit is by no means lost in mystery. Like the Father and the Son, He discloses Himself gradually throughout the biblical period. Although His "name" or personal identity remains hidden, He is known in the experience of God's people through His revealing and saving *activity*. In the early apostolic period, He is so closely identified with God and Jesus that St Paul can use the expressions "Spirit," "Spirit of God," and "Spirit of Christ" interchangeably (Rom 8:9-11). At a later period, toward the end of the first century, the author of the Johannine Gospel and First Epistle can take a further, bold step toward discerning and identifying His personal qualities.

Jesus in St John's Gospel attributes three distinct "names" or titles to the Spirit of God: "Holy Spirit," "Spirit of Truth," and "Paraclete." The first appears, somewhat tentatively, in the Old Testament. The other two are unique to Johannine tradition, and occur only in the Farewell Discourses (chs 14-16) of the Gospel and in the First Epistle of John.

In the following pages we plan to search out, in the sacred books of Israel and the writings of other ancient near-eastern cultures, the conceptual origins of each of these titles. Although this background sketch is unavoidably condensed and schematic, it is a necessary step in our quest for a deeper understanding and appreciation of the nature and activity of this most elusive and yet most intimately "present" aspect of divine life.

The expression "holy Spirit" occurs in two key passages of the Old Testament:

Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy holy Spirit from me.  
(Ps 51:11)

But [Israel] rebelled and grieved [Yahweh's] holy Spirit, therefore He turned to be their enemy ... Where is He who put in the midst of them His holy Spirit?  
(Is 63:10-11)

The Spirit in these passages is "holy" insofar as it participates in the holiness of God. He, Yahweh, is "the Holy One of Israel," whose Spirit serves to lead the faithful into the realm of transcendent holiness and to restore communion with their Lord. But to those who "grieve" that Spirit, it becomes an instrument of judgment and chastisement (cf. Eph 4:30). The expression "holy Spirit" at this stage in Israel's history, then, was not used as a formal title. Only with the coming of the Messiah and the



outpouring of Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost was this expression taken up and transformed into the distinctive "name" of Him whom the Fathers would later identify and worship as the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

The titles "Spirit of Truth" and "Paraclete," on the other hand, are totally foreign to Old Testament tradition. In all of the New Testament they appear only in the Farewell Discourses addressed by Jesus to His disciples in the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal, and in two passages of the First Epistle of St John. In this second instance, however, the terms appear to refer to figures other than the Spirit of God. In I John 4:6, a "spirit of truth" stands opposed to a "spirit of deception," whereas in 2:1f, the title "paraclete" is attributed not to the Spirit, but to the glorified Christ. As we shall discover, this apparent ambiguity enables the author of the Epistle to express what he perceives to be a very specific relationship both of *being* and of *operation*, of "person" and of "work," between Jesus and the Spirit. This relationship is further developed in the Fourth Gospel in such a way as to present the Son and the Spirit as the "two hands of God,"<sup>1</sup> not only in the work of creation, but also and especially in the activity of revelation and the "economy" of salvation.

The Qumran Scrolls, first discovered by a providential accident in the Judean desert in the spring of 1947, focused the attention of biblical historians upon the specifically Hebrew origins of Johannine theology. Since the period of the Enlightenment, with the development of an historical-critical approach to biblical studies, scholars had stressed above all the Hellenistic influences that conditioned both the language and the thought of the Fourth Gospel. Such influences were thought to have shaped the ethical and eschatological dualism that runs throughout the writings attributed to St John. With the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, it became clear that this distinctively Johannine dualism, with its oppositions between light and darkness, life and death, truth and lie, was rooted as much in Oriental as in Hellenic thought. In fact, "Hellenism," dating from the fourth century B.C., came to be understood as a highly syncretistic phenomenon, produced by a cross-pollination between Greek and Oriental influences that left their mark on Israel from at least the time of the Babylonian exile (587-538 B.C.).<sup>2</sup>

Biblical theologians have paid little attention to one aspect of that

dualism: the opposition of the two spirits in I Jn 4 and its bearing upon the image of the Spirit presented in the Fourth Gospel. In order to trace the origins of this Johannine spirit-dualism and to determine its implications for St John's teaching on the Holy Spirit, we begin with the progressive unfolding of the nature and operation of Spirit throughout the Old Testament. To discover the origins of the spirit-dualism itself, however, we shall have to turn to the Dead Sea Scrolls and beyond, to consider the teachings of the great Iranian prophet Zarathustra, who flourished during the sixth century B.C. These several sources will prove useful for clarifying the images of "Spirit" and "Word" in post-exilic Jewish thought, and this in turn should offer valuable insight into the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Spirit as that relationship is portrayed in the Gospel of John.

#### NOTES

1. Cf. St Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV:20:1ff.
2. For a sound discussion of the relation between Judaic and Hellenistic Greek influences on Johannine Christianity, see C.K. Barrett's *The Gospel of John and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

## The Spirit in Israel's Salvation History

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." (Gen 1:1-2)*

The very language of the Genesis cosmology is filled with power. Soberly yet dramatically, the author of this post-exilic creation account expresses in mythological terms the formation of the material world *ex nihilo*, and drawn from *tehom*, the primeval watery chaos. What radically distinguishes this story from the more ancient Babylonian creation-myth is the movement of the Spirit over the waters, a movement that brings order, life and beauty out of primordial darkness. "And the Spirit hovered..." would better render the Hebrew verb by expressing the ideas of power and intention. The *ruach-Yahweh* (*Elohim*), or Spirit of the Lord, is a creative agent that works together with the *dabar-Yahweh*, the divine Word, to bring forth meaningful existence from the lifeless abyss. "And God said, Let there be light! And there was light." By His Spirit and His spoken Word, God creates life and light. The modern cosmologist expresses himself in a different language and on a different level of reality, scientific rather than poetic; but his findings confirm an ancient intuition:

In the beginning, there was an explosion...which occurred simultaneously everywhere, filling all space from the beginning, with every particle of matter rushing apart from every other particle... Finally, the universe was filled with light. (Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* [New York: Basic Books, 1977], p. 5f.)

To eyes of faith, the *archê* or ultimate creative principle, the source of life and light upon which all "being" and "becoming" depend, reveals itself to be God, who operates through the agency of His Spirit and His Word. From the opening verses of Scripture, creation is presented as the object of a continuous divine activity that blesses and sanctifies while it forms and sustains all things. It is a concerted activity — the work of "God," "Word" and "Spirit" — perceived by the early Hebrews as diverse

expressions of divine power, but whom later Christian theologians would identify as divine hypostases or “persons” of the triune Godhead.

To the Hebrew mind, divine power manifests itself in history primarily as *ruach*, a term we translate variously as “wind,” “breath” or “spirit.” Although the Greek equivalent *pneuma* covers generally the same three modes of being and activity, in classical usage it never expresses the *presence* of divinity itself. *Ruach*, however, does precisely that; and thereby it forms the immediate background for the affirmation, “God is Spirit” (Jn 4:24).

Before turning to the term *ruach* in the Old Testament,<sup>1</sup> we should note two potential dangers common to all word-studies: the temptation to find clearly distinguishable meanings where none existed in Hebrew thought, and conversely, to obscure the rich variety of nuances which the word actually bore.<sup>2</sup>

A particular problem of method needs to be avoided as well. Students of the Old Testament often fail to appreciate the fact that basic theological concepts developed in Hebrew thought over a time-span of more than a thousand years. Studies on the Spirit, for example, typically weave together evidence from various strata of Israelite tradition, irrespective of their chronological relationship to one another. As a result, they tend to overlook the significant development that took place in Israel’s religious consciousness, and specifically in the understanding and presentation of Spirit, which occurred during the period from the earliest historical writings to the oracles of the post-exilic prophets.

To trace the growth of the spirit-concept in Hebrew thought, it is important to distinguish between the various strands of tradition worked into the Pentateuch and historical writings.<sup>3</sup> This is because revelation is progressive: God reveals His person and will in stages. The renewing, quasi-sacramental activity of the Spirit proclaimed in the oracles of Ezekiel was utterly unknown to the “Yahwist,” the author of the most ancient strata of the Hebrew Bible. By recognizing the progressive character of God’s self-disclosure, however, we can easily come to terms with ancient images of the God of wrath and capricious judgment, just as we can accept the maledictions called down by the psalmists on the heads of their enemies. For we understand that the “primitive” Hebrew mind perceived God through eyes that were culturally and historically conditioned. (The



same, of course, must be affirmed of every generation, including our own.) Accordingly, we can affirm that the end-time effusion of the Spirit predicted by the prophet Joel stands in full continuity with the more primitive picture of *ruach* presented in passages such as I Kings 22:21ff, where God sends a "lying spirit" into the mouths of Israel's prophets.

We shall begin, then, with a description of "spirit" as it appears in various strata of Old Testament tradition, in an effort to trace Israel's changing perception of its nature as well as its creative, sanctifying and revealing activity.

### *(A) The Pentateuch*

Generally speaking, the term *ruach* denotes three distinguishable modes of spiritual being or activity. 1) It can denote a life-force that animates and sustains human existence: "When the Egyptian had eaten, his spirit revived; for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights," (I Sam 30:12; cf Judg 15:19). 2) It is used of the divine Spirit or Spirit of the Lord, which in the historical books especially, plays a crucial role in Israel's salvation-history: "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Sampson, and ... he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put out his hand and seized it, and with it he slew a thousand men" (Judg 15:14f). And 3) it can designate spirits that are distinguishable from God and human beings. This last category can be divided into (i) those spirits, good or evil, which are sent by God to do His work (e.g., the lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets, I Kings 22:21ff), and (ii) spirits which imbue chosen individuals with specific moral or charismatic qualities (e.g., the Messiah will possess spirits of wisdom, etc., Is 11:2; cf the "spirit of harlotry," Hos 4:12; 5:4). Turning to the earliest layers of Old Testament tradition, we can discover at what point there were revealed in Israel's religious experience particular attributes of the Spirit that foreshadowed the figure of the Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of St John.

The *Yahwist* source (designated by the letter J) dates from the 10th or early 9th c. B.C. The ancient *Yahwist-Elohistic* (JE) story of the Fall, beginning with Gen 2:4b and continuing through ch 3, marks the beginning of Israel's sacred-history. Gen 2:7 is a key verse for the under-

standing of Hebrew anthropology: "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." The "breath of life" is rendered by *neshama* rather than *ruach* in this passage, but the meaning is similar: it is a life-force of divine origin that animates an otherwise lifeless material body. The opposition, then, is not between "body" and "soul," but between "body" and "spirit" or "life-breath." Man becomes a living being by virtue of divine life "breathed" into him to animate and sustain his every word and act.<sup>4</sup>

In Genesis 3:8 the narrator declares that Adam and Eve "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Here the expression "the cool [*ruach*] of the day" (meaning the early evening) refers to a natural phenomenon. Yet it clearly denotes as well the animation or vitality of the created order. This natural usage of the term, however, is unique. Customarily, *ruach* in J is an agent of God that actively shapes the events of Israelite history. As "east wind" or "west wind" it can be beneficent or harmful, depending upon the divine will: "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided" (Ex 14:21; cf 10:13, 19). Through this "natural phenomenon," God exercises His influence upon both nature and history (Num 11:31). Yet it is through this same power that He governs and maintains human existence. The *ruach-Yahweh* is said to have been withdrawn from man after 120 years of life, a limit imposed as punishment for his disruption of the created order (Gen 6:3). God's *ruach* sustains life. Without it, the creature perishes.

No less important, however, is the *inspirational* work of the spirit. The *ruach-Elohim*<sup>5</sup> inspires Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (Gen 41:38) and thereby foreshadows the spirit of prophecy. As an external force or power, the same spirit compels Balaam to speak the words of God (Num 24:2ff). In both instances we have in primitive form the conception, especially prominent in later classical prophecy, of *Spirit as mediator of the divine Word*. The Word of God possesses its creative, chastising and redeeming power by virtue of the *ruach* that animates it. And conversely, the Spirit exercises its mission in the world primarily through the Word in the form of prophecy and proclamation. It is this intimate, mutual quality

of their relationship, discernible in the earliest strata of Old Testament tradition, that prompted later theological reflection to declare Word and Spirit to be distinguishable in their operations and in their personal being, yet identical in essence or nature.

The *Elohistic* (E) source was produced around 700 B.C. Used anthropologically, *ruach* here designates the seat of the emotions (e.g., Pharaoh's "troubled spirit," Gen 41:8).<sup>6</sup> According to Gen 45:26–27, Jacob's "heart fainted" but his "spirit revived." Heart (*leb*) and spirit (*ruach*) appear here as interchangeable expressions for that dimension of soul (*nephesh*) which involves emotion.<sup>7</sup>

In Numbers 11:17-29, the divine *ruach* is depicted as divisible. God can reinvest a portion of Moses' charismatic spirit in the seventy elders, empowering them both to rule and to judge. In v. 29, Moses declares: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" The passage clearly implies that all *ruach* which enables one to prophesy comes from the Lord Himself. In this primitive JE tradition, the Spirit of the Lord is in fact a Spirit *from* the Lord. The divine *ruach* has its source in God, but it is never conceived as being identical with Him or, as we might say, as sharing in the divine being.

The *Deuteronomistic* (D) source is usually dated from 621 B.C. when, according to II Kings 22-23, a lost Book of the Law was rediscovered in the Jerusalem temple. This version of Torah or Hebrew Law likely comprises an ancient edition of Deuteronomy 5-28.

The Deuteronomistic tradition preserves primitive conceptions of *ruach* similar to those found in JE. Exodus 15:8 describes the cosmic effect of the "blast" (*ruach*) from Yahweh's nostrils. In this ancient hymn of praise for God's deliverance of His people from Egypt, Moses and the Israelites sing: "At the blast of Thy nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap ..." This passage, with its strong anthropomorphic coloring, reflects the ancient belief that *ruach*, subtle as wind, operates among God's people to *defend them against their enemies*. In Exodus 15:10 the "breath" of God destroys the Egyptians, whereas in Deuteronomy 2:30, God is able to influence the *ruach* of Israel's adversaries. He "hardens the

spirit” of Sihon, thereby enabling His people to pursue their conquest of the promised land. By this period, the notion had emerged of the omnipotent God who can influence the spirits of all men. Accordingly, the divine *ruach* becomes the *defender* of the chosen people, capable of moving nations as well as individuals. As such, it implicitly reveals God’s judgment upon those who, like Sihon and Pharaoh, oppose the divine will that seeks to work out salvation for the chosen people. Here we have a primitive yet clear foreshadowing of the mission of the Spirit-Paraclete, whose task is to *defend* followers of Christ against their adversaries by “convicting” the world concerning “sin, righteousness and judgment” (Jn 16:8).

The *Priestly* (P) source is post-exilic, reflecting Israelite thought during the 5th century B.C. Many primitive usages of *ruach* have been preserved in the Priestly accounts. “Breath of life” is used twice by P (Gen 6:17; 7:15) and once by J (Gen 7:22); and a “wind” brought by God recurs throughout the interwoven layers of JDP tradition. P also employs *ruach* to speak of an individual’s state of mind (Gen 26:35), or the temperament and attitude of the people as a whole (Ex 6:9). Personal characteristics can include an “able spirit” with which one is endowed by God (Ex 28:3); and in Numbers we find allusions to “the spirit of jealousy,” to “a different (positive) spirit,” as well as to “a man in whom is the spirit” (27:18). As in older strata, P describes persons as being “filled with the Spirit of God” (Ex 31:3; 35:31). In this same vein, Deuteronomy 34:9 declares that Joshua was “full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him.”

Numbers 27:18-23 is particularly important, in that it speaks of a charismatic spirit that has its source in God Himself:<sup>8</sup>

And the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is [the] Spirit, and lay your hand upon him; cause him to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation [of the people], and you shall commission him in their sight’...and [Moses] laid his hands upon him, and commissioned him as the Lord directed through Moses.

This marks a significant development in the Hebrew conception of *ruach*. Joshua is singled out as one in whom the Lord’s Spirit is already present and active. By this indwelling of the Spirit, he is recognized as a



charismatic leader, possessing the qualifications necessary to assume the divine commission laid upon him. Here *ruach* is no longer conceived as an agent or instrument used by God; it appears rather as Yahweh's own power at work within His chosen human vessel. For JE, *ruach* is clearly an entity, a substantial and divisible object or fluid. The P tradition shows that Israel's religious consciousness matured from an understanding of *ruach* as an objective instrument of the divine will towards a view of the Spirit of the Lord as a *mode of divine activity*. Spirit is "God in action." As we shall see further on, this development becomes all the more clear in the P tradition represented by Ezekiel and the post-exilic prophets.

### *(B) The Historical Writings*

*Judges*<sup>9</sup>: In these primitive (mostly JE) accounts, the Spirit of the Lord is once again depicted as a dynamic substance or energy which inspires and empowers a chosen individual to judge Israel and to win at war.<sup>10</sup> As a semi-autonomous power sent by God, the Spirit "comes upon," "stirs up" or "takes possession of" the individual, investing him or her with both the will and the power to enact charismatic leadership.

The familiar anthropological usage of *ruach* appears in 15:19. When Sampson was refreshed by God-given water, his "spirit returned" and he "revived." The human spirit, like the divine, is portrayed as an energy or force essential to life. As man cannot live without air, so withdrawal of *ruach* (breath / spirit) leads to his death. In fact, our facile distinction between the two, human spirit and divine spirit, distorts the basic Hebrew understanding of the concept: All "spirit" has its origin in God and is variously distributed by Him.

*I Samuel*: Several general observations can be made on the basis of the evidence in these passages. The *ruach-Yahweh* is functionally indistinguishable from the *ruach-Elohim*.<sup>11</sup> Again *ruach* appears as a life-force which departs from one who is near death (30:12; cf 1:15). On the other hand, the divine Spirit seizes prophets and compels them to make ecstatic utterances: "Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also

prophesied" (19:20; cf 10:6). Because the prophets, through divine inspiration, speak the Word of God, it seems appropriate in such a passage to capitalize "Spirit": the *ruach-Yahweh* is the inspirational power of the Lord Himself.

In a later passage, anointing has sacramental overtones as the means or channel by which the Spirit fills the anointed one: "Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed [David] in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (16:13).<sup>12</sup> Here too, human actions that determine Israel's salvation-history are called forth by God through *ruach*, human or divine (11:6; cf II Chron 36:22; Ezra 1:1). God can even employ evil spirits to accomplish His purposes, a notion paralleled in the Book of Job by the role of Satan: "Then an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing the lyre. And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear; but he eluded Saul..." (I Sam 19:9f).

In its many and diverse aspects, *ruach* serves as an instrument that fulfills the divine purpose within history. Yet even though the Spirit at this stage reveals and accomplishes the will of God, and we might be justified in rendering it with an upper case "S," it cannot be said to *be* God. Wholly subject to God's own intentions, it has no will of its own, nor is it perceived as a truly autonomous being. It is known as the expression of divine power and authority; but the Hebrew mind at this early period never speculated on its ontological status or its personal relationship with Yahweh.

*II Samuel*: David's words, "The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me," occur in the post-exilic interpolation 23:2. "Spirit of the Lord" is paralleled here with "God of Israel" in such a way as to suggest an identity between the two. As the conception of Spirit developed through the early post-exilic period, God and Spirit were drawn closer together and were frequently used interchangeably. In this present passage, however, the Spirit speaks *through* David, whereas God speaks *to* him. The *prophetic* function of Spirit is clearly discernible; yet again, the Spirit is not identified *as* God.

*I and II Kings:* The following observations can be made about the role of Spirit in the prophetic utterances of Elijah and Elisha. Within the heavenly court there are spirits which work for good or evil to suit the divine plan: "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice [Ahab, that he might fall before his enemies].' And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And He said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.'" (I Kg 22:21-24; cf II Chr 18:20ff).

Ecstatic prophecy results from the overwhelming and irresistible inspiration of these spirits. The *ruach-Yahweh* passes from one prophet to another (e.g., from Zedekiah to Micaiah, from Elijah to Elisha) as an indwelling but transient entity or fluid through which the authority for leadership is transferred from one individual to another.<sup>13</sup> In these early accounts the divine Spirit and heavenly spirits are characteristically a-ethical, even capricious. Spirit is at the heart of divine mystery and miraculous power, but at this primitive stage it is not yet recognized as embodying the qualities of ethical righteousness which were attributed to it by later classical prophets. Instead, the divine *ruach* is primarily an inspirational energy or force, a *dynamis* which enables the prophet to proclaim the words of the Lord (cf II Chr 20:13f; 24:20). The etymology of our word "inspiration" clearly illustrates the close link between "spirit" and "breath" that was dramatized in prophetic utterance.

Having traced the growth of the concept of "spirit" as it comes to light in the Pentateuch and historical books, we can now turn to the prophets themselves. We shall find that a similar development occurred within Israel's prophetic movement. The prophets, however, go well beyond even the Priestly writers in depicting Spirit as the mode of God's presence within history and the source of regeneration among His people.

#### NOTES

1. One of the most thorough and useful studies of this subject is D. Lys, *Ruach, Le Souffle dans l'Ancien Testament* (Paris, 1962). Y. Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint* I (Paris, 1979), p. 19-32, depends largely upon Kittel, *TWNT* VI, p. 330-453, in his treatment of Spirit in the OT, but his own insights are valuable.
2. *Ruach* denotes variously "air in motion," "breath," "breathing," "wind," and by

extension "disposition," human or divine "spirit," etc. See Köhler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon* p. 877-879; and *Supplementum* p. 185 for a convenient listing with Scripture citations.

3. For this survey we may distinguish four strands of Pentateuch tradition, some of which have left their mark on the historical books. The verses cited contain references to *ruach*. (i) *Yahwist* (J source): Gen 3:8; 6:3; 7:22; 41:38; Ex 10:13 (bis), 19; 14:21; Num 11:31; 24:2; Jg 6:34 (JE); 9:23 (JE); 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14, 19; I Sam 10:6, 10; 16:14 (bis), 15f, 23 (bis); 19:9; 30:12. (ii) *Elohist* (E source): Gen 41:8; 45:27; Jg 6:34 (JE); 8:3; 9:23 (JE); Num 11:17, 25 (bis), 26, 29; I Sam 1:15; 11:6; 18:10. (iii) *Deuteronomist* (D source): Ex 15:8, 10; Dt 2:30; Jos 2:11; 5:1; Jg 3:10. (iv) *Priestly* (P source): Gen 1:2; 6:17; 7:15; 8:1; 26:35; Ex 6:9; 28:3; 31:3; 35:21, 31; Num 5:14 (bis), 30; 14:24; 16:22; 27:16, 18; Dt 34:9. For analyses of Pentateuch sources, see esp. A. Weiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (New York: Association Press, 1948), p.99-142; and R.H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (New York: Harper, 1948), 1948, p.142-209; also Lys, *Ruach*, p.38, n.1-2 and p.50, n.2-3, plus his text index. Lys classifies I Sam 16:13 and 19:20, 23, with their respective pericopae 16:1-13 and 19:18-24, as post-exilic midrashim, p.169, n.1. Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint I*, acknowledges the need to distinguish between layers of OT tradition in order to discern not only "a development, or even a progression, in the revelation of the Spirit, but a certain diversity as well, represented by the various authors" (p.10). For sound presentations of the problems involved in distinguishing literary sources, see M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1972), and B. Anderson's analytical outline, *Creation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: 1984), p. 262-276; also B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* Part 2, "The Pentateuch," (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).
4. G. von Rad, *Genesis, a Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), p.75.
5. "Elohim" is a plural form of the divine Name, found especially in the "Elohist" source. As designations of Israel's unique God, "Yahweh" and "Elohim" are synonymous.
6. For a detailed list of the emotions seated in the human *ruach*, see R.H. Pfeiffer, *Religion in the Old Testament* (New York: 1961), p.102.
7. J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture I*, (London/Copenhagen, 1926), p.99ff; H.W. Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology," in *The People and the Book*, A.S. Peake, ed. (Oxford, 1925), p.360ff; H. Cazelles, "L'Apport de l'Ancien Testament à la connaissance de l'Esprit Saint," in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum I* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), p.723f.
8. For this reading, see Lys, *Ruach*, p.191.
9. In the Book of Joshua the two usages of *ruach* (2:11; 5:1, each D) are anthropomorphic, denoting something akin to "esprit de corps" among Israel's enemies that dissolves before the power of the Lord.
10. Thus 3:10 D; 6:34 JE; 11:29 J; cf the J accounts 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14. See G.



von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Zürich, 1951), p.25ff. In their more recent studies, Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard) 1973; Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1978; and Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior. The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*, Ontario, 1980, virtually no attention is paid to the role of the *ruach-Yahweh*.

11. Cf 11:6f; 19:9,20; 16:14ff. N. Snaith, *Distinctive Ideas of the OT* (New York: Schocken, 1964), p.156f, discusses the distinction between the *ruach-Yahweh (Adonai)* and the *ruach-Elohim*.
12. The passage 16:1-13 is possibly a post-exilic interpolation (see note 3 above); but cf H.W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel* (London, 1964), p. 136-139.
13. The transmission of leadership authority through the *ruach-Yahweh* is discussed by Ze'ev Weisman, "The Personal Spirit as Imparting Authority," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 225-231.



## The Spirit and the Word in Hebrew Prophecy

Prophecy, often accompanied by ecstatic experience, was a well-known phenomenon throughout the Ancient Near-East. Hebrew prophecy, however, was unique by virtue of its exalted religious or spiritual content and its rigorous emphasis upon proper ethical conduct. Essentially a call to faith and righteousness, the prophetic word could pronounce God's judgment as well as His promises. It was an inspired word that derived its content and its power from the Spirit. Accordingly, it served as the human vehicle by which the divine Word of the Lord "took flesh" in the form of comprehensible language.

Precisely *how* the prophet received the message he was to communicate has long perplexed students of the Old Testament. A somewhat simplistic answer would be that God communicated a particular thought through some combination of visual and auditory experiences. A skeptical approach, on the other hand, might attribute the prophetic oracles to the deep religious "insight" of the prophets themselves. In this case, the line is blurred between prophecy and preaching. Neither of these extreme views, however, does real justice to the biblical evidence. As the awe of Isaiah (ch. 6), the bewilderment of Ezekiel (chs 1-3), and the reluctance of Jeremiah (1:6ff; 20:8f) make amply clear, the prophet is in some measure "seized" and compelled to make his utterance. Like mystics of all religions and all ages, he receives the grace to transcend the limits of natural cognition. His intelligence, guided by a power higher than himself, apprehends an otherwise inaccessible level of reality. In this state of *ekstasis*, "standing apart" from his ordinary self, he receives visual and auditory impressions that come to him less in the form of verbal messages than as images which he interprets intuitively. The language of his oracles is therefore his own, conditioned by his historical, cultural and linguistic background. As the fruit of inspired, intuitive perception, however, those oracles communicate the blessings and judgments of God Himself. Therefore they are in the fullest sense "oracles of the Lord."

The prophet's vocation is to proclaim both the promises and the judgment of Yahweh, and not merely to foretell coming events. He exercises that vocation as a fragile and flawed human instrument that fulfills its task by the power and authority of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who transforms a shepherd into a seer, and makes of him an instrument by which God intervenes in history (cf Amos 1:1; 3:8). Little wonder, then, that Israel should focus its eschatological hope not only on the figure of the Messiah, but also on a Spirit-filled Prophet to come. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus will therefore be designated "the Prophet," the incarnate Word of God upon whom the anointing Spirit descends and remains (1:21; 4:19; 6:14; 7:40).

### (A) *Pre-exilic Prophecy*

Because textual references to Spirit are so numerous in the pre-exilic prophets, we have to restrict this section to a statement of conclusions that can be drawn from the most important prophetic sources. As our discussion of the Priestly and historical writings has shown, there was from the earliest period in Israel's history a growing tendency to unite — but not actually to identify — Spirit with Yahweh. As Israel's religious consciousness matured, the primitive tendency to anthropomorphize characteristics of God and Spirit decreased, together with the tendency to depict Spirit as a divisible substance or entity.

For the classical prophets, Spirit reflects Yahweh's *moods and purposes*. It manifests His anger and jealousy, yet it is also the *presence* within history of the transcendent power that moves persons and nations in accordance with the divine economy. As such, it was understood to be both the channel or instrument of God's self-revelation and the very content of that revelation. God revealed Himself *as Spirit* as well as *through the Spirit*. We should understand, however, that this simply describes the direction in which thought moved in the prophetic period: from Spirit as an instrumental entity to Spirit as God's mode of self-revelation. Throughout this period the ancient, primitive conceptions of *ruach* appear side by side with those born of more mature religious reflection. In prophetic experience, Spirit is fundamentally inscrutable.<sup>1</sup> Any attempt



to define its nature and the scope of its activity with precision only distorts the meaning of the passages in question.

*Isaiah of Jerusalem* (roughly, Is 1-39) exercised his ministry during the late 8th century B.C. A member of the priestly caste, he is noted especially for his mystical vision and ready acceptance of his prophetic vocation (ch 6). As in the historical writings, Spirit — whether “of” the Lord or sent “from” the Lord — performs various functions that bear directly upon Israel’s salvation-history. “A spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning” will cleanse Jerusalem of her sins.<sup>2</sup> A “spirit of confusion” or “panic” causes Israel’s enemies to fall (19:14). The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon the Messiah, investing him with attributes (literally, “spirits”) of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and fear of the Lord (11:2). Similarly, a spirit of justice or judgment, which has its source in Yahweh, will be bestowed as a charisma upon those of the remnant who sit in judgment at the gate (28:6). In this last example, we find the earliest allusion to the judgment exercised by the Spirit through specially endowed persons. This theme, as we noted earlier in connection with the Deuteronomic tradition, is central to St John’s Gospel, where the Paraclete “convicts” or pronounces judgment upon the unbelieving world (16:8ff).

The opposition between flesh and spirit (*basar / ruach*) is nowhere more clearly asserted than in Isaiah’s invective against his countrymen who seek to form a military and political alliance with Egypt. “The Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit!” (31:3). This verse has called forth a multitude of interpretations.<sup>3</sup> Basically the distinction is between what in our terminology we would call the “nature” of man and the “nature” of God.<sup>4</sup> Flesh is superficial, ephemeral, impotent. Only spirit gives power and life (cf Jn 6:63!). Once again we are struck with the ambiguity of the term *ruach*. It is difficult to distinguish between the human spirit and the divine Spirit because such a distinction is artificial. All *ruach* has its ultimate source in God the Creator. It is the dynamic, animating life-force without which living things perish (Gen 6:3; etc.). The human *ruach* is a divine gift; man lives by virtue of the *ruach* of the Creator breathed into him. Yet in some indefinable sense the human *ruach* remains independent of God, as the prophet’s own

poignant expression of longing for justification before God so eloquently witnesses: "My soul yearns for Thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks Thee" (Is 26:9; cf 38:16).

Within the sphere of Israel's history as a nation, Spirit as a divine reality renews and revivifies the stricken people. Alluding to the eschatological effusion of the Spirit, the prophet declares: "[All will be forsaken] until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest..." (32:15; cf 34:16). In fact the very survival of the nation depends upon the people's trust in the power of the Spirit. It is not the Egyptians or any other earthly power, but God alone who can assure their defense: "Woe to the rebellious children, says the Lord, who carry out a plan, but not mine; and who make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my counsel, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!" (30:1f). Here again, Spirit assumes the role of Israel's *defender* against the foreign enemy.

But beyond that, Spirit is the *vehicle of God's self-revelation*.<sup>5</sup> Yahweh reveals Himself through the Spirit by His mighty acts in Israel's history, which the faithful human spirit comprehends by accepting right teaching (or understanding, 29:24). The human spirit is that dimension of the soul (or total "person," *nephesh*) through which relation to God is expressed. It can be moved to "truth" *emeth* — in I Isaiah restricted almost exclusively to the idea of "faithfulness" or "fidelity" — or to "error" (cf 21:4; 35:8) by the respective influence of good or evil spirits. At this early date the concepts "truth" and "error" are categories of moral action, of fidelity or infidelity towards God. Further on we shall consider their importance for Johannine thought in our investigation of the two spirits of I Jn 4:6.

The prophet *Hosea* flourished, as a sublime and yet tragic figure in Israel's history, around the year 740 B.C. He attributes his people's recurring infidelity to a "spirit of harlotry" (4:12; 5:4), a supernatural *dynamis* which bends the human will and captures its allegiance. Inseparable from the person, the spirit nevertheless transcends man's purely physical being, driving him, and the nation collectively, away from God into spiritual adultery. *Ruach* appears here as a "spirit of disobedience"

whose significance lies in its power to corrupt the people's corporate relationship to Yahweh. It deafens the nation to those prophetic voices which speak by inspiration of the Lord's Spirit. Prophets are denounced as fools; the man of Spirit is proclaimed mad (9:7; cf Jer 5:13).<sup>6</sup> The people reject the revelation of impending doom, preferring instead the comforting words of false prophets (cf Jer 27:14ff): "There is no faithfulness (*emeth*), no devotion (*chesed*), no knowledge (*daath*) of God in the land" (4:1).

Knowledge such as the Spirit imparts is of two kinds in the pre-exilic period: cultic knowledge with its consequent legal demands, and moral knowledge expressed by the terms *emeth* and *chesed*, fidelity ("truth" of an ethical character) and devotion to the Lord.<sup>7</sup> Moral knowledge is acquired by hearing the Word of God which the Spirit utters through the mouth of the prophet. Like divine Wisdom, it evokes on the part of the human spirit a response to God's revelation (cf Is 29:24). To possess such knowledge is to renounce the "spirit of harlotry" and to walk in the ways of the Lord (14:9). "Knowledge," therefore, is fundamentally an ethical rather than an intellectual category. It is obtained by the discerning human spirit, which responds in faithful obedience to the Lord as He reveals Himself through Spirit-inspired prophetic utterance.

The Spirit's basic task, then, is to *interpret* divine ("mighty") acts within history and to lead the people from "stumbling" and "error" to faithful obedience to their God. This interpretive or "hermeneutic" function of the divine *ruach*, that leads to moral wisdom expressed as appropriate conduct before Yahweh, will become the key element in St John's depiction of Spirit as "the Spirit of Truth."

The Judean prophet *Micah of Moresheth* is usually dated from 721, B.C., when the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian invaders. The hypocrisy of Israel's pretensions to faithfulness in the face of impending disaster is revealed in the taunting rhetorical question which the people hurl at Micah: "Is Yahweh's Spirit short?" (2:7). That is, "will He become impatient as long as we remain obedient to the external demands of cultic ritual?" Micah turns this crass anthropomorphism in such a way as to show that Yahweh refuses to conduct Himself according to human terms and expectations. Naively presuming the limits of divine patience to

be predictable, the people of Judah scrupulously observe the external regulations of cultic worship. Nonetheless, they bring condemnation upon themselves through their wanton behavior and overall moral decay (2:8ff). They prefer false prophets who utter "wind and lies" (2:11),<sup>8</sup> to those who, with Micah, can claim inspiration by the divine Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

Whereas other prophets emphasize the sheer inscrutability of the Spirit, Micah underscores the Spirit's utter freedom. Man can by no means whatever appropriate or compel the divine *ruach*. God reveals His judgment upon Israel's sin, and thereby He undercuts the people's false security built upon ritual observance (cf Amos 3:13ff). Yahweh remains Lord of the cult and Lord of the nations, working His will according to His own purposes. The true prophet proclaims that will by surrendering himself to the mysterious power and inspiration which the divine Spirit invests in him.

*Jeremiah* (ca. 626-580 B.C.) is another great and yet tragic figure in Israel's prophetic history, as melancholy in the exercise of his vocation as he was reluctant in his acceptance of it. His conception of *ruach* is surprisingly primitive, limited primarily to the role of a destructive wind. *Ruach* appears as God's instrument to chastise either Judah or its enemies (4:11f; 51:1-11). Against Jerusalem the "hot wind," representing divine judgment, descends as a punishing cosmic power (4:11). Against Babylon Jeremiah promises that the Lord will stir up "the spirit of a destroyer" to "winnow" or ravage the land (51:1), a prophecy fulfilled in 539 B.C., when the Persian king Cyrus invaded and laid waste the Babylonian empire.

The conception of *ruach* as an agent of the divine will was significantly deepened and extended during the exilic period. As an instrument of judgment, *ruach* continues to play a central role in God's overall plan of salvation. The image of a destroying wind may be primitive, but Jeremiah uses it metaphorically in his graphic portrayal of God at work in history. Divine judgment falls upon nations and individuals alike. Prophets utter false hopes; their speech is empty wind and the Word is not in them (5:12f; cf 51:17 where idols are denounced as being void of *ruach*).

It is reasonable to conjecture that Jeremiah's stress upon *ruach* as a



destroying agent of divine wrath, and the absence in his writings of a spirit of inspiration, is due to his conflict with prophets who falsely claimed to speak an inspired word.<sup>10</sup> Despite the portents of doom, however, Jeremiah's mood is essentially positive. Wrath and judgment, inflicted by God through the human or cosmic *ruach*, are necessary to the overall economy of Israel's salvation within history. The element of eschatological hope, however, remains strong. Again and again the prophet assures his fellow exiles that a remnant of the scattered people will finally be led homeward, to dwell in peace and security. A "new covenant" will be established, and the people will "all know the Lord":

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (*Jer 31:31-34; 32:36-41*)<sup>11</sup>

In the thought and experience of St John and the early Christian community, this promise is realized through the sacramental and catechetical activity of the Church, the locus of the New Covenant, where the baptized attain knowledge of God through anointing by the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

*Ezekiel* began his prophetic activity in Jerusalem and continued it during the early, most stressful period of Babylonian exile. His prophecy seems to have been composed between 593 and 571 B.C. A complex — some would say, a complexed — man, Ezekiel possessed a vision of the Spirit that seems at once primitive and exalted. He gives sublime expression to the promise of salvation in his oracle which promises to the remnant "a new heart and a new spirit" (36:24ff; 11:17ff; 18:31):

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And *I will put*



*my Spirit within you* and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I shall be your God. (*Ezek 36:24-28*)

Yahweh promises to bring about in the people's midst, by the indwelling power of His Spirit, a thoroughgoing moral transformation (36:27). Thereby He will lead the nation to "walk in His statutes," that is, to fulfill the commandments of the Mosaic Law. The people's sins will be forgiven, a promise symbolized by reference to the Priestly motif of purification by sprinkling with clean water (36:25, to early Christians an unmistakable allusion to baptism). The nation, once scattered, will be gathered together in a new Jerusalem. The people, once dead, will receive new life by the power of the Lord's Spirit. The new creation is splendidly dramatized in the vision of the dry bones (ch 37). Like the bones, the nation has died and decayed. But the Lord causes breath (*ruach*) to enter into these dessicated remains, and they take on the flesh and blood of living creatures. They respond to His Word, uttered by the prophet and fulfilled by the Spirit:

[The Lord] said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones and say to them, O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath (wind, spirit) to enter you, and you shall live'... [Then He] said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come forth from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host. (*Ezek 37:9-10*)

In response to the divine Word, Yahweh's Spirit rejuvenates the collective human spirit of the nation.<sup>13</sup> The distinction between human and divine *ruach*, though, is blurred. The "new spirit" possessed by the remnant will be the Spirit of Yahweh Himself. It is His "life-breath," the principle of vitality that effects regeneration of the people and re-creation of the land.

At the time of Ezekiel's vision, however, the gift of the Spirit for national renewal was no more than a promise, an element of the prophet's eschatological hope. As regards the decisive work of transforming and renewing the people of God, "the Spirit was not yet" (cf Jn 7:39), because the historical conditions necessary for gathering the remnant and restoring the holy city had not yet been fulfilled.

Ezekiel also preserves less exalted, if equally significant descriptions of *ruach* at work in the nation's midst. The difficulties involved with translating the term by "spirit," "breath" or "wind" are amply indicated in the opening paragraphs (1:4,12,20, etc., where *ruach* signifies "spirit" but is pictured metaphorically as wind, leading to a powerful if somewhat confusing play on words). In 13:3, the "foolish" (false) prophets are those who "follow their own spirit and have seen nothing."<sup>14</sup> True visions are inspired by the *ruach-Yahweh*, and it is this Spirit which alone enables both prophets and nations to "hear the Word of the Lord" (13:2). This affirmation marks a significant development in Israel's conception of Spirit, one that is especially important for Johannine pneumatology. Here for the first time, Spirit is perceived to be the source of all authentic inspiration: that which enables men to prophesy, but also that which enables them to hear and to *interpret* the prophecy according to the divine will.

The unknown prophet called *Deutero-* or *Second-Isaiah* flourished towards the middle of the 6th century B.C., also during the difficult years of Israel's captivity in Babylon. In these oracles (Is 40-55) the Lord's breath (*ruach*) serves as a destructive force that underscores the weakness of human flesh (40:7). More significantly, it constitutes both the *content* of God's promise to the nation and the *instrument* through which that promise is fulfilled.

The salvation oracle (44:1-5) begins with a reaffirmation of Israel's election and moves to a promise of new life for the nation held in bondage and servitude:

Hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Fear not ... for I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing upon your offspring.

"Water," "Spirit" and "Blessing" appear here as images of the divine life-force which God intends to pour out upon earth and people.<sup>15</sup> The key expression in the passage is *ruach*, which is at one and the same time the *source*, the *mediator* and the *content* of the promised blessing. The divine Spirit is that aspect of God's personality which is at work within history. It is beyond human counseling; it possesses all enlightenment, justice and knowledge (40:13-14): characteristics that were later attrib-

uted to the divine Wisdom.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, the Spirit empowers the *Ebed-Yahweh*, the Lord's Servant, to "bring justice (*mishpat*) to the nations" as part of his eschatological ministry:

Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations... He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth...  
(*Is 42:1-4*)

In Isaiah 11, the Spirit empowers the Davidic Messiah to rule. In the above passage from Deutero-Isaiah, this same Spirit leads the Servant to prophesy.

Recent studies on the Servant support the view that he is an individual figure who in certain respects represents the collective body of Israel.<sup>17</sup> He is perhaps best characterized as an awaited *messianic prophet*, an eschatological figure who will establish justice in Israel and among the nations. The expression "justice" (*mishpat*, LXX: *krisis*) in 42:1-4 signifies correct judgment or right decision concerning faith in the one God: the Israelite equivalent of "orthodoxy." It is a forensic term used in the context of the judicial proceedings between Yahweh and the nations, whose gods are vain idols (cf 45:20ff; 44:9ff). The Servant's task is to lead the peoples of the earth to God's salvation through his personal, vicarious suffering (cf 49:6f; 53:2ff). When the nations accept Yahweh as the only true God, the unique source of their hope, then "right judgment" — implying as well "right worship" — will indeed be established upon the earth.

For our purposes, the most important point to note here is that the Servant accomplishes his mission *by the power of the Lord's Spirit invested in him* (42:1; cf Num 11:25). This role of the Servant, the Spirit-filled eschatological prophet who leads the nations to a true knowledge of God, was a formative element in the Johannine representation of Jesus as the suffering and redeeming "Prophet to come."

### (B) *Post-Exilic Prophecy*

Prophets of the post-exilic period (from about 530 B.C.) saw in the divine *ruach* primarily a source and power of *inspiration* and *interpretation*. The earlier conception of *ruach* as the creator of a new spirit within human life

largely disappeared, and for this reason the P account of creation (Gen 1) omits the term when speaking of the life-force in living things (cf Ps 104:30). This development in post-exilic Judaism seems largely due to renewed interest in the Law and the oracles of the earlier prophets, as well as to the growth of nationalism among the returning people. Collective *interpretation of tradition* tends to supplant the revelatory activity of the individual seer, as the prophetic function is assumed by the "watchmen" or visionaries, who labor towards the restoration of Israel. In Paul Hanson's words, "The age of the solitary prophet has given way to the age of the visionary community."<sup>18</sup> As a result, prophecy will gradually be replaced by Jewish apocalyptic. During this period of transition, however, individual, Spirit-inspired prophets continue to play a key role in Israel's quest for knowledge of the divine will and assurance of divine faithfulness.

Throughout the post-exilic age, the divine Spirit is typically depicted as possessing or "clothing" a prophet, and thereby inspiring him to pronounce judgment upon the disobedient nation. The condemnation he speaks against his people is nothing other, and nothing less, than God's own judgment:

The Spirit of God took possession of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said to them, 'Thus says God, Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He has forsaken you!' (*II Chr 24:20*)

In anthropological usage, the *ruach* of Cyrus was stirred up by the Lord (with no mention of the divine Spirit), leading him to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple (Ezra 1:1-5).

In place of the renewing, creative function of Spirit that we find in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, there emerges in the post-exilic period the new and all-important theme of the Spirit's *teaching function*. A natural development of the role of Spirit in prophetic inspiration, this emphasis upon teaching (instructing, providing spiritual insight) contributed significantly to the Jewish understanding of divine Wisdom. As we shall see farther on, it stands as well behind the Johannine conception of Spirit as the one who will guide the Church into the fullness of divine truth (Jn 16:13).

The teaching function of the Spirit appears in the prophecy of



*Zechariah* (ca. 520 B.C.), who pronounces a dire warning against his people for their refusal “to hear the law and the words which the Lord Sabaoth sent through His Spirit by means of the former prophets” (7:12). The people respond to the prophetic Word with typical ambivalence, feigning faithfulness in times of distress while in practice working evil towards their brethren. As happened repeatedly in the past, now once again they call down upon themselves divine wrath and its inevitable consequences: exile and desolation of the land. There is bitter irony — and a measure of sadness — in God’s reproach: “As I called and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear!” (7:13f).

God had given His “good Spirit” to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt and to *instruct* them (or grant them “insight,” cf Neh 9:20).<sup>19</sup> Having “forgotten” their history, however, they were destined to repeat it. Yet even the rending experience of Babylonian exile failed to impress them in any lasting way, and they harden their hearts still further against the Lord’s Spirit and give ear to the lies of false prophets. In the choice that must necessarily be made between the “good Spirit” that instructs in the divine will and the lies of those inspired by a different spirit, we find a foreshadowing of the ethical dualism of the Johannine communities that opposes a spirit of truth to a spirit of error or deception.

While the divine *ruach* at this stage is not identified with Yahweh, it nevertheless manifests His will and reveals His presence within the people’s daily experience. Rejection of that Spirit, therefore, is tantamount to rejection of Yahweh Himself. Because the people reject their God, He responds by threatening to withdraw His protecting hand and to leave them vulnerable to further conquest. The Lord’s faithfulness, however, is stronger than His anger. For this reason the following oracle can turn the threat of punishment into a promise of ultimate freedom and restoration:

Thus says the Lord of Hosts, ‘I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath... I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.’ (Zech 8:2f)

Through the Spirit, God seeks to instruct and guide His people in the way of the Mosaic Law, in order to lead them into a new relationship of faithfulness, righteousness and love with Himself and with one another.



Again and again they reject His overtures. Yet the Lord of hosts, in a display of personal humility that reveals the self-giving devotion behind His "jealous wrath," never ceases to renew His promises through the Spirit-inspired voice of His prophet.

This unwavering faithfulness testifies as clearly as any other image in Old Testament tradition to the fact that Yahweh is a God of love. As implied by the term *chesed* or "covenant love," Yahweh remains faithful despite Israel's harlotry. Repeatedly He reaches out in humble devotion to reconcile His fallen "Bride" with Himself; and just as often He is rebuffed. As a God of justice, He will once again express His divine wrath by allowing Israel to experience the pain of exile. Yet even before the consequences of that wrath are felt, He utters a promise of ultimate reconciliation and restoration to be realized in the new, eschatological age. Spoken by the Spirit through the mouth of the prophet, this promise presages the vision of John the Seer in which "the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'," inviting all those who desire it to "take of the water of life without price" (Rev 22:17). To speak of the God of the Old Testament as a God solely of wrath and judgment, therefore, is simply to ignore the Spirit-inspired prophetic announcement of God's utter faithfulness and the inviolable quality of His covenant relationship with Israel.

In early strata of the Pentateuch, the Spirit of God shaped events in Israel's salvation-history by investing particular individuals — judges and then kings — with extraordinary charismatic power. In the post-exilic period, the "good Spirit" is bestowed upon *all* the people to lead them along the way of spiritual renewal and national salvation. Yahweh's Word as spoken to the remnant through the prophet *Haggai* is once again a promise of divine faithfulness combined with an exhortation to persevere along that same "way": "... for I am with you, says the Lord Sabaoth, according to the promise which I made to you at your exodus from Egypt; and my Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not!" (Hag 2:4f).

The expression "Fear not!" is a revelatory formula in Hebrew tradition, one that often signals a theophany.<sup>20</sup> Taken up by the apostolic writers, it occurs especially in passages dealing with God's saving work through the New Exodus: at the moment of the Annunciation, according to Lucan tradition (1:30), and at the "walking on the water" (Mk 6:50; Mt 14:27),

which in Johannine theology stands at the very center of the Gospel witness (6:16-21).<sup>21</sup> From Egypt, through the exile, to the period of the second Temple, Yahweh dwells among His people *in the Spirit*, empowering them to fulfill His plan for the restoration of Israel. Consequently, Israel becomes a typological image of the Church as the new people of God, led by the Spirit from bondage to freedom, whose celebration of God's saving activity unfolds "in Spirit and in truth" within the New Temple of Christ's Body (Jn 2:20; 4:24).

Manifesting the divine presence, the *ruach-Yahweh* is a "teaching Spirit," whose function is to lead the people to a true (right) knowledge of the Lord and to consequent obedience to His will. Exercising their freedom with characteristic abandon, the people again choose to reject the divine Word. The wrath they thereby incur manifests itself as a catastrophic *silence* on the part of God. Prophetic inspiration is abruptly cut off, because the prophets themselves have become purveyors of lies (Zech 13:2). The Spirit, which had led Israel out of bondage in Egypt and exile in Babylon, disappears from the historical scene, to be projected by the people's collective consciousness as the chief object of their eschatological hope. Thus the so-called *Trito-* or *Third-Isaiah* (chs 56-66; ca. 535-525 B.C.) proclaims that Yahweh, the source of life-giving *ruach*, will "revive the spirit" of those who submit themselves in obedience to His will:

I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend for ever, nor will I always be angry; for from me the Spirit will go forth [LXX: *pneuma par' emou exeleusetai*, the future tense signifying the end-time effusion] and I have made the breath of life.  
(Is 57:15f)

In contrast to Ezekiel's vision of a national rebirth, this post-exilic prophet promises *individual* regeneration by the Spirit, thereby foreshadowing the mystery of Christian "initiation."

In the fragment Isaiah 59:21, this eschatological outpouring of the Spirit is linked to the sealing of a "new covenant":

As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord: my Spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.

Here Yahweh's Word and His Spirit serve respectively as the content and the guarantee of the covenant which will embrace all future generations. In Numbers 11:29, Moses cries out: "Would that the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" Third-Isaiah sees this hope realized in his vision of a new covenant to be sealed in a new age, when Yahweh's Spirit will rest no longer upon chosen prophets only, but upon *all* the people, so that all might be empowered to proclaim His Word and redemptive deeds.<sup>22</sup>

This promised Spirit is a Spirit of inspiration which makes the divine Word accessible to humanity as a whole. Here again we encounter the familiar twofold function of the Spirit: to proclaim the Word, and to enable God's people to "hear," i.e., to receive and to obey the Word. It is by this twofold work that the Spirit "actualizes" the new covenant in the messianic age.<sup>23</sup>

Hope in the new covenant, however, presupposes that the Spirit will "return" to the stage of history and once again proclaim the Word of God. Renewal of prophecy is therefore a necessary precondition for the covenant's fulfillment. As Moses anointed Joshua with the "spirit of wisdom" (Dt 34:9), so the Lord will anoint an eschatological prophet with His own Spirit (Is 61:1ff, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me").<sup>24</sup> To those who have been "broken in spirit," the Spirit of prophecy empowers this anointed one to proclaim a life-giving Word of comfort or consolation (LXX: *parakalesai*; cf 40:1). The Spirit is not the healing power; rather it serves as the inspiration behind the healing Word. *The Word itself has now become the active agent, mediated by the Spirit and proclaimed by the prophet.*

The passage Isaiah 61:1-3 serves as a bridge between the post-exilic period and the dawn of the eschatological age when the Spirit will be poured out anew upon the nation (cf Joel 3:1; "the nation" is the probable meaning of "all flesh"). These verses have evidently been inserted into the context of a salvation oracle and, in all probability, originally referred to the vocation of a post-exilic prophet who was understood by Third-Isaiah to be an historical rather than an eschatological figure.<sup>25</sup> Ultimate fulfillment of the promise of redemption and restoration, however, must await the new age associated with the coming of the Messiah. Accordingly, Jesus in Luke 4:18f reads these verses to identify His own ministry as a pro-

phetic witness to the new era of salvation. Subsequently the Book of Acts takes up the oracle of Joel which had promised a renewal of prophecy by the outpouring of Spirit upon "all flesh" (the nation, but to be understood here as an image of the Church). As the fulfillment of this promise, Pentecost thus marks the beginning of the long-awaited New Age of the Spirit.

### *(C) The Holy Spirit and the Word in the Post-exilic Age*

At this point we should draw together the several themes we have been discussing and offer something of a synthesis.

No absolute distinction can be made between various usages of the Hebrew term *ruach*. Whether it is depicted as a natural, an anthropological, or a divine phenomenon, *ruach* has its ultimate source in Yahweh Himself. As a divine power and source of life, its connection with Yahweh is attested in the earliest strata of Israel's recorded history.<sup>26</sup> Spirit is the inapprehensible presence within time and space, nature and history, of transcendent power and purpose. It is a dynamic presence that vivifies, blesses, chastises and instructs. In later tradition especially, it points beyond itself to its source, the creator God, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah *passim*), who is separated from His creation, and particularly from the impurity of human sin, by His quality of holiness (*godesh*).<sup>27</sup> Here the Spirit serves as a bridge or mediating presence between the transcendent God and human history. Through His Spirit, Yahweh Himself creates, sustains, renews, and instructs His covenant-people.

In post-exilic thought, the concept of union (not to be confused with "identification") between Yahweh and His Spirit was accompanied by a change in the popular understanding of how Spirit operates. The mysterious *ruach-Yahweh* no longer appears as some capricious force which sporadically overwhelms and transforms individuals and entire nations. Now it reflects the subjective dimension of Yahweh's personality: His moods, and the essential quality of His nature which is holiness. Therefore the Spirit of the Holy God can be called "His holy Spirit" (Is 63:10f; Ps 51:12ff; cf Ps 143:10, "Thy good Spirit").

The passage Isaiah 63:7-14 is especially important in this regard. It



occurs in the context of a popular lament and a petition for renewal of Yahweh's mercy (63:7-64:11). Whether vss. 7-14 circulated originally as an independent psalm remains an open question,<sup>28</sup> but the possibility makes the problem of precise dating an insoluble one. If the account in 64:11 of the destruction of the Temple is not a later addition, it may serve to fix the date for the whole passage at sometime after 587 B.C. The unit 63:7-14 mentions twice "His holy Spirit" and once the "Spirit of the Lord." The expression "holy Spirit" occurs just one other time in the Old Testament, in Psalm 50/51:11.<sup>29</sup> In each instance *ruach* is modified not by the adjective "holy," but by the noun "holiness" (*qodesh*). This use of the substantive as a modifier frequently characterizes something possessed by God, whether His name (Lev 20:3; Ps 33:21), His mountain (Is 11:9), His city (Is 48:2) or His Spirit. We may suppose that the wording "Spirit of His holiness" is intended to preserve Yahweh's utter transcendence by characterizing Spirit as a divine possession rather than as divinity itself (cf Rom 1:4, *pneuma hagiosunes*). The reader is on shaky ground, however, when he tries to distinguish between what Yahweh *has* and what He *is*.<sup>30</sup>

In Is 63:10, the people's rebellion is said to "grieve" the Lord's holy Spirit; that is, they offend against His holiness. Here *ruach* is nearly synonymous with Yahweh as the expression of His personality. It forms a parallel image with the expression "His face" in the preceding verse.<sup>31</sup> "Face" (*panim*) is the expression for the presence of God (cf Deut 4:37; Ps 139:7). Neither "face" nor "Spirit" is personified as an objective entity, ontologically distinct from Yahweh Himself. Yet each is present within history, defending and guiding the covenant-people by rendering the Lord present in their midst. To recall A. Johnson's felicitous phrase,<sup>32</sup> Spirit (and according to this usage, "face") is the "extension of Yahweh's personality," the mode of presence of the transcendent God within the sphere of human life and affairs. The holy Spirit bridges the gulf between immanence and transcendence, between the historical existence of sinful humanity and the eternity of the holy God. Thereby Spirit continually renews and maintains Israel's intimate communion with the covenant-Lord.

The same thought is expressed in the post-exilic (?) penitential psalm 50/51:10-12. The central passage is structured in direct parallelism and focuses upon the theme of "spirit".<sup>33</sup>



A : Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 A' : and put a new and right (or steadfast) spirit within me.  
 B : Cast me not away from Thy presence,  
 B' : and take not Thy holy Spirit from me.  
 C : Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,  
 C' : and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Here the promise of Jeremiah ("I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart," 24:7; cf 31:33; 32:39; Ezek 36:25ff) is coupled with the parallel between "face" ("presence") and "holy Spirit." The psalmist petitions Yahweh to forgive the sin which has offended against His holiness and against the covenant relationship marked by divine mercy and loving kindness (v 1). Restoration of that relationship requires nothing less than a new creation within the "inner being," the "secret heart" that lies at the center of human existence. Holy Spirit, the divine power that alone purifies and effects that inner transformation, is a gift of God's compassion, bestowed in response to a "broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart" (v 19).<sup>34</sup> The Spirit, then, not only works within the nation as a whole, but on a more "existential" level it acts to renew and sustain members of the covenant-bond. From this period, Spirit is known and experienced as an *abiding gift* of the Lord. It is Yahweh's own presence, continually realized among those who seek communion with Him through repentance and obedience.

The notion of God's abiding presence in the Spirit is uniquely post-exilic. The presence of His Word in history, mediated by the inspirational activity of the Spirit, on the other hand, was recognized both before and during the age of classical prophecy. This may seem evident on the basis of the passages we have already examined. Yet a significant body of scholarly opinion argues to the contrary:<sup>35</sup> that in fact no inspirational activity of the Spirit is to be found among the older classical prophets. It may be that the affirmation in Micah 3:8, "I am filled ... with the Spirit of the Lord," is a later gloss. Nevertheless, the presence of such glosses and the absence of explicit references to a Spirit of prophecy in the oracles of Amos and Jeremiah do not warrant the conclusion that spiritual inspiration is an exclusively post-exilic phenomenon. Although Amos rejected

the title *nabi* (7:14), he did insist upon his call to prophesy (7:15; 3:8). And there is no doubt that the verb *naba* ("to prophesy/flow forth") was associated at a very early date with the activity of the Spirit (I Sam 10:6,10; 19:20; cf II Kings 2:15f; Zech 13:2ff). In Hosea's time a prophet was called "a man of the Spirit" (9:7). For Isaiah Spirit is the vehicle of God's self-revelation which instructs the human spirit and leads it to "truth" or faithful obedience to the divine will. Throughout this early period, the prophet's function is to mediate the divine Word to the people. His activity, therefore, is intimately bound up with that of the Spirit, even though it is never explicitly stated that Spirit is the inspiration behind prophecy.

Thus there is considerable evidence to indicate that the prophetic consciousness in the *pre-exilic* period did conceive the Spirit to be a "Spirit of prophecy," the source and authority behind the oracles of the Lord. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristics of pre-exilic classical prophecy (ecstatic behavior, oracular forms, prophetic sign-acts, etc.) are fundamentally the same as those of prophecy in both the earlier, pre-classical times and in the later post-exilic age, when the Spirit was expressly depicted as the inspirational power behind the prophetic word. We may therefore conclude that the Spirit has a discernable *inspirational function* throughout Israel's long prophetic period.<sup>36</sup>

Although we can indeed trace the close relationship between Spirit and Word back into the earliest period of Israel's recorded history, it is true that the conception of Spirit as the inspiration and authority behind the prophets' oracles emerged unambiguously only in the period following the return from Babylon. This raises an important question: At what point, and under what influences, did the Spirit become recognized specifically as the *revealer* and *mediator* of the Word of God?

The answer to that question cannot be located in a particular historical moment or event, such as the sojourn in Egypt or the exile. It is rather to be found in the unfolding of a process which spans Israelite history. During the days of ecstatic prophecy, the *nabi* was seized by the Spirit and compelled to utter Yahweh's Word. In this early period the Word, like the Spirit, possessed a certain degree of independence or autonomy of action, although it was never actually personified. (For this reason the noun *dabar* can also denote "thing," "matter" or "affair.") Both pre- and post-exilic

prophets bear witness to the gradual process by which the quasi-independent modes of divine revelation, Word and Spirit, were drawn together, while Spirit became a circumlocution for Yahweh Himself in His activity as Revealer. The content of His revelation, as well as the form of its communication, was the prophetic Word, the expression of divine intention, approbation and judgment.

Throughout Israel's history, then, the prophetic movement attests to the specific *revelatory function* of both Spirit and Word. In the period after the traumatic events of the exile, Spirit was chiefly conceived as the mediator of the Word, the vehicle by which Yahweh consoled, warned, guided and chastened His people during their reoccupation of Palestine. The Word in turn assumed other characteristics, such as a creative role which was a dominant theme in the Priestly tradition (in the creation account of Genesis 1, for example) as in the later Wisdom literature.

This conceptual development by which Spirit came to be known as bearer of the divine Word was unquestionably influenced by Israel's contact with contemporary religions, both during and after the period of captivity in Babylon. In order to understand the importance of that development for Johannine theology, it is necessary to give some attention to those extra-Jewish influences, and in particular to the figure of the *Spenta Mainyu* — the "Beneficent Spirit" or "Spirit of Truth" — in the religious thought of the Iranian prophet Zarathustra.

#### NOTES

1. See F. Baumgärtel, art. *pneuma* ("Spirit in the Old Testament") *TWNT* VI, p.357-366. The inscrutable quality of Spirit is accentuated in John 3:8, where the dynamic character of *pneuma* is manifest, but because of the word-play, the passage remains notoriously difficult to translate.
2. The passage Is 4:2-6 is almost certainly post-exilic, but the usage of *ruach* corresponds to that found elsewhere in this prophet's oracles. Cf. 19:14; 28:6, "spirit of judgment" predicated of Yahweh-Sabaoth.
3. It would be inaccurate to speak of a spirit-flesh dualism in this passage. As Pedersen, *Israel I*, p.146; A. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff, 1942), p.14f, and many more recent authors have insisted, spirit is contrasted with flesh in Is 31 as strength over weakness. The opposition is neither metaphysical nor moral; it simply underscores the characteristic weakness of "flesh." Cf. Gen 6:3; Is 40:5f; Jer 45:5; and Ps 56:5.

4. See Lys, *Ruach*, p.84.
5. Lys, *Ruach*, p.87; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harner, 1958), p.124, who affirms, "the spirit is God himself in creative and saving activity." Cf. Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 331-336, on the presence of God in the "gifts" of the Spirit.
6. The paralleling of "prophet" and "man of spirit" may well be Hosea's own device. Cf. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1962), p. 175 and n. 108; G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments II* (München, 1960), (ET: Edinburgh, 1962) p.69; and P. Voltz, *Der Geist Gottes* (Tübingen, 1910), p.40f. This parallelism expresses an understanding commonly found in early tradition of the historical writings. The ecstatic prophet (*nabi*) was spirit-filled or "seized" by the Spirit (I Kings 18:12; cf II Kings 2:9) and compelled to utter God's Word.
7. Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p.340.
8. The meaning of this phrase is unclear. Does "wind and lies" refer to the content of what is proclaimed, or to the manner in which the utterance is made? If the former, the meaning would be: the false prophet preaches the pleasures of intoxication rather than proclaiming the imminence of doom. If the latter: the prophet's ecstasy is caused not by the Spirit of Yahweh, but by alcoholic spirits.
9. The authenticity of the phrase "with the Spirit of the Lord" (3:8) has often been challenged. L. Köhler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Tübingen, 1936), p.102, declares flatly that "in the older prophets, the gift of God's Spirit and prophetic inspiration are wholly unrelated." This extreme view is supported by P. Volz, *Geist Gottes*, p.62f; 65, n.1f; (cf W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments II* (Stuttgart, 1959), p.24, n.13). Mowinckel, "Ecstatic Experience and Rational Elaboration in Old Testament Prophecy," *AO* 13 (1935) 277, n.4, rejects the phrase as a gloss which interrupts the meter, whereas Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p.175, n.109, defends the reading precisely on the basis of meter ("a good 2+2+2+2 line"). He further describes the Spirit in this passage as "the wellspring of inspiration." Lindblom is followed by most interpreters today; see A. Weiser, *Die Propheten Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (Göttingen, 1974) p.257-259; L.C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p.310-315; B. Vawter, *Amos, Hosea, Micah, With an Introduction to Classical Prophecy* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1981), p.144-146; and D.R. Hillers, *Micah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p.45, who argues on the basis of II Sam 23:2 and Is 30:1 that the expression is not anachronistic and may be attested in Micah 2:11 by its antithesis, "a deceiving spirit" (lit.: "spirit and falsehood"; LXX: *pneuma pseudos* ; cf variants in J. Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae*, p.211). J.L. Mays, *Micah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), p. 85f, on the other hand, rejects the phrase because it "overloads the metre" and confuses the source of the endowment of charismatic gifts (the Spirit) with the gifts themselves. The cumulative evidence nevertheless favors authenticity. Spirit-inspired prophecy was definitely known at this period (cf Is 11:2f), and the most natural reading would parallel "power" and "the Spirit of the Lord" as the divine source of



Micah's pronouncement of "justice" (*mishpat*) and "might" upon the sinful people.

10. Thus S. Mowinckel, "The Spirit and the Word in the pre-exilic prophets," *JBL* (1934) 199ff. The nature of the false prophecy confronting Jeremiah has been well analyzed by G. von Rad, "Die falsche Propheten," *ZAW* 10 (1933), 109-120. The false prophets understood it to be their mission to support the "national-religious expectation of salvation," an expectation expressed by the Deuteronomist, who saw the true prophets not as "free agents" but as members of a fixed institution. In fact, however, they were false prophets — "prophets of salvation" rather than of judgment — who confidently predicted continuing mercy and thereby substituted national dogma for Yahweh's unpredictable Word. It must be added, however, that von Rad represents a certain anti-institutional bias that leads him to overstate his case. See W.L. Holladay, *Jeremiah I* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 186f, 637f; J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p.528-536; and P. Gilbert, "Vrai et faux prophète," *Lumière et Vie* 165 (1983), 21-30.
11. The genuineness of the eschatological oracle promising a "new covenant written upon the heart" (Jer 31:31ff) has often been challenged. J. Skinner's study of "covenant" (*berith*) in Jer, *Prophecy and Religion, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, 1961), p.320-334, however, may be said to have settled the question in favor of its authenticity. It is accepted by Thompson, *Jeremiah*, p.580; see R.P. Carroll's discussion of the question in *Jeremiah* (London, 1986), p.613f. H.D. Potter, "The New Covenant in Jeremiah xxxi 31-34," *VT* 33 (1983) 347-357, likewise argues strongly in favor of its authenticity, pointing out its basic differences with the Deuteronomic outlook and its concern to stress direct communication of divine truth to the people through the Spirit without human mediation. In any case, it stood in the text known by early Christian writers and exercised considerable influence upon their formulation of the Gospel: Mt 26:28; Lk 22:17-19; Rom 11:27; Heb 8:8-12; 10:16; etc.
12. This question is discussed in detail in Vol. II: the Spirit as *chrisma* or unction in I John.
13. There is no thought of individual resuscitation here, and the term "resurrection" is consequently not applicable. The Church has recognized the typological significance of the "dry bones" prophecy, however, and in Orthodox tradition proclaims Ezekiel's vision at matins of Holy Saturday as a foretelling of the general resurrection.
14. The LXX reads *to katholou me blepousin*: they fail to perceive the "fullness," and consequently speak lies, *mataia*, a synonym for vanity, Ex 20:7, or idolatry, Jer 8:19.
15. C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (London, 1969), p.135f, notes that "blessing" originally meant "life-force." Cf. G.A.F. Knight, *Servant Theology. Isaiah 40-55* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p.76, who associates this eschatological symbol with Ezek 37 and the vision of dry bones.



16. The meaning of this passage is obscure. R.N. Whybray, *The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah xl 13-14* (Cambridge, 1971), prefers to translate *ruach* by (God's) "mind" or "intelligence" (p.12f). With A. Johnson, *The One and the Many*, Whybray correctly stresses the "social" aspect of the divine personality. He sees in the "counsellor" of 40:13 a collective image of the heavenly court, whose members execute Yahweh's commands but, in the perspective of Deut-Is's strict monotheism, can in no way assist Him in the making of decisions. The importance of this theme will become clear in our discussion of the "paracletic" functions of Christ and the Spirit.
17. The best treatment of this subject is probably still C.R. North's *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (London, 1956). North accepts the songs as the work of Deut-Is (p.186) and concludes that the Servant is a soteriological (rather than political) messianic figure *to come* (p.217f). Similarly, G. von Rad, *Theologie des ATs* II, p.273f, who believes the Servant figure to be constructed on older tradition, also employed by the Deuteronomist, which expected an eschatological prophet like Moses. Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p.267ff, on the other hand, stresses the collective nature of the Servant, although he acknowledges that the prototype might have been an individual figure. Cf. S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford, 1959), p.187ff; H.H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord* (Oxford, 1965), p.3-93; and the commentary by Westermann, *ad loc.* For a variant of the "collective" image of the Servant, see N.H. Snaith, *Isaiah 40-66. A Study of the Teaching of the Second Isaiah and its Consequences* (Leiden, 1967), p.172-175, who identifies this figure with the Israelite exiles deported to Babylon in 597. R.N. Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah Ch. 53*, (JSOT supplement 4) (Sheffield, 1978), holds with a number of modern scholars that the servant is Deut-Is himself. P. Grelot, *Les Poèmes du Serviteur: De la lecture critique à l'herméneutique* (Paris, 1981), identifies the Servant as a Davidide, probably Zerubbabel. For useful summaries and evaluations of recent studies on the Servant-figure, see C.G. Kruse, "The Servant Songs: Interpretive Trends Since C.R. North," *StudBT* 8 (1978), 3-27; and K. Nakazawa, "The Servant Songs — A Review After Three Decades" *Orient* 18 (1982) 65-82.
18. Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p.69. Hanson continues to describe characteristic features of emerging apocalyptic thought in this period: "(1) The period of the fresh outpouring of the prophetic spirit yields to the studied reapplication of the words of former prophecy. (2) The individual office of prophet develops toward a collective office according to which the community of visionary leaders claims as a body to continue the office of the servant of Yahweh" (*ibid.*).
19. Neh 9:20, "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst." Note the parallel between God's gift of His Spirit to instruct Israel in the desert and His gift of manna and water. Such a passage could scarcely be ignored by the early Church in its reflections upon the meaning of the sacraments (e.g., Jn 3, 6).

20. See L. Köhler, *Theologie*, p.101; and his article, "Die Offenbarungsformel 'Fürchte dich nicht' im Alten Testament" *SchTZ* (1919), 33ff. E.W. Conrad, "The 'Fear Not' Oracles in Second Isaiah" *VT* 34 (1984) 129-152, distinguishes between two *Gattungen* in which this formula appears: war oracles that announce Yahweh's victory, and patriarchal oracles which promise offspring to the Israelite community. While such a distinction may appear in II Is, the phrase generally designates God's manifestation to the people as a function of His saving work.
21. For the chiasmic structuring of the Fourth Gospel that locates this passage at the thematic center, see P.F. Ellis, *The Genius of John* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1984).
22. See G.A.F. Knight, *The New Israel. Isaiah 56-66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 41. "Thus we have come to the end of the line, historically speaking, of the great individual prophets. From now on the office of the interpreter of the Word was to be shared by the ordinary family both as part of their life on earth as well as in the life to come." The development of Israel's perception of Spirit, from an occasional power to a sanctifying instrument of Yahweh in the life of the people as a whole, occurred at an accelerated pace in the period of the Exile. See R.J. Sklba, "'Until the Spirit from on High is Poured out on Us' (Is 32:15): Reflections on the Role of the Spirit in the Exile" *CBQ* 46 (1984) 1-17.
23. Compare the theme of the new covenant in Is 59:21 with the Jeremiah prophecy 31:31-34, where "all shall know the Lord" by virtue of the new law to be written upon their hearts. Behind each promise stands a conception of Spirit as the "presence" of God among His people in the new (messianic) age.
24. Knight, *The New Israel*, p.50, sees in the "me" of this verse both Third-Isaiah and the people of Israel collectively. As the parallels to the Servant Songs (esp. Is 42:1) and Micah 3:8 show, however, the speaker is an individual figure who assumes the role of "prophet of the end-time." Johannine tradition sees the realization of this prophetic ministry in the work of Jesus: 6:14; 7:40; 9:17.
25. C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p.367: "To the best of our knowledge, this was the last occasion in the history of Israel on which a prophet expressed his certainty of having been sent by God with a message to his nation with such freedom and conviction." Westermann further notes the development of the spirit-concept in Israel — from its presence as an occasional charismatic power to its close association with both king and messiah, and on to its virtual identification with Yahweh — in "Geist im Alten Testament" *EvT* 41 (1981) 223-230.
26. P. Volz, *Geist Gottes*, argues that the connection between *ruach* and Yahweh is relatively late. From the point of view of the history of religions, he maintains, the conception of *ruach* is older than that of the God Yahweh and incorporated originally both demonic and animistic dimensions (p.62). Thus he distinguishes between evil or demonic spirits, a divine spirit (*ruach-Gottheit*), and the *ruach-Yahweh*. In the first stage of the history of religions, he holds, *ruach* appears as an "autonomous potential," a kind of spiritual matter or fluid. Only in the second stage was *ruach* clearly associated with Yahweh Himself (p.69). While Volz's study is valuable for its distinctions between various stages in the development of

Israel's theological reflection, his arguments are questionable. As we shall point out in the next section, Babylonian and Egyptian mythologies recognized wind or breath (Akkadian *sharu*) as a life-force with its ultimate source precisely in the godhead. Cf. J. Hehn, "Zum Problem des Geistes im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament," *ZAW* 43 (1925) 210-225, esp. p.213. In the OT a "spirit" is depicted as an autonomous entity only in I Kings 22:21; but even here the spirit functions more as a *dramatis persona* than as either "Stoff" or "Person" (as Volz maintains, p.4). Against Volz's view, P. van Imschoot, "L'Action de l'Esprit de Jahvé dans l'Ancien Testament," *RSpt* 23 (1934) 584f, has shown the connection between Yahweh and the *ruach* which Elijah confers upon Elisha (II Kings 2:9-15). For a criticism of the expression "divine fluid" to describe spirit, see Hehn's discussion, "Problem des Geistes," p.211, of F. Preisigke's "Vom göttlichen Fluidum nach ägyptischer Auffassung" (Schrift I, Papyrusinstitut Heidelberg, Berlin and Leipzig, 1920). That Volz all too often uses modern categories to explain Hebrew word-usage is clear from his references to "causality" and "metaphysical" qualities, as well as to "fluid."

27. There is still much debate over the etymological origin of the root *qds*. The two possibilities seem to be "to shine" or "be bright," and "to be separate" or "set apart." Snaith, *Ideas*, p.21ff, offers convincing grounds for accepting the latter meaning, and his conclusions can be substantiated by an examination of the title "Holy One of Israel" in Isaiah. Similarly, O. Procksch, *TWNT* I, p.88ff. F. Nötscher, "Heiligkeit in den Qumranschriften," in *Vom Alten zum Neuen Testament* (Bonn, 1962), p.163ff, discusses the concept of "holiness" among the Dead Sea sectarians.
28. Most commentators treat 63:7-14 as a unit but include it within the larger context of 63:7-64:11. Westermann, *Isaiah* 40-66, p. 386-387, points to the similarities between the structure of vss. 7-14 and the Deuteronomic image of sacred history.
29. Discounting the LXX readings in Dan 5:12; 6:4; and the variant of Ps 142/143:10.
30. Cf. Lys, *Ruach*, p. 155, n.
31. The amended, but certainly correct reading of this verse, following the LXX, is literally, "not a messenger nor an angel, but His face helped them."
32. *The One and the Many*, p.15.
33. On the structure and central theme of this psalm, see J. Breck, "Biblical Chiasmus: Exploring Structure for Meaning," *BTB* XVII/2 (1987) 71.
34. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen I* (Neukirchen, 1960), p.388f, expresses well the gratuitous nature of this gift: "Man is incapable of preparing a 'pure heart,' and no ritual can bring it to life. Only God's free, creative act is able to renew man's inner being."
35. Thus, for example, Volz, Köhler, Mowinckel, and Eichrodt.
36. Further evidence of pre-exilic prophetic inspiration is offered by P. van Imschoot, "L'Action de l'Esprit de Jahvé," p. 553-587; Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p. 175ff.





## The Spirit-Concept in the Ancient Near-East

Among the ancient near-eastern religions we can trace three fairly distinct lines of thought: Egyptian, Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian), and Iranian. All three cast significant light upon the relationship of Spirit and Word in the Old Testament. In the present chapter we want to examine some of the relevant sources from each of those traditions that specialists have uncovered during the past century.

Traffic through the Levant from the dawn of near-eastern history created an extraordinary cross-pollination of religious ideas. Palestine itself was a cross-roads, linking Assyria and Babylon to the north and east with Egypt to the south. Because Israel's contact with foreign cultures was so extensive throughout the pre-Hellenistic period (before 300 B.C.), it is impossible to distinguish precisely the many sources of external influence upon Hebrew religion or the dates at which that exposure first took place. Consequently, what biblical historians call the *religionsgeschichtlich* (poorly rendered into English as "history-of-religions") problem is ultimately insoluble, and we can do no more than indicate certain ways in which Hebrew thought appears to have been directed and shaped through its contact with various contemporary religious movements.

In an article published in 1925, Johannes Hehn discussed the problem of methodology involved in obtaining a history of the Spirit-concept in antiquity and its bearing upon the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Tentatively, he sketched the development of that concept using ancient near-eastern sources that were available to him. Since that time, many other texts have come to light, making all the more clear just how valuable biblical archaeology is for the science of exegesis. By looking at a representative sample of these many sources, we can suggest, not parallels in the strict sense, but rather influences from foreign religions that definitely shaped Israel's understanding of Spirit as the bearer of the divine Word. It will become clear as well that certain unique characteristics of Johannine pneumatology owe much to these same, extra-biblical influences.

(A) *The Egyptian ka: "spirit"*

Generally speaking, Egyptian, Akkadian (Assyro-Babylonian) and Iranian religions depict spirit respectively as the divine breath, the source of human life; as the divine power within history; and as the divine bearer of truth and life. We should begin this "history-of-religions" survey by looking briefly at the first of these traditions.

Christianity took hold in Egypt sometime during the early part of the second century. For nearly three millennia, a highly elaborate polytheism had served as the national religion. In the most ancient times, each city or district had its patron god or goddess, most often depicted with an animal head (the most well known are probably Anubis, the jackal-headed god of the dead, and Horus, the solar deity depicted in the form of a falcon). During the fifth dynasty (2560-2420 B.C.), Horus, the god of Lower Egypt, merged with the local god Atum of Heliopolis and the sun-god Re to produce a national deity who served as the patron of the Pharaohs. During the reign of Amenophis IV in the mid-14th century, an attempt was made to establish a form of monotheism — or more accurately, henotheism — centered about the figure of Atum-Re. The attempt was short-lived, and following Amenophis' death, the people reverted to a more traditional polytheism which exalted Amon-Re as supreme over the other deities. With the growth of the cult of Isis and Osiris during the early Hellenistic period, popular mythology conceived of salvation as blissful immortality through ritual identification with the slain and risen god. Particularly in the case of the Pharaohs, proper burial practices would assure such immortality by enabling the soul (*ba*) and the spirit (*ka*) of the deceased to live on in a transcendent yet material afterlife. Of particular interest to us is the *ka*, the animating life-force within human beings that has its origin in the creator-god Atum.

As a vital-force or principle of divine origin, *ka* denoted variously "spirit," "life-force," "soul," "personality," etc., whereas the Akkadian *sharu*, which in many ways is the closest equivalent to the Hebrew *ruach*, denoted primarily "wind" and only secondarily a divinely bestowed "life-breath."<sup>2</sup> The notion of breath as a specifically transcendent or divine life-force is frequently attested in Egyptian texts. The creator-god Atum embraced his creatures and bestowed his own vital-force upon them:

“Thou didst put thy arms about them as the arms of a *ka*, for thy *ka* was in them.”<sup>3</sup> Ptah, the creator-god of Memphis, created the other gods, including Atum, *by speech*.<sup>4</sup> The divine power of creative speech attributed to Ptah was personified in the figure of the god Thoth, the Egyptian god of Wisdom. Ptah created by speaking the *name* of a thing which he conceived in his heart, the center of thought. Even the spirits were created by divine speech. This characterization of spirit and word, *ka* and speech, as creative agents in Egyptian mythology occurred as early as the third millennium B.C.<sup>5</sup>

The Egyptian pantheon was created by the spoken word of Amon-Re. He is the “sole one who made (all) that is,” who “gave commands and the gods came into being.” He rules over his creation with *sia* and *hu*, “understanding” or “perception” and “authoritative command” or “word.”<sup>6</sup> The lesser gods whom he created defend Re against his enemies by their own speech, employing magical incantations.<sup>7</sup> The *power of the spoken word* is further illustrated in mortuary texts, where the *ka* of the deceased could be invoked through ritual formulas to protect him against “all wrath of the (other) dead.” Such protective magic also served the living, as illustrated by a ritual formula, based upon a pun, recited by the mother of a sleeping child.<sup>8</sup> Again, execration texts (curses, usually pronounced against enemies) list as “baneful forces,” “every evil word, every evil speech ...”<sup>9</sup> Whether spoken by the gods or by persons, the *word* possesses power for either good or ill.

Among those beings created by Re’s spoken Word are the four winds, a multitude of spirits, and man who lives by the “breath of life.” Wind, breath and spirit are frequently associated and occasionally identified with one another: “I made the four winds,” says the creator-god, “that every man might breathe thereof ...”<sup>10</sup> Amon-Re himself is described as “the breeze opposing the rebellious wind,” the beneficent *ka* who gives breath to the weak.<sup>11</sup> In various contexts, *ka* appears as the seat of the emotions, as intelligence, feeling, will, and personal character, whereas breath is depicted as the source of a man’s courage, his strength, and his life.<sup>12</sup> Pharaoh himself is the *ka* of his people, “and his mouth is increase,” that is, his Word has power to create abundance.<sup>13</sup>

In a myth from the 13th century B.C., Isis’ speech is described as animated by the breath of life.<sup>14</sup> Once again, Word and life-breath are

brought into close association. The North Wind, in a 12th century myth, bears good news from Isis to the king.<sup>15</sup> When a young man is seized with a prophetic frenzy, however, the inspirational power is attributed to the god himself rather than to a spirit or divine *ka*, although the life-force of the gods, like that of human beings, is the *ka*.<sup>16</sup>

Hehn<sup>17</sup> cites other Egyptian texts to illustrate the significance of life-breath. Typical is the statement of the Pharaoh to Amon, "Thy color is light, thy breath is life ... thy body is a breath of wind in every nose; one breathes through thee in order to live." Wind and breath are often indistinguishable, wind being the life-force sent by the gods to sustain human existence. A possessing spirit, on the other hand, is usually the cause of physical or psychological illness.<sup>18</sup>

However closely Word and Spirit may be associated with one another in Egyptian religious texts, the suggestion is never made that Spirit *per se* is the source of prophetic utterance or revealer of the divine Word. While wind or breath can "bear" a message of the gods, they serve merely as channels by which that message is conveyed. The spoken word may derive its power from the *ka* that expresses it, but the content of the word is generally limited to ritual formulas and magical incantations, the most notable exception being the divine act of creation accomplished by speaking the name of the thing called into existence (cf. Gen 1). There is no suggestion in the Egyptian sources that the spirit-borne word reveals either the person or the intention of the deity who utters it. That is, it is not a "revelatory word." To discover this revelatory aspect of the divine word, we have to turn to other ancient near-eastern sources, beginning with religious texts of the Sumerian and Akkadian Semites, whose literary, political and cultural ascendancy in Mesopotamia began with the reign of King Sargon in the middle of the 24th century B.C.

*(B) The Sumero-Akkadian sharu: "wind" / "life-breath."*

The ancient Sumerians, inhabitants of southern Mesopotamia from pre-historic times, transmitted their religious ideas to the Akkadian speaking Babylonians and Assyrians beginning in the second millennium B.C. The Sumerian pantheon comprised a multitude of highly anthropomorphic gods who created the material world and used it for their own ends. High



gods, lesser gods and human beings lived together in intricately structured social relationships in which individual deities served the needs and interests of those who worshiped them.

Magic played an especially important role in daily affairs. The Sumerians conceived the gods as dwelling in natural phenomena and communicating their power to them (the sun, mountains, atmospheric storms, vegetation, etc.). Through cultic ritual, men were able to take control of that divine power in order to achieve certain ends, particularly the crucial matter of maintaining the annual cycle of agriculture. The dying and rising god represented in the Egyptian cult of Osiris finds something of a parallel in the fertility cult of Tammuz and Ishtar. In other cultic acts, the king identified with the fertility god and engaged in ritual intercourse, thereby insuring through the potency of his own seed that vegetation would be renewed in the new year. The Babylonian high-god Marduk was originally a god of agriculture. Because of his importance in assuring the survival of the settled, agricultural population of which he was patron, he was eventually projected onto the cosmic plane above all other deities. There he was obliged to do battle with the forces of chaos and death personified by the goddess Tiamat, from whom sprang both gods and humans. The struggle between Marduk, representing life and light, and Tiamat, who as the primeval waters represented destruction and darkness, is recounted in the cosmogonic myth known as the *Enuma Elish*.

These various rites, with their mythical accounts of conflict, death and rebirth, served to reenact the creation and organization of the world and to assure an abundant harvest in the new year. Prior to and even during the period of Babylonian captivity, they were progressively combined with dualistic elements of Persian origin to produce the matrix in which the ethical and eschatological dualism of certain currents of sectarian Judaism began to develop. Our concern here is not to study in detail the various myths and epics of Sumero-Akkadian religious literature. We want simply to determine the relationship described in those texts between the powerful "word" and its mode of transmission by *sharu* or "wind."

The power of the spoken Word played a key role in Sumerian mythology. In the poorly preserved "Deluge" text, which is strikingly similar to the Old Testament flood story (Gen 6-8), the Word uttered by the divine

council both *expresses* and *effects* the gods' will to flood the cultic centers and "destroy the seed of mankind." Ziusudra, the faithful mortal and counterpart of the biblical Noah, is saved from the deluge by the mercy of Anu (and?) Enlil (the prototype of Marduk), who bestow upon him "breath eternal," "life like that of a god." Ziusudra is subsequently described as "the preserver of the name [existence] of vegetation (and) of the seed of mankind." If this reading is correct, we have here an example in Sumerian mythology of the "name" embodying the essence and preserving the existence of a thing, a concept highly developed in Hebrew thought.<sup>19</sup>

It is tempting to speculate on the meaning of lines from the "Deluge" myth which read: "Ye will utter 'breath of heaven,' 'breath of earth,' ... Anu (and) Enlil uttered 'breath of heaven,' 'breath of earth' by their ..." [ANET p.44]. Because of breaks in the tablets, the context is unfortunately lost and the translation remains conjectural. Another fragmentary text, describing the duties and powers of the gods, reads in part: "... from the place of Enlil and Ninlil, the Igigi ... who are kings who pronounce the word, who are gods of true decrees, directed the cult-rites for (the moon-god) Nanna [or, variously, for Ninisuna, Nirgal, and Inanna]."<sup>20</sup> If the text is reliable, it appears that the lesser gods, the Igigi, undertook two closely related functions: utterance of the "word" or divine decrees of the high gods Enlil and Ninlil, and direction of cult-rites for various other deities.

Significant here is the implied link between the word and the cult. Whether or not early ecstatic prophets were attached to cultic centers in ancient Israel, from at least the time of Isaiah the prophetic and priestly functions — "Word and Sacrament," as we would say — were recognized as complementary aspects of a single "divine service." The same appears to be true in other more ancient near-eastern religions.

The task of distinguishing in Sumerian and Babylonian pantheons between lesser gods and spirits is notoriously difficult. We should not be far off the mark, however, if we see in the function of the Igigi a parallel to that of spirits in the divine council of primitive Hebrew mythology (e.g., I Kings 22:20ff). The Igigi reveal the divine Word by uttering "true decrees," probably within cultic settings. The adjective "true" is also significant. In another context the goddess Inanna addresses Ninshubur, her "messenger": "O (thou who art) my constant support, my messenger

of favorable words, my carrier of true words ... ”<sup>21</sup> Kramer cites a variant for these lines which reads, “Come, my faithful messenger of Eanna, instruction I offer thee, take my instruction, a word I speak to thee, give ear to it.”<sup>22</sup> The “true word” is equivalent to “instruction” from the gods: in this instance, from Inanna, who implores her messenger to *intercede* for her before the council of gods that they might rescue her from the nether world. The messenger and the Igigi in these texts bear interesting resemblance to the Johannine Paraclete, who, as Spirit, “teaches” or instructs the Church in the “truth” concerning the Logos / Word of God (Jn 14:26; 16:13f), and who, as the risen Christ, intercedes before the heavenly Father on behalf of those who face condemnation for their sin (I Jn 2:1f).

Repeatedly we find this double function of “revealer” and “defender / intercessor” attributed to various gods of ancient near-eastern pantheons. In the Old Testament, only human figures play this double role (Moses, the prophets ...), although, as we have seen and will have occasion to discuss further on, the Servant of Yahweh also combines proclamation with intercession in accomplishing his redemptive mission.

Sumerian mythology exercised a direct influence upon Akkadian myths of the Assyrians and Babylonians.<sup>23</sup> The *Enuma Elish* or Creation Epic characterizes “word” and “wind” (or “breath”) in terms familiar from Egyptian and Sumerian sources, but with slightly different emphases. The Word of Marduk has power to create or to destroy (IV:20ff).<sup>24</sup> His father, Lord Anshar, assures Marduk’s victory over Tiamat with the words, “My son, (thou) who knowest all wisdom, calm (Tiamat) with thy holy spell” (II:116f). He concludes, “Let my word, instead of you, determine the fates. Unalterable shall be what I may bring into being; neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips” (II:127ff). The divine Word and Wisdom are decisive in assuring the god’s victory over evil. Before Marduk engages in the cosmic battle, the Igigi<sup>25</sup> praise him as “the most honored of the great gods,” and declare, “thy utterance shall be true, thy command shall be unimpeachable.” Again the god’s “word” is described as “true,” that is, irrevocable and ultimately effective or, in this context, victorious.<sup>26</sup>

The *dramatis personae* of the Creation Epic include the god Namtilaku, “the god who maintains life ... the lord who revives the dead gods by

his pure incantation ... " (VI:152ff). The power of the word or incantation in this passage is similar to that of the "benign breath" (*sharu*) of the god Ziku, "who establishes holiness ... whose benign breath we smelled in sore distress" (VII:19f).<sup>27</sup> The term *sharu* can also be rendered "life-breath." As Hehn has demonstrated, "breath" is a universal symbol of life in the Ancient Near East. We have already noted its frequency and significance in Egyptian religion, where the concept of life-breath as life-force first appeared.<sup>28</sup> Like the Hebrew *ruach* in the later exilic prophecies, *sharu* as "breath" or "wind" bears life by communicating the divine Word. The Word can only be "effective" — it can only realize its purpose — insofar as it is "borne" by breath (*sharu*). And conversely, *sharu* is a life-giving power, capable of reviving the dead or interceding before the high gods, only insofar as it expresses the Word. Put in more contemporary terms, the "medium" and the "message," while distinguishable, are effectively inseparable.

Predominant in Akkadian mythology, then, is the notion of *sharu* as wind, a power within nature that serves the purposes of the gods by transmitting the divine Word. Both "word" and "wind" can function as weapons of destruction or as instruments which sustain life. More important, however, is the role of word and wind as *channels of divine revelation*. A 7th century hymn to the moon-god Sin lauds the creative power and majesty of the god's word and declares, "Thou! Thy word causes truth and justice to be, so that the people speak the truth."<sup>29</sup> The ethical dimension of the divine Word in this passage is paralleled in contemporary Hebrew prophecy: like the *dabar-Yahweh*, it possesses the inherent power to *effect* its content, to bring about the (divine) virtues of truth and justice. The Word not only expresses or articulates those values; it is itself the power that *causes* or elicits them within the moral life of the people.

Another prayer, addressed to the sun-god Shamash and dated from the same period, praises him as "Thou who dost look into all the lands with thy light. As one who does not cease from revelation, daily thou dost determine the decisions of heaven and earth."<sup>30</sup> "Revelation" in this passage seems to mean something akin to "illumination"; it is virtually a play on words, linking the sun's searching and revealing light with the making of decisions within the heavenly court and "deliverance of (divine) ordinances" to mankind.



In more ancient myths the gods reveal themselves in the wind. Jastrow interprets the petition to Marduk, "May your good wind blow," as meaning "May a favorable oracle be sent."<sup>31</sup> The god Nibo answers a prayer of Ashurbanipal (668-633 B.C.) by speaking through the wind (cf I Kings 19:11). His answer begins with the admonition "Fear not!," an injunction which, as we have noted, appears in Hebrew tradition as a "formula of revelation."<sup>32</sup> Nibo promises to bless the king with "good winds" (favorable oracles), and to argue his case before the assembly of the gods; in other words, to serve as his *defender* or *advocate*. Once again the gods act as intercessors or advocates on behalf of human beings before the heavenly court,<sup>33</sup> and they do so through the association of word and wind (breath).

Whereas the function of advocate or "paraclete" [Greek *parakletos*, "one called near" to act in a helping role] was assigned to various deities in the Babylonian pantheon, Israel's strict monotheism limited it to human mediators between God and man. Particularly significant for our concerns is the association made between the revelatory and paracletic roles of the god, who communicates the divine will in the form of oracles and pleads the case of men (or the king) before the heavenly council. A similar linkage will occur in Johannine tradition as the Holy Spirit, the life-breath of the risen Christ, assumes the functions of "Spirit of Truth" and "Paraclete."

Individual spirits in both Babylonian and Egyptian religious traditions seem to have been local gods which were incorporated into the pantheon as subordinates to the high gods.<sup>34</sup> Such spirits were the product of a primitive animism and have no direct parallel in Old Testament thought, although they may have served as prototypes of certain spirits and demons known to the Hebrews (cf I Kings 19:11; 22:21; Lev 16:8; etc.).<sup>35</sup> The Egyptian concept of *ka*, however, denoting spirit or life-breath, closely parallels the Hebrew *ruach*. And the association of *dabar* and *ruach*, word and spirit, in the Priestly creation story of Gen 1, finds a clear analogy in the relation of word and *sharu* (breath or wind) in Babylonian religion.

In Akkadian mythology, the *wind* (as *sharu* should usually be translated), far more than spirits or lesser gods, acts by mediating the divine Word, and thus, like the Hebrew *ruach*, it serves to communicate divine revelation. Since many of these sources are contemporary with the oracles

of the Hebrew prophets, however, it is impossible to "prove" the dependence of one tradition upon another. Such an attempt, in fact, would merely lead us astray. For we are dealing not with a process of direct borrowing, but with the mutual drawing from a common conceptual well. Just as at a later period Greek, Roman, Persian and other cultural and linguistic elements would merge to produce a "Hellenistic environment" that left its imprint as fully on Johannine as on Pauline thought, so the classical prophets of Israel were influenced by the same conceptual environment that shaped other currents of religious thought throughout the Ancient Near-East. In searching for the background influences upon Johannine pneumatology, then, evidence of direct dependence of one tradition upon another is less important than discerning the differences and similarities between the nature and functions of "spirit," "spirits" or their equivalents ("wind," "breath," etc.), as they receive and communicate knowledge of divine life and the divine will for human affairs.

This is not to say, however, that the various religious currents of the Ancient Near-East had no direct impact whatever on the shaping of specific ideas or concepts proper to Hebrew religion. Especially during the decades of captivity, the Judean exiles were constantly exposed to Chaldean and Babylonian mythology and cultic practices, just as they had been exposed to Canaanite myths, legends and fertility cults during the early years of their settlement in Palestine. Some degree of absorption was inevitable, and it is reflected particularly in their changing perception of *ruach*: from a semi-autonomous life-force and charismatic power to the chief instrument of God's self-revelation, and even to "God Himself revealed."

The religious thought of the Persian (Iranian) prophet Zarathustra, however, was far more important than either Egyptian or Akkadian mythology in forming the post-exilic Hebrew conception of Spirit as bearer and revealer of the divine Word. It seems that this tradition was also first encountered by the Judeans during the period of Babylonian exile. Characterized by an ethical and eschatological dualism, it was transmitted to the early Church through the kind of Jewish sectarianism we find represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the following section, we want to sketch some of the most important features of Zarathustra's teaching, paying special attention to

“hypostasized” or personified figures that exercise functions similar to those of the Spirit-Paraclete. Farther on we shall look more closely at Iranian dualism and its bearing upon the Spirit-dualism of the Qumran Scrolls and the First Epistle of John.

*(C) The Iranian Spenta Mainyu: the “Bounteous Spirit” or “Spirit of Truth.”*

The sixth century before Christ was a period of extraordinary religious ferment and creativity. In Greece, pre-Socratic philosophy was engaged in cosmological speculation and intense reflection on the problem of “being and becoming.” Abandoning the naive, mythical imagery of the popular pantheon, Thales and his successors perceived the presence of deity within all things, subtle as air and enveloped in mystery. Whether they conceived the medium of divine life and power as one of the four elements (earth, water, air, fire) or as the ethereal *nous* (“mind” or “intelligence” — Anaxagoras), they sensed within the created order a transcendent presence characterized as infinite, omnipotent and omniscient, a creative *dynamis* that guided the cosmos and human life toward their proper end. By differentiating between the spiritual essence of this power and the material world in which it was active, pre-Socratic philosophy laid the foundation for the dualistic thought of Plato and, in modified form, of his pupil Aristotle.

Reitzenstein and others, however, have argued that Plato was influenced not only by his teacher Socrates and his predecessors, but by Iranian thought as well. However that may be, it is indisputable that Zoroastrian teachings were transmitted to the Jews during the period of Babylonian exile, when they were heavily exposed to a religious syncretism of Chaldean origin.<sup>36</sup> Throughout the early sixth century B.C., Iranian thought mingled with Chaldean astral religion to produce the primary matrix for the growth of late-Jewish apocalyptic. With the fall of Babylon to the Persian king Cyrus in 539 B.C., a majority of exiled Jews elected to remain in Babylonia, where many flourished under the relatively benign reign of the foreign despot and were further exposed to the spiritual heritage of Iran (Persia). As the “remnant” resettled in Palestine, channels were held open between the former country of exile and the Jewish

homeland. Consequently, travel between the two countries favored the mutual dissemination of religious ideas as much as it did the strengthening of commercial and cultural ties.

Although the next two centuries saw the degeneration of Zarathustra's monotheism into the popular and widespread Mithras cult, elements of the great prophet's teaching, and especially its spirit-dualism, survived more or less intact. In different but related ways, many of these elements were assimilated by Jewish apocalypticism and Essenian sectarianism. From there they filtered down to the early Church, where they left a distinctive mark on some of its most important writings. It is significant that St Matthew offers, as his first example of the universal character of the gospel message, the visit to the Christ child by *Magi*, who were themselves Persian priests of the Zoroastrian faith. Together with the rise of Greek philosophy and the quantum leap in the moral and spiritual spheres taken in classical Hebrew prophecy, we can see in Zoroastrian teaching one of the most important religious movements of its age.

With the teachings of Zarathustra (more accurately, "Zarathushtra"; in Greek and Latin, "Zoroaster") we enter a religious world vastly different from that of the Egyptian and Akkadian traditions we have already examined. Zarathustra's moral and spiritual teachings are preserved in a collection of hymns or *Gathas* contained in the sacred Iranian book of the *Avesta*. The *Avesta* itself, reflecting the influence of the ancient Indian *Rig Veda*, includes later teachings as well as those of the founding prophet. Its three major divisions are classified as (1) the *Yasna* (liturgical hymns and prayers, including the *Gathas*, chs. 28-34 and 43-53) together with the slightly later *Haptanhaiti Gatha* (or *Gatha of the Seven Chapters*, chs. 35-42); (2) the *Yashts* (sacrificial hymns addressed to individual deities, including texts on exorcism); and (3) the *Videvdad* (the "law against demons," dealing with ritual purity). Together, the first two constitute the *Khurda* or "little" *Avesta*. Most of the material in this collection stems from the period between Zarathustra's call and the fall of the Achaemenid Empire in the fourth century B.C. Iranian scripture also includes the much later Pahlavi Books, which date from the 9th century A.D., but preserve tradition from the period of Sassanian rule (3rd-7th c.), when Zoroastrianism experienced a revival after several centuries of decline.<sup>37</sup>



Zarathustra's dates are usually given as 628-551 B.C. Little is known about his personal life. At one point, like other prophets of renown, he was obliged to flee his homeland and seek a following elsewhere. Zaehner locates his area of activity as Chorasmia or present-day Western Afghanistan and the Turkmen Republic of the U.S.S.R. The impetus behind his religious reform was provided by two major factors. The first was the undoubted authenticity of his prophetic call. The second, closely linked with it, was his determination to abolish the cruel and barbaric sacrificial cult practiced as the national religion and to replace it with a monotheistic faith of the highest ethical quality.

His monotheism centered upon the "one true God," *Ahura Mazda* or "the Wise Lord." From his Indo-Iranian heritage, Zarathustra took over various *daevas* and depicted them as demons, purveyors of the Lie. His followers, settled cattle-herders, were in constant danger from marauding nomads who were under the influence of these *daevas* or demonic powers. Within this social and religious milieu, the prophet preached an ethical and eschatological dualism, based upon total freedom of the will. Both God and man are able, and indeed obliged, to choose between Good and Evil, between the Truth and the Lie. Although his eschatology envisions a judgment by purifying fire, followed by eternal destruction for the wicked and eternal bliss for the righteous, Zarathustra evidently hoped that within the framework of human history the *daevas* and their followers would be destroyed and a Kingdom of Righteousness would be established upon the earth.

For our purposes, the most significant aspect of his teaching concerns the various emanations or personified divine functions that have their origin in the High God, and include the figures of "Holy (Bountiful) Spirit," the "Good Mind," the "Incarnate Word," and "Truth."

Ahura Mazda, who created by thought *ex nihilo* (Yasna 44), is the "father" of twin spirits, Spenta Mainyu (Holy or Bountiful Spirit) and Angra Mainyu (Evil or Aggressive Spirit). In later Zoroastrianism, the prophet's followers would reinstate the ancient Indo-Iranian dualism by setting Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda) and Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) against one another as eternally opposed principles of good and evil.<sup>38</sup> In the prophet's own teachings, however, Angra Mainyu remains his sibling's antithesis and eternal antagonist, and evil is explained not by an

ontological or cosmic dualism, but by the exercise of *choice*: each Spirit is free to choose his particular ethical orientation, and he does so with consequences that affect humanity as a whole.

Human beings are likewise endowed with free will. Each one confronts the existential decision to follow one Spirit or the other, to align oneself with the Truth (*asha*) or with the Lie (*druj*), with righteousness or with unrighteousness (Y. 30:1-6; cf 47:5). The Asha-vans, or followers of the Truth, are those who have chosen the new faith that Zarathustra has expounded. They have consciously rejected the worship of daevas and have thereby renounced the polytheism and enthusiastic excesses of the old cult (Y. 32:1-5). Such excesses included the ritual slaughter of oxen in an especially barbaric manner, as well as overindulgence in the intoxicating Haoma plant, which played a leading sacramental role in Zarathustrian religion.<sup>39</sup>

A fire-altar stands at the center of the new cult, fire being the symbol of Truth because of its purifying heat and light. This holy fire banishes the darkness and either converts or destroys the Dregvants or followers of the Lie (Y. 43:4; 31:19; 51:9).<sup>40</sup> Those who live by the Truth can expect spiritual and material abundance in this life and eternal happiness in the world to come (Y. 28:6f; 29:11; 33:12; 43:2; etc.). Every human being faces both an individual judgment at death and a final judgment at which the righteous will be requited and the wicked will perish in an ordeal by fire (Y. 44:9; 46:10-14; 49:9; 51:9).

Surrounding Ahura Mazda are six *amesha spentas*, "Holy Immortals," which in later tradition especially, function as divine hypostases or agents through which the Wise Lord acts.<sup>41</sup> They include *Vohu Manah* ("Good Mind"), *Asha* ("Truth"), *Armaiti* ("Right-thinking" or "Piety / Devotion"), together with *Kshathra* ("Dominion" or "Kingdom"), *Haurvatat* ("Wholeness" / "Perfection[?]"). and *Ameretat* ("Immortality"). The last two, Wholeness and Immortality, are bestowed by Ahura as blessings upon followers of the Truth (Y. 33:8, etc.), whereas Armaiti usually signifies man's pious response to the divine will, enacted according to the classic moral formula: "good thoughts, good words, good deeds."

At this early stage, Good Mind, Truth, and Piety, together with Holy Spirit, are sired by Ahura Mazda (Y. 31:8; 45:4; 47:2f). In the Haptanhaiti Gatha and later Avesta the Wise Lord becomes increasingly identified with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Immortals are depicted as his

characteristic aspects or attributes.

In addition to the Holy Immortals, we should note as well the figure of *Sraosha*, which in the original Gathas is the technical term for human obedience and divine hearing. Like the Hebrew word *shamea*, the Avestan term denotes both "to hear" and "to obey" (cf Greek *akouein* / *hypakouein*). In a logical step to the later Avesta, *Sraosha* becomes personified as the "Incarnate Word" (Y. 3:20, etc.) which *instructs men in the Truth*. Our quest for analogies and parallels to the Hebrew conception of Spirit as mediator of the divine Word, then, should focus particularly on the figures Spenta Mainyu, Vohu Manah and *Sraosha*.

The technical terms *mainyu* and *manah* are built upon the root *man-*, meaning "to think." The suffix *-as* (*-ah*: *man-ah*) forms an abstract noun of action, while the suffix *-yu* (*main-yu*) denotes agent. M.W. Smith distinguishes between technical and non-technical usages of these and other terms which refer to "aspects" of Ahura or to human virtues.<sup>42</sup> "In its technical sense," she says, "*mainyu-* is the agent of Ahura's purpose, it is the active force which he himself produces, 47:3, and uses." Spenta Mainyu, in other words, "is the technical term for Ahura's creative power."<sup>43</sup> In non-technical usage, *mainyu* may be used as a synonym of *manah*. Etymologically the terms stand in very close relation to one another and at times are indistinguishable with regard to their respective functions. As we shall see further on, Vohu Manah is not simply an "aspect" of Ahura's personality.<sup>44</sup> Like Spenta Mainyu, it is rather a quasi-independent agent or instrumentality of the divine will by which Ahura Mazda acts within the created world. These two figures, together with the other Amesha Spentas, are not wholly personified or systematized in the Gathas as they are in the later Avestan tradition. Nevertheless, the prophet presents them as semi-autonomous beings and carefully distinguishes their respective functions, although these do overlap to a considerable degree.

The term *spenta* poses another problem of definition. Bartholomae translates it *heilig*, "holy."<sup>45</sup> Zaehner follows him by rendering "Holy Spirit," but for *amesha spenta* he prefers "Bounteous Immortal." As he points out, the term implies increase, material and spiritual abundance.<sup>46</sup> If M. Smith, on the other hand, prefers "beneficent," it is because she feels this translation better expresses the "energetic" quality of the word than

does the "static" rendering "holy."<sup>47</sup> This misses the point that the "holiness" of God, in Zoroastrian as in Hebrew thought, expresses not only the "separateness" but also the "dynamic" or "energetic" quality of divine being and activity. Be that as it may, our concern is whether the nature and function of the Spenta Mainyu parallel to any significant degree the nature and function (or operation, *economia*) of the Holy Spirit of Yahweh.

Ahura Mazda is himself a "holy God" [cf Y. 29:7; 43:4f, where Zarathustra recognizes Ahura's holiness through his quality of *mazdah* or wisdom; 46:9, where Ahura is called an *asha van*; 47:3, "Thou art the holy father of the Spirit"; 48:3; and 51:16]. Of the other figures which are characterized as *spenta* or "holy" — Spenta Mainyu, Vohu Manah and Zarathustra himself — it may be said that they *belong* uniquely to Ahura: they participate in and express his own holiness. Spenta Mainyu in particular "belongs" to Ahura and serves as *mediator* between him and mankind; Vohu Manah is the principal source and agent of divine *revelation*, and Zarathustra is the prophetic *witness* to that revelation. Each *spenta* figure serves to re-establish the original harmonious unity between the spiritual and material spheres which was shattered by the advent of sin and death. In antithesis to this functional quality of holiness stands the figure of Angra Mainyu, whom we can legitimately see as the counterpart to Lucifer in Hebrew tradition: both are depicted as the arch-representative of sinful rebellion against God and commander of the forces of evil.

Although the Amesha Spentas can belong to humans as virtues, they do so only because of their prior existence in the Godhead. Followers of the Truth possess the Good Mind and respond to Ahura with Piety or Right-thinking, for example, only because they themselves have decided in favor of the Truth and thus likewise "belong" to the Wise Lord. Those figures which Zarathustra characterizes as *spenta* create and sustain the relationship between Ahura and the faithful, the Savior and the saved.<sup>48</sup> Like the Holy Spirit of late Israelite prophecy, they forge a bond of enduring faithfulness between the transcendent holy God and sinful humanity,<sup>49</sup> thereby maintaining the people's relationship with their Lord. As in Hebrew thought, the Zoroastrian concept of Spirit is that of a revealing, blessing, protecting and saving agent of the divine will which manifests the *presence* of God among the faithful, who seek communion



with him in obedience (*sraosha*).

As agents or hypostatized properties of the holy God, Spenta Mainyu and the Amesha Spentas are themselves holy. The Avestan term *spenta*, like the Hebrew *qodesh* in the later prophets, is an active — not a static — concept.<sup>50</sup> As we mentioned earlier, *qodesh* originally denoted the absolute separateness (or “brilliance,” root *qdsh*) of God, the unapproachable, unfathomable splendor and glory (*kabod*) of the divine nature. As such it was a-ethical. Once the divine holiness became associated with Yahweh’s righteousness and saving mercy, it assumed an ethical dimension and came to characterize the holy God in His activity of redeeming His sinful people.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the Avestan word *spenta*, qualified by its association with *asha*, Truth or Righteousness, has strong ethical overtones as the chief characteristic of those hypostases or agents of Ahura Mazda which act within human history to confer both blessings and life to the faithful.

Similarities between the Hebrew Holy Spirit and the Avestan Spentas become clear through an examination of the complementary functions attributed to Spenta Mainyu, Vohu Manah, and Sraosha.

In Y. 44:7, Zarathustra addresses the Wise Lord as “the creator of all things through thy Holy Spirit.” On the one hand, the *spiritus creator* fashions the sacred cattle, the waters and all plant life, that is, the stuff of the material world. Yet his creative activity is one with Ahura’s (Y. 31:7,11). On the other hand, he “establishes life” for the righteous (30:4) and maintains their existence (45:6).<sup>52</sup> His relationship to Ahura Mazda is difficult to define. In the strongly dualistic Yasna 30 and 45, his independence is evident. In the “monotheistic” Gathas, however, based more upon the prophet’s own religious experience than upon his Indo-Iranian background, the Spirit appears to be a dimension or mere aspect of Ahura’s own personality and power (31:7; 43:5; cf 30:5; 45:2). The ambiguity is due to the partial assimilation of dualistic thought with the prophet’s own perception of the uniqueness of the high God.

Spenta Mainyu is active as creator, as benefactor, and as eschatological judge. At death each individual faces judgment at the “Bridge of the Requirer” (or “Separator,” 46:10). Those who have lived by Truth will pass over with the guidance of Zarathustra into Paradise, while the wicked

will tumble into the abyss of darkness, the House of the Lie. The Spirit grants to the righteous in this life an abundance of material and spiritual blessings while conducting them along the way of Truth towards the House of the Father. Here they consummate their union, begun on earth, with the Good Mind. Their reward is "bliss" or the "joy of long life," that is, eternal life or paradise (43:2; 46:13,19; 48:7; 49:10). Spirit and fire (the symbol of Truth) appear together in various eschatological contexts (31:3; 47:6; cf 34:4) as instruments of judgment which condemn the wicked and reward the righteous with eternal life (32:7; 51:9).<sup>53</sup>

The closing stanza of Y. 47, the so-called "Yasna of the Holy Spirit," reads: "By this Holy Spirit, O Wise Ahura, by means of fire, thou shalt give the assigning of shares in the reward, to the two parties. With the support of Piety and of Truth, this indeed shall convert many seekers."<sup>54</sup> The aim of Zarathustra's preaching is to "convert many seekers" by revealing to them the Truth. The prophet received revelation from Ahura Mazda through the Holy Spirit (28:1f). The Spirit himself chose Truth from the beginning and leads men to it (30:5; 43:2; 45:6; 47:2; cf 28:1). In response to the prophet's petition, "Teach us the paths of Good Mind, good for travelling because of Truth" (34:12; cf 31:17; 51:3), the Wise Lord reveals himself as the God of Truth, the faithful Lord who demands faithfulness from his subjects (51, 53 *passim*).

"Truth" in these contexts is an ethical category which expresses the relationship of fidelity between the Savior and the saved, who respond with good thoughts, words and deeds. Truth may also be described as the principle of divine justice by which Ahura orders and governs the material and spiritual realms of creation.<sup>55</sup> In abstract usage, *asha* is the *content* of Ahura's revelation, vouchsafed to Zarathustra and proclaimed through the Holy Spirit (28:1,2,11; 45:6; 48:3; 50:6; 51:3,13,15). In the Haptanhaiti Gatha, *asha* appears in the concrete form of *fire* and is identified with the Spirit (Y. 36:3). According to Matthew (3:11) and Luke (3:16), John the Baptist announces the coming of the Messiah with the promise that He will baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." This combination is particularly significant if "fire" means not only "judgment," as most commentators suppose, but also "truth." In that case, Jesus' baptism in the Spirit would introduce believers into the Truth which He Himself incarnates (cf Jn 4:24; 14:6).

In Zoroastrian tradition, then, the Spirit serves as mediator of the Truth or divine revelation. The son of Ahura Mazda, he is present and active both at creation and at the final judgment, to bestow material blessings upon the earth and to guide the faithful in Truth to eternal life. Having chosen Truth from the beginning, Spenta Mainyu may be described as the "Spirit of Truth," although the Avesta does not employ such a title. The closest it comes, in fact, is in the dualistic Y. 30:5, where the prophet speaks of the "Holy Spirit ... who chose Truth." As for the concept "Truth" itself, it is the ethical principle of justice and righteousness in terms of which a covenant of faithfulness is established between God and human persons. It is both the goal of human existence and the pathway which leads to that goal (51:17). As such, it is simply another way of speaking of "divine revelation" or "revelation of the saving will of Ahura."<sup>56</sup>

The functions of Vohu Manah overlap those of Spenta Mainyu in several important respects. The Good Mind, or "exteriorization of the divine thought,"<sup>57</sup> is active in creation (Y. 31:11), mediates the promise of salvation and its fulfillment to the faithful, and serves as their advocate or defender at judgment (43:2; 45:5; 47:5; 51:7; cf 33:12, "O Ahura ... through the most Holy Spirit [*spenishta mainyu*], through wisdom [*mazda*], grant strength at the good accounting"<sup>58</sup>). Most importantly, Vohu Manah is depicted as the channel of *divine revelation*, established and maintained by Truth and exalted among men by the Holy Spirit (31:7). In Zaehner's formula, "Ahura Mazda is the god of prophetic revelation, the one true god revealing himself to the Prophet through the Good Mind."<sup>59</sup>

Whereas Spenta Mainyu belongs exclusively to Ahura, Vohu Manah can be possessed by human beings. The first creation of Ahura, he is, in effect, a personification of the divine will that reaches out to the faithful and leads them in paths of Truth towards union with God (34:12; 28:4; 46:12; 49:3). Mills captures the essence of the relationship between Good Mind and the pious in his translation of Y. 46:12, "... with these shall Ahura dwell together through His Good Mind (in them), and to them for joyful grace deliver His commands."<sup>60</sup> It is through the Good Mind, rather than the Holy Spirit, that Ahura "dwells among" and even "abides in" the faithful and reveals his will to them. Johannine tradition, alone

among the apostolic writings, makes the point that the Spirit *abides in* (*menein*) both the anointed Jesus and the faithful, for the express purpose of revealing His saving Word of Truth (Jn 1:32; 14:16f; 16:13-15; I Jn 3:24). The distinctive usage of the verb *menein*, "to abide" or "indwell" in Johannine theology, finds its clearest extra-biblical antecedent in the indwelling and revealing figure of Vohu Manah.

In the later Avesta, Vohu Manah is depicted as one of the Amesha Spentas, the first in honor who sits at the right hand of God.<sup>61</sup> In the Gathas, however, he is often represented as co-equal in status and function with Spenta Mainyu. Together, Spirit and the Good Mind communicate to mankind Ahura's blessings of Wholeness and Immortality (47:1). To the Good Mind falls the special task of *defending the faithful against the Lie*. His antithesis is Aka Manah, the Evil Mind, who inspires false teachers to corrupt the teachings of Truth revealed by Zarathustra (Y. 32 *passim*).

The daevas and their followers are called the "seed" of Aka Manah (32:3) — not in a literal sense, but in so far as they have chosen the way of Evil and rejected the way of Truth. *Their moral choice in fact determines their ontological status*. Characteristic of the dualism of the Gathas is an interdependence between choice and being: to choose the Truth is to live in terms of it, to conform one's entire existence to its demands, whereas choice of the Lie means total rejection of the Truth. The two "ways" are wholly opposed to each other and determine one's existential orientation to such an extent that any possibility for "repentance" or "conversion" appears to be excluded. While it is correct to speak of a "moral" or "ethical" dualism in the Gathas, it is also true that one's ethical decision determines one's very nature. The usual distinction we make between an "ethical" and an "ontological" dualism, therefore, is artificial. By affirming that the daevas and the dregvants are the "seed" of the Evil Mind, Zarathustra presents an incipient form of the metaphysical dualism that appeared in later Iranian tradition, especially under the influence of the Magis. Thus he can depict Vohu Manah as revealer and defender of the Truth, pitted in cosmic battle against Aka Manah, the lord of the wicked and perpetrator of the Lie.

Although he has "taken sides," as it were, by choosing Truth over against the Lie, Ahura Mazda nevertheless manages to hold himself



above the fray. Despite the ontological character of the struggle between Truth and Lie, represented by the various antagonists (Spenta Mainyu / Angra Mainyu; Vohu Manah / Aka Manah), Zarathustra's monotheism remains essentially intact.

Just as the New Testament writings make no attempt to describe systematically the "theological" (as contrasted with "economic") relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Gathas are not concerned with depicting in any systematic way the mutual relationships of the various Spenta figures. From what they do affirm regarding Spenta Mainyu and Vohu Manah, however, it would be appropriate to describe the Good Mind as the divine plan of salvation, in hypostatic form, which is communicated to human creatures and actualized among them by the Holy Spirit (47:2). This divine plan or *economia* is markedly personal in nature. It involves God's loving concern for mankind which both wills and accomplishes salvation through his indwelling divine presence that leads the faithful in the way of Truth.

A deeply mystical element in Zarathustra's thought is evident in this vision of the Good Mind which abides in the faithful, leading them towards a saving union with God and everlasting participation in the blessedness of his presence (cf 34:12; 49:3). Salvation unfolds as a movement, by which the righteous are guided through this life and into the next by the Good Mind: he who is both the indwelling inspirational power behind ethical conduct (33:6; 34:2,11) and the final vindicator of those who attain eternal life (48:8; 51:20f; cf 46:7).

The role of Sraosha becomes especially prominent in the later Avesta, as the figure of Vohu Manah recedes to the background. The term *sraosha*, denoting human obedience and divine response, eventually becomes personified as the "Incarnate Word" which embodies the Truth of divine revelation (Y. 3:20; 4:23). In the Gathas it appears in eschatological contexts as a criterion by which the righteous are separated from the wicked at judgment. Those who pass successfully over the Bridge of the Requiter have submitted themselves in total *obedience* to the will of God (28:5; 33:5; 43:12). Followers of the Lie, on the other hand, are characterized as "full of disobedience" (*asrushiti*); they willfully turn aside from following Truth and refuse to heed the Good Mind (44:13). Once he

becomes personified, Sraosha naturally fills the role of eschatological judge (43:12). In the Yasht dedicated to him, Sraosha is repeatedly addressed as the "pious master of Truth,"<sup>62</sup> who teaches men the True Religion and unites them in a covenant of peace with Ahura (Yt. 11:14; Y. 57:23).

Zaehner cites later tradition which casts Sraosha as lord of the material world, the earthly counterpart of Ahura, who wages war against the daevas and their leader Aeshma, demon of violence and wrath.<sup>63</sup> This is an appropriate role, since the Truth which Sraosha teaches reveals the pathway towards cosmic peace and harmony on the one hand, and union of man with God on the other. Angra Mainyu and Aeshma, as followers of the Lie, introduced chaos, violence and death into the world. Vohu Manah and Sraosha, personifications of divine thought and the divine word, are charged with the task of defeating their adversaries by engaging them directly in combat, and by instructing and defending the faithful in their quest for eternal life.

This kind of speculation on the origin of evil and the eventual triumph of Truth over the Lie had a profound effect on late-Jewish apocalyptic thought. It frees the high God of responsibility for evil, sin and death, and yet it assures that his will for the salvation of the human race will eventually triumph. Although election is a dominant theme in the Gathas, it is grounded thoroughly in the exercise of choice. Thus the tension between predestination and freedom, as between the omnipotence of God and the existence of evil ("theodicy"), which remain a problem for biblical authors, is largely resolved in the teachings of Zarathustra.

What remains unresolved, however, is the problem of individual responsibility and the inner conflict perpetuated by the need to make repeated choices within the context of the moral life. Because of the "them against us" mentality of Zarathustra and his followers, created by constant threats to their physical and material well-being, moral "choice" seems limited to an initial decision, made once and for all, between Truth and Lie. Once a person's ethical orientation is determined, true freedom of choice is no longer possible. While we can speak of moral options, in the Zoroastrian scheme of things those options are severely limited. It is only with the deeper reflection of Jewish Wisdom writings, where the

battleground shifts from the cosmic realm to the sphere of the human heart, that the dynamic of sin and repentance is fully perceived and appreciated. Consequently it is in those writings, far more than in the Gathas, that authentic moral freedom is preserved.

In the three figures, Spenta Mainyu, Vohu Manah and Sraosha, we find truly striking resemblances to the Holy Spirit of post-exilic Judaism and to the Spirit of the New Testament. Before attempting to spell out those resemblances, however, it should be useful to diagram the relationships that exist between the various figures we have discussed so far. Because their functions overlap, and the Gathas offer no systematic description of their being or operation, the following summary and diagram give only a general indication of those relationships and necessarily conflate tradition from both the Gathas and the later Avesta.

Ahura Mazda stands above the several hypostases and even above the dualistic plane of Truth and Lie. In the beginning he freely chose Truth, as did one of his twin sons, Spenta Mainyu. The other twin, Angra Mainyu, chose the Lie and thereby set in motion the disruptive powers of Evil which struggle against the forces of Truth for an eternal claim upon human souls. Ahura, the embodiment of Truth, reveals himself as a faithful covenant-lord. His saving Word, represented by Sraosha, is mediated by Spenta Mainyu. "Incarnated" (that is, revealed and rendered accessible) within the Vohu Manah, it makes its claim first upon Zarathustra, and through his prophecy upon the faithful, the Asha-vans.

Corresponding to this revelation of Truth, which is principally conceived as cosmic order and union with God, is the operation of the forces of wrath, violence and disorder: the Lie (Druj) originates with Angra Mainyu (the Evil Spirit) by virtue of his primal choice; it is communicated to Aeshma, the demonic leader of the daevas, and to his followers, the Dreg-vants, by Aka Manah, who is the indwelling, corrupting power behind the Lie. These corresponding relationships, which delineate two diametrically opposed camps of transcendent figures and human persons, may be diagrammed as follows:

*AHURA MAZDAH*

Asha ( <i>Truth</i> )	Druj ( <i>Lie</i> )
Spenta Mainyu	Angra Mainyu
Vohu Manah	Aka Manah
Sraosha	Aeshma
Zarathustra	False Teachers
Asha-vans	Dreg-vants

The post-exilic Hebrew conception of Spirit as mediator of the divine Word or revelation finds a far closer and more complete parallel in Iranian thought than in other religions of the Ancient Near-East. Egyptian and Sumero-Akkadian mythologies attribute to the spoken word both quasi-independence and creative power. The ability of gods and men to harness and use this power, however, derives primarily from magical rites and incantations which are all but unknown in Hebrew religion, where the power of the Word derives from Yahweh's judging and redeeming *presence* within Israel's history. The nearest approach in either Egyptian or Akkadian traditions to the conception of Spirit as mediator of revelation is found in the Babylonian *sharu* or wind, depicted as both bearer and discloser of the divine Word.

With the emergence of a genuine monotheism in the thought of Zarathustra, mediatorial functions — which in Egyptian and Babylonian pantheons had been assigned to lesser gods, spirits or winds — were attributed to various divine instrumentalities or agents which serve, and in fact are one with, the high God Ahura Mazda. The tension between his dualistic Indo-Iranian background and his personal conviction of the fundamental unity of the Godhead prevented Zarathustra from eliminating altogether the functionally differentiated hypostases through which Ahura speaks and accomplishes his will. As hypostases, the *spenta* figures retain identity with Ahura and do not constitute a polytheistic pantheon. On the other hand, it would be erroneous to see in them prototypes of the Christian Trinity of three divine "Persons" united in a common essence.

The personified divine Word in the figure of Sraosha is revealed through Zarathustra's prophetic proclamation as well as in the later Avesta. Zaehner says of Sraosha, "... as 'Incarnate Word' he is the liturgy



personified, the meeting-place of this contaminated world of time and space and the pure, uncontaminated world of eternal Truth and goodness." <sup>64</sup> Conceived and communicated by Vohu Manah and Spenta Mainyu, Sraosha reveals the abiding presence in human life and history of the God of Truth.

This combination of figures fulfills the same function in Iranian religion that the Spirit and Word fulfill in later Hebrew prophecy. As we mentioned earlier, it is impossible to determine the amount of *direct* influence Iranian thought bore upon post-exilic Judaism. From the parallels noted above, however, there seems to be little doubt that the Hebrew conception of Spirit as mediator of the Word, signifying divine revelation, owes a great deal to the religious genius of Zarathustra. But as we have also seen, the seeds of this conception were sown in the earliest days of Hebrew prophecy, long before Zarathustra's reform. Whether Israel's contact with Persian culture and religion was direct in pre-exilic times, as it was following the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus and his armies, or whether it was indirect, mediated by Chaldean syncretism, cannot be decided with any certainty because of a lack of historical evidence.

Before we conclude the first part of this study, we should indicate briefly some further aspects of Iranian religion that specialists have regarded as influencing more or less directly the theology of Judaism and primitive Christianity.

At the beginning of the Christian era the teachings of Zarathustra and his followers were well known throughout the Hellenistic world. The Greek writer Plutarch (ca 50-120 A.D.), for example, knew of the Amesha Spentas and rendered *asha* and *armaiti* respectively as "truth" (*alêtheia*) and "wisdom" (*sophia*).<sup>65</sup> But well before Plutarch's time Iranian thought had left its mark upon post-exilic Judaism and perhaps upon classical Greek writers as well.<sup>66</sup> The rise of Jewish apocalyptic — with its emphasis upon new creation, individual bodily resurrection, final judgment, eternal bliss and everlasting punishment (which replaced the Hebrew idea of Sheol as the abode of the deceased) — certainly owes much to Zoroastrian religion. Similarly, the divine hierarchy within the Godhead (e.g., Wisdom as an hypostatized "function" or instrument of Yahweh, or the quasi-personification of Spirit and Word); the heavenly court (cf Gen 1:26, "Let *us* make ..."; and the more ancient I Kings 22:19);

angels, demons and an arch-demon who engage in a cosmic struggle between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness: each of these appears in both Iranian and late-Jewish traditions. The later Avesta, and probably Zarathustra himself, looked forward to a coming Savior, the *Saoshyant*, and to vindication of the righteous at the final judgment, offering an interesting parallel to the later pseudepigraphical Ethiopic Enoch and its messianic figures, the Elect One and Son of Man.<sup>67</sup>

Other suggested points of Judeo-Christian contact with Iran are the seven angels of the Apocalypse as Johannine reflections of the seven Amesha Spentas; the heavenly book which records good and evil deeds; the three great ages of cosmic history (which, with the slaying of the dragon in the final cosmic battle, is probably of Babylonian origin); the hypostatized Wisdom figure; and finally the sacramental meal that in many ways resembles both the messianic banquet of the Qumran sectarians (I QSa) and the Christian eucharist.<sup>68</sup>

While not all of these parallels are equally convincing, they show beyond doubt that not only the spirit-dualism, but many other aspects of Jewish apocalyptic and wisdom speculation as well, derive ultimately from the teachings of Zarathustra. Mediated by Chaldean religion and the modified Zoroastrianism brought to Babylonia by Cyrus, those teachings were woven into what can be most aptly called the "Hellenistic synthesis": that unique blending of Greek and Oriental elements which produced the matrix of both intertestamental Jewish thought and early Christian theology.

#### NOTES

1. J. Hehn, "Problem des Geistes," p. 210-225.
2. *Ibid.* p.211.
3. "Myth of the Creation by Atum," in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (hereafter: ANET), p.3.
4. "Theology of Memphis," fragment 53, ANET, p.5.
5. For the date of the Memphis text, see J. Wilson's introduction, ANET, p.4. Describing the creative activity of the god Ptah by thought (heart) and speech (tongue), Wilson asserts: "Thus at the beginning of Egyptian history, there was an approach to the Logos Doctrine." This reinforces the findings of research over the last half-century that traces the origins of the creative function of Israel's Wisdom figure back into early Egyptian mythology. See esp. P. Humbert, *Recherches sur les sources Egyptiennes de la littérature sapientielle d'Israël*

- (Neuchâtel, 1929); C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9* (Neukirchen, 1966); and the art. by H.-J. Hermisson, "Observations on the Creation Theology in Wisdom," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. J.G. Gammi *et al.*, (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) — reprinted in B. Anderson, ed., *Creation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), esp. p. 48.
6. ANET, p.366.
  7. *Ibid.* p. 7, 13, 366.
  8. *Ibid.* p.325, 328. Puns used in magical incantations were not mere pleasantries; they served to coordinate a word with an object, to create an effective power. Cf. ANET, p.328, n.4.
  9. *Ibid.* p.329.
  10. *Ibid.* p.7.
  11. *Ibid.* p.369, 380.
  12. *Ibid.* p.370, 375, 413; and 376, 380, 417. Mortuary texts from the Book of the Dead describe Osiris as "Lord of Breath," who justifies the righteous deceased and assures his eternal bliss; *ibid.*, p.34, 36.
  13. *Ibid.* p.431.
  14. *Ibid.* p.13.
  15. *Ibid.* p.4.
  16. *Ibid.* p.26 and n.13. The 11th cent. text reads: "Now while he (an official, Wen-Amon) was making offering to his gods, the god seized one of the youths and made him possessed." Wilson notes that "the determinative of the word '(prophetically) possessed' shows a human figure in violent motion or epileptic convulsion." Compare the characteristics of Hebrew prophetic ecstasy.
  17. "Problem," p.216ff.
  18. See esp. the "Legend of the Possessed Princes," ANET, p.29ff, and p.30, n.13.
  19. See S.N. Kramer, "Sumerian Myths and Epic Tales," ANET p.37ff, esp. p.44, n.13. A helpful introduction to these texts may be found in Kramer's *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p.95ff.
  20. Kramer, ANET, p.58f.
  21. *Ibid.* p.53. The words of a god were regarded as absolute and irreversible, as evidenced by a Sumerian liturgical text addressed to a king: "Thy commands, like the word of a god, cannot be turned back," ANET, p.382; cf the "Akkadian Creation Epic," Tablet II, line 129f, *ibid.* p.64.
  22. *Ibid.* p.53, n.12
  23. See Kramer, *Mythologies*, p.120ff; and S. Moscati, *Ancient Semitic Civilizations*, (New York: Putnam 1958), p.55-79.
  24. E.A. Speiser, "Akkadian Myths and Epics," ANET, p.60ff. Present reference, p.66. Roman and Arabic numerals refer to tablet and line of the texts cited.

25. Speiser, *ibid.* p.65, n.59., identifies the Igigi here as "the heavenly deities." This is too general and misleading, as our comments have indicated. M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylon and Assyria* (New York, 1898), p.185, identifies the Igigi as the heavenly counterpart of the chthonic spirits known as the Anunnaki. Whether lesser gods or spirits, the Igigi seem to occupy a subordinate position in the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon and serve the high gods in some respects as the spirits serve the Hebrew God.
26. Tiamat appropriately responds to Marduk's challenge by uttering a curse against him: "In fury Tiamat cried out aloud. To the roots her legs shook together. She recites a charm, keeps casting her spell, while the gods of battle sharpen their weapons." Marduk counters the power of her word by hurling an "evil wind" into her face (IV:89ff). Among the gods, words and winds served as most effective weapons.
27. Cf. Hehn, "Problem," p.213.
28. *Ibid.* p.216.
29. ANET, p.386.
30. *Ibid.* p.387.
31. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* (Giessen, 1905-1912), vol. I, p.513 and n.33.
32. *Ibid.* vol. I, p.444; see p.440ff. See Köhler, "Offenbarungsformel."
33. See Jastrow, *Religion I*, p.395, 525f, 536 (the Hymn to Sarpanitum) and 546f, a hymn to Nin-gal (wife of Sin the moon-god), in which Nin-gal is praised as defender and intercessor before the gods. For the role of intercessor ("paraklete") in the OT, see esp. N. Johansson, 'Parakletoi'. *Vorstellungen von Fürsprechern für die Menschen vor Gott in der Atlichen Religion, im Spätjudentum und im Urchristentum* (Lund, 1940); and O. Betz, *Der Paraklet* (Leiden/Köln, 1963), p.36-43.
34. Jastrow, *Religion I*, p.283, remarks: "In the area of religion there is as little chance as there is in the realm of nature, that what once existed will totally disappear. Something is always preserved. Accordingly, hundreds of old Babylonian local gods live on in the literature in the form of spirits or demons."
35. Hehn, "Problem des Geistes," p.221, cites Akkadian texts to show that a "good wind" opposes the destroying power of an "evil wind." This type of primitive dualism in the lower echelons of the divine hierarchy may have influenced the Hebrew conception of "lying spirits" and spirits of false prophecy. Hehn, p.222, adds, "*Sharu* as wind or breath is also found in Akkadian sources in the form of 'lie' ... As in the OT, *ruach* can shade over into the meaning of emptiness or nothingness (e.g., Mic 2:11; Is 26:18; 41:29), so *sharu* also bears the meaning 'empty (vain or idle) talk'."
36. See esp. R. Reitzenstein, "Plato und Zarathustra," in *Antike und Christentum* (Darmstadt, 1963), p.20-37, and Bousset-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen, 1966), p.475-483, who consider Chaldean thought to be the principal conduit between the Iranian and



- late-Jewish religious traditions.
37. For good introductory discussions of old Iranian sources and theology, see R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961); J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion de l'Iran Ancien* (Paris, 1962), esp. p.31ff; G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Stuttgart, 1965); Paul du Breuil, *Zarathustra et la transfiguration du Monde* (Paris, 1978) (with a good bibliography and useful chapters on "monotheism and dualism," p.124-135, "Zoroastrianism and Judaism," p.235-282, and "the Gospel and Zoroastrian esoterism," p.299-363); Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London/Boston, 1979); and G. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland* (Naples, 1980). For the present study we rely primarily upon German translations of the Gathas: C. Bartholomae, *Die Gathas des Avesta* (Strassburg, 1905); H. Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* (Heidelberg, 1959); and the somewhat tendentious translation of W. Hinz, *Zarathustra* (Stuttgart, 1961) (ch. 10); also H. Lommel, *Die Yasna des Avesta* (Göttingen/Leipzig, 1927); and J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre* (Paris, 1948) (with tr. of the Gathas). For the complete Avesta in English, see J. Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, vols. IV and XXIII of Max Muller (ed.), *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford, 1883, 1895). In this series the Yasna is translated by L.H. Mills, vol. XXXI, but his work is unfortunately outdated and often misleading. The most useful English translation of the Gathas is still that of Maria W. Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathustra* (Philadelphia, 1929), containing transliteration, word-for-word translation and notes. A useful collection of excerpts can be found in Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Manchester, 1984). We are severely handicapped by having to rely upon translations. Even among the various German editions one finds little correspondence and much disagreement regarding readings which are important for our study.
  38. W. Eilers, *RGG*<sup>3</sup>: arts. "Ahriman" (I.191f); "Amesha Spenta" (I.321f); "Iran, II Religionsgeschichtlich" (III.878ff).
  39. See Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.85ff; 91ff.
  40. In the post-Zarathustrian Y. 37:4, *asha* (Truth) is more closely associated with Light and becomes something of a generalized ethical principle, whereas in the original Gathas Truth plays the protagonist in the cosmic struggle against *druj*, the Lie, which signifies variously error, deception, corruption, disharmony, and chaos. See Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.64. For a thorough treatment of "free will" in the thought of Zarathustra and in the later Avesta, see A.V.W. Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies* (New York, 1928), p.219-244.
  41. For a discussion of the relation between Ahura and the Holy Immortals, see M. Smith, *Studies*, p.23ff. Her "aspect theory," according to which the common nouns *mazdah* (wisdom), *asha* (which she renders "justice"), *vohu-manah* (good mind, good purpose), *kshathra* and *armaiti* are "qualities or attributes possessed alike by Ahura and by men, the former originating them, the latter receiving them," has been widely accepted. Hinz, *Zarathustra*, p.103ff, criticizes her posi-

tion and maintains that the Gathas distinguish between actual beings or essences (*Wesenheiten*) and mere personified concepts (*Begriffe*). The criterion, he says, is the designation *mainyu*, "spirit." Thus Ahura Mazda, Spenta Mainyu, Angra Mainyu, Vohu Manah (which Hinz identifies with Vahishta Mainyu in 33:6) and Zarathustra himself, each of whom is characterized as *mainyu*, qualify as individual beings or personalities. Because of their close relationship to Vohu Manah, Hinz includes Sraosha (Obedience) and its antithesis Aeshma (Disobedience; Zaehner: Aggressive Impulse) in this category. Hinz's book is highly problematic in its relentless effort to establish identity between Zoroastrian figures and the angels and Holy Spirit of apocalyptic Judaism and primitive Christianity. Spenta Mainyu he identifies with Christ, Angra Mainyu with Lucifer, Vohu Manah with Gabriel, etc. The last two, as parallels rather than as outright identifications, have been accepted by many scholars (cf Yt. 3:13 with Lk 10:18 and Rev 12:7ff — a virtual direct quote from the Avestan tradition). It can also be reasonably argued that the figure of Aeshma served as the prototype of the biblical Asmodeus, the destroyer (see J.C. Swaim, art. "Asmodeus," IDB I, p.259f; C.-H. Hunzinger, art. "Asmodi," RGG<sup>3</sup> I, 649.) This, however, hardly supports Hinz's claim that the revelation received by Zarathustra is basically the same as the Jewish-Christian revelation.

42. For the etymology of these and other so-called Iranian "problem-words," see C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904) (hereafter *AiW*), and M.W. Smith, *Studies*, p.19-35, 44-57. The significance of the root *man-* ("to think") is clear from the fact that Ahura Mazda "thinks" creation into being, and to both Spenta Mainyu and Vohu Manah is attributed an active role in creation (Y. 44:7; 51:7; cf 31:11).
43. M. Smith, *Studies*, p.55,52.
44. As Smith maintains, *ibid.*, p.22f. By restricting Asha to an aspect of Ahura, namely "the divine justice ... under which he orders the universe" (p.28), she obscures the fundamental *asha-druj* dualism which compels even Ahura himself to choose between Truth and Lie, Y. 32:2.
45. *AiW*. For a summary of various attempts to render the term into German, see P. Volz, "Der heilige Geist in den Gathas des Sarathuschtra," p.329.
46. Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.42.
47. Smith, *Studies*, p.56.
48. Zarathustra speaks of himself as "savior," but only because of his vital role in the total (divine) work of salvation (Y. 45:11; 48:9). It is ultimately Ahura who "saves," granting Life to followers of the Truth. With the failure of a Kingdom of Righteousness to establish itself within history, Zarathustra or, more likely, his followers, centered their eschatological hope in the person of the *Saoshyant*, a future "Savior" who would come to renew the cosmos (see the post-Zoroastrian [?] Y. 53:2; cf 29:9; 34:13; 46:3). With the final defeat of the powers of evil, "the victorious Saoshyant and those others who help him ... will make the world most excellent, unaging, undecaying, neither passing away nor falling into cor-

ruption; for ever shall it live and for ever prosper, (each man) ranging at will. The dead shall rise again and the living shall be visited by immortality, and (all) existence shall be made most excellent in accordance with its will ... The material world will no more pass away ... and the Lie shall perish" (Yasht 19:89f; tr. Zaehner, in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths* [New York: Hawthorn] 1959, p.214). Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources*, p.90, derives the name Saoshyant from Zarathustra's words, "May truth be embodied," and renders it "one who will bring benefit," *Zoroastrians*, p.42. She notes the mythological birth of the Saoshyant from a "virgin mother" — a misnomer, since Vispa-taurvairi was impregnated with the seed of Zarathustra which had been preserved in a lake where she bathed. Boyce's translation of Yasht 19 (*Texts*, p.90) includes the description of the apocalyptic battle in which "Asha will conquer the evil Druj, evil, dark. Aka Manah will also be overcome, Vohu Manah overcomes him. Overcome will be the falsely spoken word, the truly spoken word overcomes it ... An(g)ra Mainyu of evil works will flee, bereft of power."

49. It should be noted, however, that human sin plays a much less prominent role in the Gathas than in the OT. There is in the former something of a thought-word-deed righteousness on the part of those who choose to follow Truth. One's choice determines one's very nature [a point discussed further on], although the *asha-vans* can be swayed by false teachers (Y.31:18) and must be admonished to manifest *armaiti*, piety (Y. 32:2; 34:10; etc.). With no real doctrine of sin, the Gathas place no emphasis upon continual repentance.
50. On the terms *qadosh/qodesh*, see O. Procksch, *TWNT* I, p.88-97 [sharply criticized by J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (London, 1961), p. 282ff]; F. Horst, art. "Heilig," *RGG*<sup>3</sup> III, 146-151; J. Muilenburg, art. "Holiness," *IDB* II, p.616-625; N.A. Snaith, *Ideas*, p. 21-50.
51. The dominant title of Yahweh in Isaiah's prophecy is "the Holy One of Israel." In Dt-Is especially, the Holy One is described as "Redeemer"; His holiness manifests itself through His redemptive activity (Is 41:14; 43:3, where the Qumran Isaiah scroll reads "Redeemer" for "Savior"; 43:14; 47:4; etc.). The divine holiness, which originally expressed sheer overwhelming splendor, manifested in glory, was understood in the exilic period to "manifest itself in judgment and destruction ... (Holiness) is active in mercy and grace, in redemption and salvation ...," Muilenburg, *IDB* II, p.621f. For the transference of the title "Holy One" to Jesus, see W.R. Domeris, "The Holy One of God as a title for Jesus," *NeoT* 19 (1985) 9-17, on Mk 1:24 and Lk 4:34; and his "The Office of the Holy One," *JTSA* 54 (1986) 35-38, on the power and authority of Jesus as the *hagios tou theou*. See volume 2 on I John 2:20, "You have an anointing from *tou hagiou* (the Holy One)," presumably referring to Jesus.
52. If indeed this is the correct reading. Smith translates: "(Ahura Mazda), him who (is) well-disposed (towards those) who exist by (his) beneficent spirit," reading *mainyu* instrumentally; *Studies*, p.118.
53. E. Schweizer, "Gegenwart des Geistes und eschatologische Hoffnung bei

Zarathustra, spätjüdischen Gruppen, Gnostikern und den Zeugen des Neuen Testaments," in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology* (Festschrift: Dodd) (Cambridge, 1964), p.488, underestimates the eschatological role of Spirit in the Gathas by characterizing him as "an abiding presence ... the characteristic of pre-eschatological, this-worldly human existence." This emphasis tends to obscure the important role of Spirit in the end-time, who vindicates those who walk along the "way of Truth" (Y. 34:12; 51:7).

54. Translation adapted from Smith, *Studies*, p.132.

55. *Ibid.* p.28. H. Reichelt, *Avesta Reader* (Strassburg, 1911), p.97, defines *asha* as "the personification of right ... the divine order that pervades the world."

56. We will have occasion to discuss the dualistic background of these passages in greater detail when we turn to the Dead Sea Manual of Discipline. Volz, "Der heilige Geist," p.339, clearly recognized the inconsistency in Zarathustra's thought with regard to the relationship between Spenta Mainyu and Ahura, an inconsistency resulting from the attempt to reconcile the dualism of his Indo-Iranian heritage with his own authentic monotheism. Volz summarizes: "In dualistic teaching, the holy Spirit played both a creative and eschatological role, and according to his very nature he was conceived as the primal power of the ethical life (30:4,5). Within a monotheistic perspective, these functions are retained; but now the holy Spirit becomes the 'Spirit of Mazda,' working with the high God at creation and in the end-time, as well as in the moral life of men. In later Persian religious teaching, the holy Spirit withdraws from the scene."

In pre-Zarathustrian Iranian religion, Ahura and Mithra were paired as high gods in combat against "the fighter who lies against Mithra," the principle of Evil, later Angra Mainyu or Ahriman. For Ahura-Mithra, Zarathustra substituted the unique deity Ahura, whom he qualified with the attribution *mazda* (wisdom, wise), which only later became a fixed part of the divine name. Next to Ahura Mazda (or *mazdah* Ahura), Zarathustra placed the Spenta Mainyu or Holy Spirit as a substitute for the god Mithra. Yt. 10, the lengthy "Mithra Yasht," reintroduces Mithra into the theology of the later Avesta. Here the figure of Mithra, in completing a full circle, assumes the role of Holy Spirit (and, incidentally, of Asha and Sraosha) in the Gathas. In the Yashts generally, Ahura is identified with the Holy Spirit and, together with Mithra or alone as the Good Spirit, he faces and overcomes the Evil Spirit (Yt. 13:12f). The reappearance of Mithra in post-Zarathustrian tradition is due to the fact that the functions of Mithra in the old religion were never fully assimilated by the figure Spenta Mainyu.

Tension remained between Zarathustra's monotheistic convictions and the dualism of his background which permeates the Gathas. After his death, the unassimilated dualistic elements led the prophet's followers to reinstate Mithra as a prominent deity. United with Ahura in "creation and preservation" of the cosmos, Mithra (whose name means "contract") was worshiped as warlord, king, and light, who descended to earth as protector and avenger of followers of the



Truth. The cult of Mithras, highly popular among Roman soldiers at the beginning of the Christian era, is a direct descendant of Iranian Mithra-worship. See esp. Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.97-120.

57. Zaehner, *ibid.*, p.54.
58. Translation adapted from Smith, *Studies*, p.91.
59. Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.67.
60. L.H. Mills, *The Zend-Avesta*, vol. 31 of Max Muller (ed.), *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford, 1883-1895), p.141. Note that Mills interpolates the words "in them." This gives a paraphrase, but one that is consistent with the role of the Good Mind throughout the Gathas.
61. Cf. the graphic ordering of the Amesha Spentas before the throne of Ahura given by Jackson, *Studies*, p.46. Once Ahura was identified with the Holy Spirit, Sraosha entered the ranks of the Amesha Spentas to complete the sacred number of seven.
62. Srosh Yasht 11 and Yasna 57. For a translation and good introduction to this hymn, see Lommel, *Yashts*, p.85ff.
63. Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.95f.
64. *Ibid.*, p.96.
65. Jackson, *Studies*, p.43.
66. See R. Reitzenstein, "Plato und Zarathustra," p.20-37, who argues that Plato was familiar with and influenced by certain aspects of Iranian theology, especially creation-mythology, through his pupil Eudoxos. M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History: the Myth of the Eternal Return*, (New York: Harper, 1954/1959), p.120ff, also discusses Iranian influences upon the Platonic system of thought. For an annotated bibliography of works devoted to Iranian influence upon Platonism, Gnosticism and Judaism, see Zaehner, *Zoroastrianism*, p.347f. The relationship between the dualism and doctrine of two Spirits of the Gathas and that found in the Qumran texts is discussed below.
67. See note 48 above. R. Reitzenstein's thesis, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium* (Bonn, 1921), that the myth of the "saved Savior" was of pre-Christian origin, has been widely rejected, and most see it today as a later Manichean development. This later tradition, however, was probably based upon the figure of "Gayomart," the first man and "dying life," which in turn seems to have been rooted in an ancient pre-Christian Anthropos myth. It is quite possible, however, that Jewish and Iranian doctrines of the eschatological savior ("Messiah / Son of Man," and "Saoshyant") were independently influenced by this ancient theme of the "primal man."
68. Zaehner, "Zoroastrianism," in *The Concise Encyclopedia*, p.222, summarizes this "Iranian sacrament" as follows: "The central rite of the Zoroastrians is the *Yasna*, a word which literally means 'sacrifice.' Zoroaster ... vehemently attacked the old sacrificial rite in which a bull was slain and the fermented juice of a plant called *Haoma* consumed; yet it is precisely the drinking of this *Haoma*-juice which has

for time immemorial constituted the central act of the Zoroastrian ritual ... Zoroaster had promised immortality to his followers, and in the rite of the *Haoma*-juice lies the elixir which confers immortality. The *Haoma* is not only a plant: it is also a god, and the son of Ahura Mazda. In the ritual the plant-god is ceremonially pounded in a mortar; the god, that is to say, is sacrificed and offered up to his heavenly Father. Ideally *Haoma* is both priest and victim — the Son of God, then, offering himself up to his heavenly Father. After the offering, priest and faithful partake of the heavenly drink, and ... are made to share in the immortality of the god. The sacrament is the earnest of everlasting life which all men will inherit in soul and body in the last days. The conception is strikingly similar to that of the Catholic Mass." This is true from a formal point of view only; the Zoroastrian rite knows nothing of an incarnation of *Haoma*, of redemptive suffering, of salvation through the forgiveness of sins, or of the glorification and 'deification' of human life through sacramental identification with the One who is both priest and sacrifice. While it may be understood to confer immortality, it is not conceived as the means by which life-giving "communion" is established between man and God.

For a convenient summary of alleged parallels between Iran and Hellenistic Judaism, Gnosticism and Christianity, see J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Religion*, p.257ff; also J. Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum* (Giessen, 1920), which is dated but still useful; and P. du Breuil, *Zarathustra*, p.235-282. G. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, p.183, denies that Israelite thought influenced Zoroastrianism and stresses the latter's parallels with Buddhism.

## Part II

# The Spirit in the Hellenistic Age





## Jewish Wisdom Tradition

Both the limits and the content of Jewish Wisdom tradition are elusive and difficult to define. The “wisdom” genre comprises in any case the Old Testament canonical books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes (‘Qoheleth’), plus a number of psalms and fragments from the Pentateuch, historical writings and prophets. To this must be added the important deuterocanonical works, Ecclesiasticus (‘Jesus ben Sirach’) and the pseudonymous Wisdom of Solomon.<sup>1</sup>

In the New Testament, the wisdom motif dominates in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) and other portions of Jesus’ teaching; and the book of James represents a “christianizing” of Jewish wisdom in parenetic or hortatory form. In numerous apostolic writings the author’s christology has been molded by Jewish sapiential tradition, to the extent that Jesus is presented as the incarnation or personification of Wisdom. This is particularly evident in early Christian hymns or hymnic fragments such as Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:2-4; John 1:1-18; and I Corinthians 13, where the image of Christian love is patterned on the divine *agapê* embodied in and revealed by the pre-existent Son of God.

What content or special theme allows us to conclude that a given writing incorporates “wisdom” tradition? Throughout the Ancient Near-East, the concept of wisdom implied the acquisition and proper use of special skills. Transmitted from father to son or from teacher to pupil, practical knowledge and its application through reasoned reflection characterized the sage or wise man. (Typically, little is said of “wise women”; but their existence and influence in the ancient world are apparent in divination and cultic ritual, as well as in the exercise of common sense or trained “intuition” which offers sound advice.) In Egypt these teachings included practical skills such as reading, writing, weaving, sailing, etc. But the genre could include as well advice from a king to his son and heir, concerning such matters as relations to subordinates, self-protection, and court etiquette.<sup>2</sup> In Mesopotamia, wisdom reflection focused especially

on skills employed in the cult, including ritual magic. Here, however, the concern broadens to include speculation on the origin and meaning of human life.<sup>3</sup> For the first time, Akkadian mythology introduces into wisdom tradition the vexing but inescapable problem of theodicy: how is faith in a just and benevolent God to be reconciled with the fact of persistent evil?<sup>4</sup>

From ancient times, then, wisdom literature included both instruction in practical and ethical matters, and theological speculation on the meaning of human suffering and divine justice. These two strains carried over into Israel, whose sages produced practical advice:

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die ... you will save his life from Sheol (*Pr 23:13f*);

mournful reflection on the meaning of life:

Remember your grave<sup>5</sup> in the days of your youth before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh ... and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it<sup>6</sup> (*Ec 12:1-7*);

and profound meditation on the inscrutable nature of God's motives in dealing with mankind:

I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted ... I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know ... therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes (*Job 42:2-6*).

To the sages of Israel, however, the beginning and end of Wisdom is "fear of the Lord" (*Pr 1:7*). Yahweh is the source of all genuine knowledge and understanding. He orders the cosmos and inscribes in it a Torah or Law of life that guides the wise man in his pursuit of happiness and prosperity. Because God is omnipotent, any dualistic clash between good and evil on a metaphysical plane is excluded. Human persons are free to follow either the path of wisdom or the path of folly. The fact that the universe is ordered and subjected to the divine will and purpose means that "good" will receive its reward and "evil" its punishment. The basic aim of wisdom teaching, therefore, is practical and ethical. It is not so much to develop in the wise man "an ability to cope"<sup>7</sup> as it is to instill in him the art of attaining success and prosperity through reasoned reflection and practical skills.

The problem is that despite this noble aim, in so many instances

things just don't work out that way. Evil is a reality; the just often suffer while the unjust prosper at their expense. Accordingly, practical moral codes are found to be woefully limited in their ability to guide one to the sort of material well-being that conformity with their precepts promises. The experience of personal failure and suffering conflicts directly with the fundamental conviction that God is good, just, *and* omnipotent. Hence the tormenting problem of theodicy, which in the books of Job and Ecclesiastes leads respectively to humble submission or abject resignation before the mystery of God's inscrutable will and intention. True wisdom — perceived by Job but hidden from Qoheleth's eyes by a shroud of "vanity" — calls the wise man to respond with awe and repentance before the divine majesty. Life is not "vain" or absurd; it does have ultimate meaning. That meaning is revealed, however, only with the unfolding of the New Covenant, as Wisdom takes up her dwelling among men in the person of the incarnate Logos.

The sudden hypostatization or personification of the Wisdom figure in early post-exilic Judaism has led to a far-reaching quest for Wisdom prototypes in literature of the ancient Orient.<sup>8</sup> Although results of the research have been on the whole inconclusive, it is clear that to some extent Greek, Egyptian and Persian influences all helped shape the image of the Jewish "Sophia." Our purpose in this section is not to reproduce this evidence, but rather to note those characteristics of personified Wisdom which relate it directly to the Spirit of the intertestamental period.

The emergence, following the exile, of a pure monotheism in Israel was accompanied by a heightened awareness and consequent personification of intermediary figures — particularly angels and Wisdom — which served to bridge the gulf between the created world and the transcendent God.<sup>9</sup> This development, of course, did not occur in a vacuum; it was in large measure Israel's response to an earlier, similar process that took place in the same Oriental milieu that influenced its concept of *ruach*.

Going back to ancient Egypt, we find Thoth, the god of Wisdom, identified with Sia or "understanding." Sia, in turn, is a counterpart to Hu or "word." Each is possessed by the high god Re-Atum, who employs them in his work of creation.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, Sia and Hu, whose divinity is attested by their intimate relationship to Thoth, have been regarded as

forerunners of the personified Wisdom in Jewish tradition. A third hypostasis in Egyptian mythology also influenced Hebrew Wisdom: Maat, the goddess of Truth, who personifies both justice and righteousness in human conduct, and order or harmony within the cosmos. World order and social justice are complementary aspects of Truth: in the person of Maat the ethical and cosmic dimensions of divine law are fused into a single hypostasis.<sup>11</sup>

As the principle of justice and cosmic order, Maat closely parallels the Iranian Asha. The daughter of Re, Maat is the consort of Thoth, with whom she judges the dead (as does Asha in the Gathas and later Avesta). Her Babylonian counterpart is the divinity Kettu, who also personifies right or truth. In Akkadian mythology the Word (*amatu*) was similarly personified, standing in close relation to *sharu*, breath or wind, which functions as bearer of divine revelation. The Ras Shamra texts likewise bear witness to the intimate connection between Wisdom and the divine Word: "Thy word, O El, is wisdom / thy wisdom is everlasting."<sup>12</sup>

Although Egyptian and Hellenistic influences shaped the Jewish Wisdom figure to an appreciable extent, it is rather to Iran that we should look for the primary influence upon personified *chokma*. Striking resemblances exist between Wisdom and the Vohu Manah, who mediates the divine Word in the form of revelation. Yasna 48:3 in fact affirms that human wisdom is communicated through the wisdom of Vohu Manah.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these parallels, however, one major characteristic of the Good Mind is missing in the Hebrew Wisdom figure, namely its eschatological functions, particularly the role of judgment. As we have noted, this eschatological function of Vohu Manah and other Avestan figures is assumed instead by the Holy Spirit in post-exilic Judaism. Little by little, Wisdom "absorbed" the various roles of Spirit in the intertestamental period — excluding that of judge and sanctifying agent in the end-time. The eventual disappearance of personified Wisdom and the re-emergence of Spirit in later apocalyptic and early Christian writings (particularly in the Johannine tradition) seem due in large measure to the significance of Spirit for Hebrew eschatology, a significance which Wisdom never acquired.

Further attempts to identify foreign influences on the Jewish Wisdom figure have led Rudolph Bultmann and others to reconstruct an ancient



Wisdom-myth on the basis of texts such as Prov 1:24ff, Sir 24:7; Bar 3:11ff; and Eth En 42:1-3. This last reads:

Wisdom could not find a place in which she could dwell; but a place was found (for her) in the heavens. Then Wisdom went out to dwell with the children of the people, but she found no dwelling place. (So) Wisdom returned to her place and she settled permanently among the angels. Then Iniquity went out of her rooms, and found whom she did not expect. And she dwelt with them, like rain in a desert, like dew on a thirsty land.<sup>14</sup>

It is not hard to see how Bultmann could discover in this mythological account a parallel to the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, particularly vss. 10-12. The heart of the imagery seems to be the rejection of Wisdom by men, a rejection that in Proverbs becomes reciprocal: "They will call upon me (Wisdom), but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me" (1:28). Although mythological elements are clearly present here, and almost certainly influenced the Fourth Evangelist in his depiction of the rejected Logos, they hardly warrant Bultmann's conclusion that a fixed Wisdom-myth of Oriental gnostic origin existed in pre-Christian times and served as the immediate prototype of the Hebrew Sophia and the Johannine Logos.<sup>15</sup>

More to the point is Bultmann's correlation of the hiddenness of Wisdom with divine revelation. Pre-existent wisdom, rejected by men, is hidden and inaccessible. She is mediated only through God's act of self-revealing. In the later Wisdom books, her role broadens as she becomes not only the *content* of revelation, but also its *mediator*. Accordingly, Wisdom assumes many of the characteristic functions of the Spirit of prophecy, with whom she is explicitly identified in Wisdom of Solomon. In Sirach she is further identified with the Law or Torah: the expression of the divine will, the content of God's revelation, or, to use the synonymous technical term, the "truth." The process by which Jewish reflection gradually incorporated in personified Wisdom these essential characteristics and functions of Word and Spirit — with the exception, once again, of an eschatological role — becomes clear as we look more closely at individual Wisdom writings.

The collection of "theological poems"<sup>16</sup> in *Proverbs* 1-9 depicts Wisdom as a divine hypostasis or, perhaps more accurately, as a personal

figure which in some measure is independent of Yahweh. A principal theme that recurs in most of Israel's sapiential literature is woven throughout the book: "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7; 2:5; etc.). In popular thought, such knowledge is synonymous with wisdom. Once personified, the Wisdom figure *teaches* the wise man knowledge of righteousness and justice (2:9).

At this stage, the content of Wisdom is basically ethical; its function is to shape the moral life. Only under Greek influence of the later Hellenistic period (especially evident in Philo) does Wisdom become what can be termed an intellectual or rational category; yet even here its ethical aspect is preserved.

An implicit dualism appears in the contrast between the wise and the "foolish who walk in the ways of darkness" (LXX: 2:13; cf 9:13ff). Over against folly stands "truth" (*alêtheia*), which is taught by the mouth of Wisdom and consists of moral exhortations to obey the divine commandments (LXX: 8:7; cf 22:21). As in Jewish apocryphal writings, truth here denotes something akin to "moral comportment" rather than mere "fidelity" or "reliability," as in more ancient Hebrew thought.<sup>17</sup> It is a behavioral category which comprises both understanding of the divine commandment and the will to obey. The wise man both hears and does the truth. As with the Hebrew term *shamea*, to hear and to obey constitute a unified act: truly to hear *is* to obey. This ethical fusion of understanding and will is the chief characteristic of the wise man who accepts Wisdom's teaching with its assurance of life beyond the grave: "He who finds me finds life."<sup>18</sup>

Wisdom is pre-existent (LXX: 8:22ff) and assisted at creation (8:30; cf 3:19 — only in Wis Sol does Wisdom assume her own creative role). Rejected by men (1:24,28), she nevertheless dwells within Israel as the source and mediator of revelation (1:20ff; 8:1ff,32ff; 9:1ff). She speaks with divine authority (1:20ff) and reveals God's will universally (8:1-21). As revealer of the truth,<sup>19</sup> personified Wisdom declares, "I will pour out my spirit (Heb: *ruach*; LXX: *pnoes*) to you, I will make known my word to you" (1:23). Her revelatory function is a *teaching* function (4:2ff). *Both the mediator and the content of revelation, Wisdom unites in her person the Spirit and Word of post-exilic tradition.*

Many of the Wisdom themes found in Proverbs are taken up and developed in the Book of *Job*. Wisdom is a divine gift who reveals herself to the just man and serves as the principle of right order within the cosmos (e.g., 28:20-28).

Here the relationship between Spirit, Word and Wisdom is more clearly delineated than in Proverbs. In 32:7f, Elihu replies to Job, "Let days speak and many years teach Wisdom / but it is the spirit (*ruach*) in man, the breath (*neshamā*) of the Almighty that makes him understand." Earlier Hebrew writings had implicitly identified the human spirit with the Spirit of Yahweh. In this and related passages the identification is unmistakable: *the human spirit is the breath of God*, the creative life-force which dwells within every human being: "... as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit" (27:3f); "The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (33:4; cf 34:14f and Ec 12:7).

The spirit appropriates Wisdom or revelation by its very nature, as a divine element within the mortal body. This implicit spirit/flesh dualism has been influenced to some extent by the Platonic Greek thought most evident in the Wisdom of Solomon. It is rooted, however, in the ancient near-eastern traditions that identify the human life-principle with the divine breath or spirit.<sup>20</sup>

If the Spirit of God in Job preserves him from falsehood and deceit (or injustice, 27:3f), the Spirit in Elihu inspires him to prophetic utterance (32:18). Elihu speaks words of wisdom which, in the LXX rendering, are *taught* by the Spirit (33:3f).<sup>21</sup> The Spirit declares a word of judgment (cf 4:12,15) and teaches true wisdom (26:3f), but the human spirit — however closely it may be identified with the divine Spirit — can nonetheless turn against God and utter words of foolishness (15:13). The human spirit thus retains partial autonomy and is in some undefined way distinct from the *ruach-Yahweh*.

In summary, the soteriological, revelatory function attributed to the Spirit in earlier tradition is transferred in the book of Job to personified Wisdom. In older Hebrew sapiential writings, Wisdom is analogous to the prophetic Word; they are both semi-technical expressions for the will of God revealed through a human mediator, whether prophet or sage. In

the later post-exilic period, the role of Spirit as the inspirational power behind prophecy diminished, in keeping with the warnings of the prophets themselves. Subsequently, Spirit was projected into Israel's future as an eschatological figure. As a result, it appears almost exclusively in apocalyptic writings of the intertestamental period. With the disappearance of Spirit, and of prophetic activity in general, there emerged in Judaism the figure of personified Wisdom, rooted in ancient Hebrew tradition (cf the "spirit of wisdom," Dt 34:9; Is 11:2) but markedly influenced by various personified figures in Egyptian and Iranian religious traditions. The gradual process, evident in Job, by which Wisdom appropriated the characteristics and functions of Spirit, was only completed during the latter part of the first century before Christ, with the composition of the Wisdom of Solomon.

Before turning to that key work, however, we should note a few relevant themes that appear in the so-called *Wisdom Psalms* and the book of *Ecclesiasticus* or Jesus ben Sira (Sirach).

The teaching function of Wisdom is especially prominent in the Wisdom-Psalms 31, 33, and 118 (in the Greek Septuagint translation). The Lord, or Wisdom, "will instruct you and teach you the way you should go" (31 [Heb. 32]:8-11), namely, the way of "fear of the Lord" (33:12-23; Heb. 34:11-22). The technical expression for the content of Wisdom's teaching is *gnosis* or "knowledge" (72/73:11): "He who teaches men knowledge — the Lord — knows the reasonings of men, that they are vanity" (93/94:10f).

If 93:12ff originally formed a unit with the preceding verses, there is implicit in this passage an identification of *gnosis* with *nomos*: the "knowledge" taught by the Lord is the divine Torah or Law. A similar identification is made in Ps 118/119:17f, where *logos* is equivalent to *nomos*. In vs. 29f, the content of the Law is depicted as a "way of truth (*alêtheias*) set over against the "way of unrighteousness (*adikias*)." We find here, then, within a Wisdom setting, an early stage in the development of the "Doctrine of Two Ways," so prominent in Qumran and early Christian literature. Under Iranian influence, *a spirit of truth* and *a spirit of deception* (or *perversity*) become the inspirational agents that lead men down one path or the other. A major theme in the thought of the Dead Sea



Sectarians, this spirit-dualism will reappear in the First Epistle of John. What began as a simple contrast between wisdom and folly, righteousness and unrighteousness, faithfulness and unfaithfulness to the Law of God, becomes in the Hellenistic period a dualistic tension between truth and lie, the “way” of life and the “way” of destruction.

Finally, we should make note of the creative role ascribed to Wisdom in the Psalms, particularly as it parallels the role of Spirit:

How marvellous (*emegalunthe*) are Thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast Thou made them all ... Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit and they are created, Thou renewest the face of the earth! (*Ps 103/4:24,30*)

Wisdom’s appropriation of the functions of Spirit and Word is also attested in the book of Sirach.<sup>22</sup> Created before all things, Wisdom has its eternal source in God (1:1,4). A secondary interpolation (1:5) reads: “The fountain of wisdom is God’s word on high (*pêgê sophias logos theou*)”;<sup>23</sup> that is, the source — rather than the content — of Wisdom is the divine Word. Wisdom is known through human words or speech (4:24) and is synonymous with “truth” (*alêtheia*, 4:24,28), or with the Law of Moses (24:23ff; 33:2). As the gift of God (1:1,10; 51:17), Wisdom declares, “I will pour out teaching like prophecy” (24:33). In the eschatological prophecy of Joel (2:28/3:1), taken up by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17ff), similar imagery describes the way the Spirit will return to Israel, enabling the people as a whole to prophesy in the end-time. By virtue of Wisdom’s teaching function, Sirach declares that the wise man, who devotes himself to study of the Law, “will be filled with a Spirit of understanding” and “pour out words of wisdom” (39:6).<sup>24</sup> Wisdom is hidden, but her secrets are revealed to an obedient few (1:6; 6:22; etc.), and she bestows her glory on those who diligently seek her (4:13; 14:27f; cf 17:13; 24:16f).

The merging of Wisdom with sacred history in Sirach marks a major development in Israel’s sapiential reflection. Similarly, the identification of Wisdom with Torah contributed significantly to the rise of Rabbinic Judaism.<sup>25</sup> Still more important for our purposes, however, is the appearance in Sirach of the *inclination* (*yezer, diaboulion*) within man. The sage declares: “It was [God] who created man in the beginning, and He left him in the power of his own inclination” (*diabouliou* — Sir 15:14).<sup>26</sup> Jeremiah had long before complained that the people exercised their free

will for evil: "This people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away" (5:23f). In the later passage Gen 8:21, God receives Noah's sacrificial offering and promises never again to "curse the ground because of man"; but He adds, "for the imagination (*dianoia*) of man's heart is evil from his youth." On the basis of such passages, late-Jewish writings such as Sirach, the Testament of Asher, and Rabbinical works developed a "*yezer-dualism*" that represents, as we shall see, a modified form of the ethical spirit-dualism found in the Gathas and Dead Sea Scrolls. To explain the origin of sin and disobedience, Rabbinic theology opposed a *yezer hara'* (evil inclination) with a *yezer hatob* (good inclination). Unlike the twin Spirits of Avestan tradition, however, these two inclinations are essentially psychological (rather than metaphysical) realities that dwell within the heart of every individual and struggle constantly against one another for control over human volition.<sup>27</sup>

We shall investigate this theme in detail later on, when we turn to the question of dualism in Qumran. For the present it is enough to note that Sirach's identification of Wisdom with Torah marked a bifurcation within sapiential tradition: one branch grew into Rabbinic thought, while the other, represented especially by the Wisdom of Solomon, assimilated Hellenistic themes to pave the way for later Christian gnostic speculation.<sup>28</sup>

The theological and literary pinnacle of Hellenistic Jewish thought was attained by the author of the pseudonymous *Wisdom of Solomon*. Although various dates and places of composition have been suggested for this work, the consensus is that it was produced at Alexandria during the first century before Christ. The widespread theory which held that different hands composed chs 1-9 and 10-19 is increasingly called into question today. Recent analyses of the rhetorical style of the book indicate that it is the product of a single author, who relied upon a number of different sources.<sup>29</sup> His originality is evident, however, and he stands as a major theologian in the period of late-Judaism.

The most significant theological advance made by Wis Sol over earlier sapiential writings is its virtual identification of *sophia* with *pneuma hagion*, Wisdom with Holy Spirit. In the book of Proverbs Wisdom declares, "The Lord created me at the beginning of His work, the first of

His acts of old" (8:22). Taking up this theme of the eternal generation of Sophia by God, the author of *Wis Sol* associates her with Holy Spirit so as to suggest a near identity between the two. The sage confesses: "I called upon God and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me ..." (7:7). Farther on he asks: "Who has learned Thy counsel, unless Thou hast given Wisdom and sent Thy Holy Spirit from on high?" (9:17). Frequently Wisdom and Spirit are used alternately in direct parallelism, further underscoring their close association or even identity (e.g., 1:4-5).

Yet the identity is not a complete one, for the sage can also affirm that the Spirit *indwells* Wisdom, endowing her with twenty-one distinct, if somewhat redundant, attributes (3 x 7, the perfect number; 7:23). Several of these attributes suggest the idea of *fluidity*: "more mobile than any motion ... because of her purity she pervades and penetrates all things." She is the active power of God within the universe and within human life, praised as "a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty" and an "Image" (*eikon*) of the divine Goodness (7:25f). While the influence of Stoic philosophy is undeniable here, that influence seems to be limited to the choice of vocabulary. Whereas to the Stoics, *pneuma* or spirit is the immanent, all-pervading divine presence that fills the cosmos like a fiery gas, for the author of *Wis Sol*, the Spirit is a *gift from* God, bestowed upon Wisdom as upon mankind.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to recognize that these attributes accorded to Wisdom in fact derive from the Spirit itself. It is *pneuma* that is "intelligent, holy, unique ... subtle," etc., and enables Wisdom to pervade the universe as well as "holy souls." In this context, we find another significant theme, unique to *Wis Sol*, that further associates Wisdom and Spirit. Verse 7:27 reads:

Though she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, *and prophets*.

Wisdom, endowed with the Spirit, renews the prophetic vocation within Israel. Classical prophecy had died out, since the Spirit had been withdrawn from Israel as a punishment for the people's continuing iniquity (cf the post-exilic Ps 74:9, "We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet ..."; I Macc 14:41, which awaits a "trustworthy prophet"; and II Baruch 85:3, "the righteous have been taken from us and the prophets are sleeping ..."). Although Wisdom is clearly personified, she is

so fully assimilated to the person and work of Spirit as to become a Spirit of Wisdom (*pneuma sophias*, 7:7).

Parallelism in 1:4-5 and 6-7 equates Wisdom with a holy and "educated" or "disciplined" Spirit. The latter term is *paideia*, a familiar term in classical Greek usage. Taken up by the author of Wis Sol, however, it is modified in a significant way by his Hebrew background. Here *paideia* refers to *moral* rather than intellectual education. The Spirit of Wisdom conveys instruction in the divine commandments as the heart of its *teaching* function. Here the beginning of Wisdom is not explicitly "fear of the Lord." It is rather "a most earnest longing for instruction" (6:17-20). In answer to this desire, God sends forth Wisdom, who "knows and understands all things"; and the sage, in the name of Solomon, continues: "and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory" (9:11). The content of her teaching, however, is not solely the divine commandments. It includes as well revelation of God's will, which is synonymous with *revelation of the truth* (*alêtheia*).

A moral dualism, found earlier in the Old Testament and Iranian Avesta, contrasts the just or righteous "sons of God" with the wicked who stray from the "way of truth" and are denied "the light of righteousness" (5:5f). These sons of God learn righteousness from Wisdom: she instructs them to observe "holy things in holiness," thereby rendering them "holy," as God Himself is holy (6:10-11). Thus Wisdom also acquires the role of *sanctification* that earlier Hebrew tradition attributed to the Spirit. Like Spirit, Wisdom dwells or abides in the human soul as a sanctifying power that leads the righteous man along the paths of truth (cf 6:14; 7:28; 8:9,16; 9:9f). The unrighteous, on the other hand, are described as those who "are deceived about the knowledge of God"; they live in ignorance or with a profound lack of perception (*agnoias*). They are "uninstructed" (*apaideutoi*) and "deceived" (*eplanêthêsan*), and therefore they live "as captives of darkness and prisoners of long night ... exiles from eternal providence" (17:1f; cf 14:22).

In the context of this ethical dualism, the functions of the Spirit of Wisdom presage those of the Spirit of Truth, while the opposition between the righteous and the unrighteous is expressed in language that will serve St John in his attack upon the "antichrists."

Also in Wis Sol, the Platonic doctrine of the soul's immortality is



blended with traditional Hebrew motifs. Wisdom leads to life beyond the grave: "for righteousness is immortal" (1:15). Ch 8:13,17 might be understood as implying that such immortality is only in the *memory* of coming generations, who recall the works and faithfulness of the deceased. The indwelling presence of life-giving Wisdom, however, clearly leads to an after-life of blessedness for those who seek her. The sage affirms that God's "immortal Spirit is in all things" (12:1), and that "the longing for Wisdom leads to a kingdom" (6:17-20; cf 10:10). Man was created for incorruption: God "made him in the image of His eternity." But death entered into the world through the evil will (or jealousy, *phthonos*) of the devil (2:23f). At death the flesh returns to the earth and to corruption, while the spirit or soul, borrowed for the span of a lifetime, returns to the One who loaned it (15:8,11,16; cf 16:14). This would seem to deny any form of immortality; and 15:11 could be read as implying that this process of dissolution concerns only the unrighteous.

In fact, two lines of thought remain unassimilated in this regard: the Greek notion of the immortal soul, imprisoned in the flesh; and the developing Jewish belief in blessed immortality for the just with eternal condemnation for the unjust. The juxtaposition of these themes serves to place Wis Sol midway between Platonic dualism and the gnostic salvation-mythology of the early Christian era.

A further association of Wisdom with God's creative Word is made by the inverted parallelism of 9:1f:

O God of my fathers and Lord of mercy, who hast *made* all things *by Thy Word*,  
and *by Thy Wisdom* hast *formed* man ...

This divine Word heals all men and guards the faithful who trust in the Lord (16:12 logos; 16:26 rhêma). A union of evil words and deeds brings death to the ungodly (1:16); and in mythological imagery the personified Word (Logos) plays a judgmental role and "fills all things with death" (18:15ff).

Finally we should note that personified Wisdom in Wis Sol assumes the vital role of guiding Israel's salvation-history (10:1ff; cf Is 63:10ff), a role attributed to the *ruach-Yahweh* in more ancient Hebrew scriptures. As defender and guide of the chosen people, Wisdom dwells among them, directing their destiny and preserving their covenant relationship with the holy God.

This survey of the nature and function of Wisdom has illustrated the development of *Chokma/Sophia* from a heterogeneous collection of ethical maxims to the personified figure which supplanted the Spirit and Word of post-exilic prophecy. The Wisdom figure appropriated characteristics from many divine hypostases in ancient Oriental religions. Her identification with Truth, an ethical category which signifies revelation of the divine will and corresponding human obedience, was almost certainly influenced by the Egyptian Maat and the Iranian Asha. As the divine Word, Wisdom reflects dependence upon Hu, Amatu and Sraosha, while the figures Ka, Sharu and Spenta Mainyu stand behind the Holy Spirit with whom Wisdom is identified in Wis Sol.

None of these various divine figures of ancient near-eastern religions is wholly or even directly responsible for the growth and final shape of Jewish Wisdom. Each of them, however, contributed to the conceptual milieu to which Israel was exposed in pre- and post-exilic times. This exposure helped mold the thought-forms and language by which the prophets and sages expressed their understanding of God's presence and activity within the life of the people.

The Spirit of prophecy withdrew from Israel as punishment for continued disobedience and obduracy. Although the activity and corresponding doctrines of Spirit and Word never wholly disappeared from the historical scene, they were largely taken over by the ancient Wisdom stream of Israelite tradition. The Word of God, revealed by the Spirit speaking through the prophets, had long been associated with the divine will and, more specifically, with Mosaic Law. As Spirit, and consequently the prophetic Word, withdrew from Israel, Wisdom became personified as the divine *presence* within history. Wisdom thus replaced Spirit and Word as the bearer of Truth or divine revelation; and the sages became successors to the prophets.

The last two centuries before Christ witnessed the development of two parallel strands of Wisdom tradition. One, represented by Sirach, maintained the identity of Wisdom and Torah, and served as the background for Rabbinical teaching. The other, represented by Wis Sol and other Hellenistic writings (especially Philo, as we shall see), identified Wisdom with Spirit to influence both directly and indirectly the theological reflections of Paul, the Johannine school, Ignatius, and the Gnostics. As

Friedrich Büchsel put it long ago, "The Proverbs (ch 8) and Jesus Sirach praised Wisdom by describing her works; Solomon (Wis Sol), by describing her being."<sup>31</sup> These two approaches bore a significant influence on the developing matrix of Christian origins. Among other things, they explain why the early Church sought to understand the meaning of Jesus both through His life and teachings, and through christological reflection concerning His person.

In Hebrew Wisdom writings, as in the tradition of the Persian Avesta, we can characterize Spirit as the inspirational power, Word as the vehicle of expression, and Truth as the content of divine revelation. The figure of Wisdom gradually assumed each of these roles by the first century B.C. In contrasting Wisdom and Spirit, some have denied that Wisdom was conceived as a true life-source.<sup>32</sup> This is not wholly accurate, since Wisdom does lead to immortality in later sapiential writings. Nevertheless, a significant difference between the two does exist. For Wisdom is never said to *create* the moral life. Although she sanctifies the righteous man (Wis Sol), she is never depicted as the *agent* of moral regeneration as is the Spirit, who actualizes the New Covenant by producing a "new creature."

More important, perhaps, is the fact that Wisdom never assumes the eschatological role of the Spirit. This partially explains why her sanctifying work extends only to the righteous and is never associated with national regeneration or the New Covenant. It also explains why the conception of the Holy Spirit as sanctifier and revealer of Truth re-emerged as the most adequate theological expression of God's loving and saving presence among humankind. Although Jesus is depicted as Wisdom in the Gospel of Matthew and other New Testament writings, He is chiefly characterized as the incarnation of Spirit and Word, the Revealer and Embodiment of divine Truth.

#### NOTES

1. "Deutero-canonical" is the qualification given by Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions to writings considered by the Church to be inspired but having a lesser degree of authority in matters of faith and morals. These include 1-2 [some would add 3-4] Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, Baruch, and certain additions to Esther and Daniel. Most date from the "intertestamental period" (a misnomer, since some are more ancient than, e.g., the book of Daniel, ca. 165 BC) and are classed by Protestants as "apocryphal" ("hidden") and non-canonical.

2. See "The Instruction of King Amen-em-het," to his son, ANET p.418f, a work that clearly influenced Pr 22:17ff.
3. See the Akkadian text, "I will praise the Lord of Wisdom," ANET p.434-437, that ends with a glorification of Marduk as bestower of life.
4. E.g., "A Dialog about Human Misery," a typical Babylonian theodicy; ANET p.438-440.
5. "Grave," rather than "Creator," is surely the correct reading here.
6. The inverted parallelism of v. 7 is significant, stressing the duality of body and spirit while making the point — central as well to the thought of Job — that the human spirit "comes from God." It appears most clearly in the LXX:
 

<i>kai epistrepse ho chous</i>	<i>epi ten gen</i>	<i>hos en</i>
<i>kai to pneuma epistrepse</i>	<i>pros ton Theon</i>	<i>hos edoken auto.</i>
7. A. Caquot, "Israelite Perceptions of Wisdom and Strength in the Light of the Ras Shamra Texts," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), p.25.
8. The usual definition of "hypostasis" among specialists in the history-of-religions is given by H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom, Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund, 1947), p.8 (quoting Oesterly-Box): a "hypostasis" is "a quasi-personification of certain attributes proper to God, occupying an intermediate position between personalities and abstract things." Obviously this usage must be distinguished from the patristic usage of hypostasis in reference to the Persons of the Trinity.

C.K. Barrett, *New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (London, 1958), p.217, denies that Wisdom is hypostatized in Israel's sapiential literature. For other views, see R. Marcus, "On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom," *HUCA* 23 (1950-51), 157-171; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (New York: Abingdon, 1972), p.144-176; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p.153-156. Hengel shows that Pr 8:22-31 and Job 28 — originally independent wisdom hymns inserted into their present contexts at a secondary stage of composition — depict a hypostatized Wisdom figure who serves as a "divine mediator of revelation" (p.155 and note 314). See also the thorough study of P.-E. Bonnard, "De la Sagesse personnifiée dans l'Ancien Testament à la Sagesse en personne dans le Nouveau," in M. Gilbert (ed.), *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* (Belgium, 1979), p.117-149; and the comments by R.E. Murphy, "Wisdom — Theses and Hypotheses," in *Israelite Wisdom*, p.38f.

9. O.S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature* (Edinburgh, 1936), p.223-224, states that Judaism "transformed the deities of foreign worship into angels, who, representing the functions of the Supreme Being, were more or less the equivalent of abstract ideas or divine attributes, and on the other hand, it turned such abstract ideas as the *spirit* of God (as world creating power, Job 33:4; Judg 16:15; Apoc Bar 23:5; as filling all things, Wis Sol 1:7; as ruling in history, Is 63:10) and the *word* of God (Ps 107:20; 119:50) into what may be called hypostases or



personifications of the divine activity and power. *Wisdom*, which we perceive to be personified in the latest collection of the Book of Proverbs, namely chs 1-9 (400-300 B.C.), in Job 28, in Sirach 24:3-6, in Wis Sol (6:18; 7:7f; 8:3f,13,17; 9:4,9), the Book of Baruch (3:9-4:4), and in the First (42:1-2) and Second (30:8a) Books of Enoch, receives in the speculations of earlier Judaism a more important place than do the Spirit and the Word." This widely accepted view is highly misleading. Spirit and Word are hardly "abstract ideas" in ancient Hebrew thought. While a movement towards hypostatization did occur in the case of "wisdom," it is simply incorrect to define Spirit and Word as personified "functions" of God. As the first part of this study has demonstrated, Spirit and Word were perceived from the earliest days of Israel's history to be in some sense distinct from Yahweh and yet essentially inseparable from Him. Accordingly, the Fathers of the Church could find in the *dabar-Yahweh* and the *ruach-Yahweh* a pre-Christian disclosure of the incarnate Logos and the Holy Spirit.

10. H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom*, p.24-27.
11. Cf. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom*, p.49. Bonnard, "De la Sagesse," p.129-131, concludes that the Egyptian Maat bore no direct influence on the Israelite Wisdom figure. The differences between the two traditions are real, as he points out. Nevertheless, they do not exclude such influence. See B. Vawter, "Proverbs 8:22: Wisdom and Creation," *JBL* 99 (1980) 205-216, who, with Whybray, stresses the unlikelihood of Wisdom's becoming deified in Israel, as Maat did in Egypt, and concludes: "What Egypt insisted on under the term *maat* was the autonomy of order, justice, reason in the universe. Must we imagine that Israel was less capable of such an idea?" p.216.
12. Ras Shamra texts V AB E, 38f; cf II AB IV, 41f, quoted by Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom*, p.79f. For a discussion of Babylonian texts which illustrate the power of the divine Word, see *ibid.* p.67f.
13. Boussett saw in the Amesha Spenta *Armaiti* (Piety) the prototype of the Wisdom figure, but his conclusion was based on the weak evidence of Plutarch's translation of *Armaiti* by *sophia*; Boussett-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums im Späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen, 1966) (reprint), p.520. For further evidence of the close relation between *Vohu Manah* and Wisdom, see W. Schencke, *Die Chokma (Sophia) in der jüdischen Hypostasen-spekulation* (Kristiania, 1913), p.85; and G. Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God* (Uppsala, 1945), p.59ff.
14. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday, 1983), p.33.
15. Bultmann, "Der religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum Johannes-Evangelium," in *Eucharisterion II* (Gunkel Festschrift) 1923, reprinted in *Exegetica*, ed. E. Dinkler (Tübingen, 1967), p.10-35. Ringgren has rightly objected that "Bultmann's chief passage, Pr 1:28 (upon which he bases his Wisdom-myth hypothesis) has its roots in the prophetic literature (Mic 3:4; cf Is 58:9 and Ezek 11:23 on Yahweh's *kabod*) ... the fundamental idea is simply that the divine

- manifestation withdraws because of the sin and wickedness of men," *Word and Wisdom*, p.139.
16. G. von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, 1962), vol. 1, p.442. For studies on Egyptian sources of Hebrew Wisdom in Proverbs, see P. Humbert, *Recherches sur les Sources Egyptiennes de la littérature Sapientiale d'Israël* (Neuchâtel, 1929); C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9* (Neukirchen, 1966); and J. Leveque, "Sagesse Egyptienne, Sagesse Biblique," *MDB* 45 (1986), 39-41.
  17. See G. Quell, art. *alêtheia*, *TWNT* vol. I, p.233-237; and the important studies by I. de la Potterie, "L'arrière-fond du thème johannique de vérité," *Studia Evangelica I* (Berlin, 1959), p.277-294; and his monumental *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1977), esp. vol. 1, p.1-36.
  18. LXX: Pr 8:35f; cf 3:16,18; 4:13; 6:23; 15:24. These passages reflect the primitive concept of Sheol as the place where the soul dwells after death. Yet at the same time they reflect the introduction into Hebrew thought of "life" as immortality. See Rankin's detailed discussion of the growth in Israel of belief in a future life, *Israel's Wisdom Literature*, chs V-VII; and J. Pedersen, "Wisdom and Immortality," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Rowley Festschrift, North and Thomas eds.) (Leiden, 1960), p.238-246. P. van Imschoot, "Sagesse et l'Esprit dans l'Ancien Testament," *RB* 47 (1938), 23-49, argues that Wisdom as a source of life is used in a strictly metaphorical sense (e.g., Pr 4:23; 10:11, where Sophia teaches men to lead a long and happy life). While this is true of some, especially older, strands of the tradition, it is also true that Wisdom exercises a soteriological (as distinct from "eschatological") role as the guide and pathway to life beyond death. That this is so may be deduced from Qoheleth's polemic against such a belief (Eccles 2:13ff). Cf. also Job 19:25ff and the so-called Job Psalms, Pss. 73:23-26; 49:16; also Sir 40:11f; Wis Sol 1:14ff; 6:17-20; 8:13,17; 12:1.
  19. G. Fohrer, art. *sophia* (OT), *TWNT* VII, p.476-496, defines "truth" in this context as "trust in the Lord." As we have noted, the ethical overtones of the word are broader than this, implying revelation of the divine will and faithful human response.
  20. In addition to Ec 12:7, cf Ps 104:29f, "when thou sendest forth thy Spirit they are created ..." See P. van Imschoot's article, "L'Esprit de Jahvé, source de vie dans l'Ancien Testament," *RB* 44 (1935), 481-501, esp. p.486 on the separation at death of body and spirit. R.M. Westall, "The Scope of the Term 'Spirit of God' in the Old Testament," *IJT* 26 (1977), 29-43, denies that Spirit has a specifically creative function, either in the above cited passages or in the rest of the OT. While a "Christian" reading of passages such as Gen 1:2 may have exaggerated the image of the *Spiritus Creator*, the Spirit is nevertheless the instrument of Yahweh's creative activity, on both a cosmic and a human level.
  21. *pneuma theion to poiësan me / pnoë de pantokratoros ê didaskousa me*. See B. Duhm, *Das Buch Job* (Freiburg, 1897), for interesting remarks on the text.
  22. Sirach can be quite precisely dated in the first quarter of the second century B.C.,

- probably between 190-180. In his illuminating discussion, "Wisdom and Religion in Sirach," in *Israelite Wisdom*, p.247-260, E. Jacob states: "To have introduced history into the sapiential speculation is the great novelty of Sirach" (p.255). This explains in part the sage's identification of Wisdom with Torah: his concern is to interpret God's (historical) covenant relationship with Israel in the light of Wisdom tradition. Jacob depicts Sirach as a bridge-builder, who avoids sectarianism by synthesizing Jewish and Hellenistic elements into a work that stresses the necessity of unity between Wisdom speculation and Jewish religion. "Jesus ben Sira" stands, therefore, as the "theologian of Wisdom" par excellence.
23. Translation from J.G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach* (Cambridge, 1974), p.9. References are taken from the LXX.
  24. Clearly "Spirit" in this passage should be capitalized: the "Spirit of intelligence" (*pneumati suneseos*) is unquestionably the Spirit of the Lord. The close link between the inspirational activity of Spirit in prophecy and in the disclosure of wisdom is developed here for the first time in Jewish Wisdom writings. It comes to fullest expression in the Wisdom of Solomon, where Wisdom is identified with Spirit. See J. Marbock, "Sir. 38,24-39,11: Der schriftgelehrte Weise," in M. Gilbert (ed.), *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* (Leuven, 1979), p.293-316, who discusses the inspirational role of Spirit in the sage's teaching and its relation to prophecy (24:33; 39:6-8). P. Beauchamp, "L'Esprit Saint et l'Écriture biblique," in *L'Esprit Saint*, (ed. Facultés universitaires St-Louis) (Brussels, 1978), p.47ff, identifies personified Wisdom in Sir 24 with "the new Eve of the rediscovered paradise," and concludes that neither Word nor Spirit can be identified with the hypostatic Wisdom figure.
  25. See the classic studies by R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times*, (New York: Harper) 1949, p.381ff; and G.F. Moore, *Judaism*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1962), vol. I, p.263ff, for the development of the Rabbinic conception of Law and its dependence upon Wisdom tradition.
  26. RSV, that correctly renders *diabouliou autou*. Cf. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, p.78: "he left him free to take his own decisions."
  27. Useful treatments of this theme can be found in Moore, *Judaism* vol. I, p.479-483; R.A. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology* (London, 1961), p.81ff; Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich, 1928), vol. 3, p.330f; and esp. W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1962), p.20f.
  28. For discussions of the various foreign influences on the thought of Sirach, see B.L. Mack and R.E. Murphy, "Wisdom Literature," in K.A. Knight and G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress / Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), p.374f; and J.T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), esp. ch. 3, "Ben Sira's Relations to Egyptian Tradition," p.61-106, who stresses Sirach's use of "Judaized Hellenistic" and "Judaized Egyptian" wisdom sources.
  29. See the important monographs by James M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the*

*Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (*AnBib* 41) (Rome, 1970); and M. Gilbert, *La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse* (*AnBib* 53) (Rome, 1973), that deal extensively with rhetorical analysis.

30. See M.-A. Chevallier, *Souffle de Dieu. Le Saint Esprit dans le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1978), p.68f; and P. Beauchamp, "L'Esprit Saint", p. 52, who discusses the *coincidentia oppositorum* of these verses that attribute to the Spirit of Wisdom "immobile movement"; and E.G. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge, 1973), p.54f, for the translation of these various attributes.
31. F. Büchsel, *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh, 1926), p.53.
32. See P. van Imschoot, "Sagesse et l'Esprit," p.46ff.



## Hellenistic Sources

### (A) Classical Greek Usage

Despite wide-spread opinion to the contrary, there exists an essential difference in concept between the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*.<sup>1</sup> Whereas *pneuma* denotes a natural physical or psychological force of divine origin, *ruach* signifies *the presence of divinity itself*. The Spirit of the Old Testament and of most Hellenistic Jewish writings is the personal manifestation of God within human life and history. *Pneuma*, on the other hand, is never personified in Greek usage, nor does it ever acquire personal attributes or qualities.<sup>2</sup>

The basic meaning of *pneuma* remains “air in motion.”<sup>3</sup> Various secondary meanings derive from it, such as breath, life-breath, and finally life-principle. As a life-force or life-principle, *pneuma* is closely identified with the psychological concept “soul” (*psychê*). By extension the term can also denote the inspirational power behind mantic prophecy and the creative arts.<sup>4</sup>

Occasionally *pneuma* can function as revealer, in the sense that it unveils the ultimate significance of reality.<sup>5</sup> Its metaphysical content, however, contrasts sharply with the “truth” of Hebrew-Jewish tradition revealed by the Spirit of the holy and righteous God.

It is customary to contrast Greek and Hebrew concepts such as spirit, truth and knowledge by distinguishing between ontological and ethical categories. In Greek usage, these terms and their underlying concepts pertain to the realm of *being*, and in Hebrew usage, to the realm of *behavior*. In spite of tendencies to exaggerate this distinction,<sup>6</sup> it is useful and generally accurate. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the Platonic terms “truth” (*alêtheia*) and “knowledge” (*gnôsis*) — which denote respectively eternal realities or “forms” and their apprehension by rational cognition — bear ethical significance to the extent that knowledge of true reality leads to the “good” (*eudaimonia*), that is, to happiness,

prosperity and success.<sup>7</sup> And conversely, to the Hebrew mind what one *does* in large measure determines what one *is*: being is determined by behavior. An individual's nature reflects the righteousness of Yahweh only insofar as he or she practices righteousness. And St John, faithful to his Semitic background, declares that those who "*walk in the light*" and "*do the truth*" are "*born of God*" or are simply "*of God*" (*ek tou Theou*), expressing not only orientation but also origin or source (cf I Jn 1:7; 2:4; 5:1; II Jn 4; etc.). The distinction between ethical and ontological categories, therefore, should not be pressed too far.

The basic difference between Greek and Hebrew concepts of spirit and truth lies not so much in their function (defined either ontologically or ethically) as in their ultimate *origin*. Whereas the Greek *pneuma* is a natural physical or psychological phenomenon that comes from the realm of divine being and discloses the nature of cosmic reality or "truth,"<sup>8</sup> the Hebrew *ruach* is the revealing Spirit of God, the self-disclosing presence of Yahweh Himself within the sphere of human history. This distinction is rigorously maintained, even in Jewish writings of the Hellenistic period such as the Septuagint and Wisdom of Solomon, that in other respects betray strong Greek influence. There Spirit is never reduced to a natural phenomenon subject to the laws and limits of the cosmos. It is always depicted as the Spirit of the living Lord, who manifests divine life, power and purpose. Although it operates within the created order to reveal and to sanctify, its origin is elsewhere, in the transcendent Being of God Himself.

### *(B) Philo of Alexandria*

A prolific writer and outstanding exegete, Philo lived from about 20 B.C. to 50 A.D., in Alexandria, the intellectual center of Hellenistic Judaism. His influence upon contemporary Jewish thought, as upon numerous early Christian Fathers such as Clement, Origen, and others of the Alexandrian school of exegesis, can scarcely be exaggerated.<sup>9</sup>

A deeply pious Jew, Philo has been aptly characterized as a "philosophical mystic."<sup>10</sup> Through his allegorical expositions of the Old Testament, steeped as they were in Platonic-Stoic philosophy and mystical speculation, he sought to impart to Judaism an awareness that divine truth had

been revealed by Moses through "both cryptic story and Jewish rite."<sup>11</sup> Hellenistic syncretism so thoroughly stamped his attempt, however, as to place Philo well outside the mainstream of Hebrew-Jewish thought. With regard to his teaching on *pneuma* or spirit, it has long been recognized that Philo was more influenced by the philosophers than by the prophets.<sup>12</sup> In what follows, we want to note briefly the chief characteristics of *pneuma* in his writings that signal important points of departure from the Hebrew concept.

In pre-Socratic philosophy *pneuma* denoted "wind," "breath" and "life-force," as did the corresponding term in ancient near-eastern religions. Under the influence of Stoic materialism, *pneuma* was closely associated with the rational principle *nous*, variously rendered as "intellect," "intelligence" or "mind." It was conceived as a natural phenomenon, a fiery substance that permeates and undergirds both matter and thought. It could also function as a power of inspiration.<sup>13</sup> As such, it is characteristically *immanent*, although it originates from and often stands in close relationship to the transcendent God. The quality of immanence sets it off sharply from the *inbreaking* movement of the Spirit of Yahweh, whose principal work is to open and maintain communication and communion between the transcendent God and historical Israel. In his exegetical and philosophical writings, Philo depicts *pneuma* in typically Greek fashion and fails to grasp the transcendent nature and revelatory function of the *ruach-Yahweh*.

The word *pneuma* possesses a variety of meanings for Philo, ranging from "pure knowledge" (*akêratos epistêmê*, Gig 22) to the power of prophetic inspiration (*prophetikon pneuma*, Vit Mos I.277).<sup>14</sup> Its basic meaning here is "breath," "wind" or "air," understood as one of the basic elements (Gig 10; Opif 29f). By extending this definition, Philo can employ *pneuma* as a psychological concept: the essence of the soul (Det Pot 79ff) or the "higher mind," the rational principle that originates in God and is breathed into the human *nous* or intellect to animate the potential rational capacity in man.<sup>15</sup> The *Nous*, filled with the divine *Pneuma* (*theion pneuma*), elevates human persons above the mundane level of earthly existence by imparting to them knowledge of immaterial, transcendent reality or "truth." Such, in any case, is the experience of the "heavenly man" as distinguished from the "earthly man" who is incapable

of detaching himself from the material world. This distinction between two types of persons — those capable of mystical enlightenment and salvation, and those bound to mundane existence — was combined with Pauline and Hellenistic mystery teachings to lay the groundwork for the later distinction between “fleshly” (*sarkikoi*) and “spiritual” (*pneumatikoi*) classes of human beings so prominent in later Christian gnostic speculation.

A biblical correlation between Spirit and Wisdom provides the background for Philo’s identification of *pneuma* with “pure knowledge.” In Ex 31:1-3, Yahweh tells Moses that He has filled Bezalel with the “spirit” of divine wisdom, understanding and knowledge for craftsmanship. The attributes of Spirit listed here are normally those of Wisdom, the *sophia technitis* who bestows practical and artistic skills. Thus the Philonic *pneuma*, which is the higher mind, bears the attributes of *sophia* or wisdom,<sup>16</sup> including the attribute of “(pure) knowledge,” a synonym for “truth.” Insofar as it communicates such knowledge or truth, Pneuma can be described as a “spirit of truth,” although the content of that truth, as well as its mode of communication (through mystical experience rather than through the prophetic Word), must be clearly distinguished from the functions of the *ruach-Yahweh* or other spirit-figures of ancient near-eastern religions. Philo’s identification of Pneuma with Sophia, Nous and Logos, however, was not without significance for early Christian reflection on the relationship between the incarnate Logos and the Spirit of Pentecost.

As a created substance, the Philonic *pneuma* remains essentially distinct from God. As the natural phenomenon “wind,” it possesses a degree of independence which is quite foreign to the Israelite conception of *ruach*. According to Old Testament thought, “wind” is a divine instrument that comes forth from Yahweh and remains under His command. Nor is *pneuma* an *abiding presence* in Philo, as it is in later Hebrew prophetic tradition. Rather, it enters the soul to fill the *nous* and realize the latter’s rational potentiality. To support this depiction of spirit exegetically, Philo draws upon passages such as Gen 2:7 and 6:3 rather than upon the prophets. To his mind, spirit can rest (*menein*) upon a person, but not even in the case of Moses does it “abide” or “indwell” (*diamenein*) as a permanent, transforming gift (Gig 19ff).<sup>17</sup> As a transitory power,



*pneuma* can also inspire ecstatic utterance, but in this respect it is closer to the Greek spirit of mantic prophecy and mystical illumination than to the occasional spirit which stands behind the ecstatic prophecies of early Old Testament tradition.<sup>18</sup>

One well-known passage in particular (Gig 54f) illustrates Philo's free interpretation of the Old Testament in language current among contemporary mystery religions:

[In Moses' ecstatic vision of God, Philo says he entered into the divine darkness and] there he abides while he is made perfect in the most sacred Mysteries. And he not only becomes an initiate but also the hierophant of the rites and teacher of divine things, which he will reveal to those whose ears have been purified. With him, then, the divine Spirit that leads along every right Road abides.

[translation: Goodenough]

The language used here — darkness, indwell or abide, made perfect, sacred mysteries, initiate, hierophant of the rites, teacher of divine things — is in fact terminology of the mystery cults. Yet the statement expresses a truth which was central to Hebrew faith from at least the time of the second Temple: the Mystery of God is revealed by the Spirit to the faithful, through teaching and through ritual. This same conviction in the early Church was expressed as the presence and saving operation of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament.

### (C) *Mystery Religions and Hermetic Thought*

During the early Hellenistic period, the Greco-Roman world was the scene of an extraordinary influx of Oriental mystery cults.<sup>19</sup> In the threatening and unstable environment of that time these semi-secret redemptive movements offered personal security to the adept, and supplied a meaning to both life and death.

Behind each of the principal cults (with the exception of Mithraism) stood the nature-myth of a dying and rising god, who represented the annual dying and revitalization of vegetable life. The aim of the "mysteries" was to assure the salvation (*sôteria*) of the individual by uniting him with the savior-god or goddess (*sôtêr / sôteira*), whose own victory over death effects immortality for the believer. The necessary union was accomplished by various sacramental rites which granted regeneration or rebirth (*palingenesia*).

In Titus 3:5, similar language is used of Christian baptism: "by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit." And in the baptismal context of Romans 6, St Paul speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ and the believer in terms that to some interpreters evoke the imagery of the "dying and rising god" of the mystery cults. In the apostolic writings, however, the *content* is wholly different: the Savior (*sôtêr*) is God Himself incarnate, and His sacrificial victory over death offers eternal communion with Himself, a hope barely adumbrated by the mysteries. Those cults, nevertheless, could be seen as a prophetic prefiguration of the saving work of Jesus Christ. As the Hebrew Scriptures foreshadowed and prepared for the coming of the Son of God within Israel, in a lesser yet similar way the mystery religions served as a kind of "proto-gospel" in the Hellenistic world.

It is no easy matter to penetrate the mysteries and determine their teachings and ritual practices. Both their initiatory rites and their doctrines were well kept secrets. From the sources that have been preserved, however, we have every reason to believe that the role of *pneuma*, spirit, in the mysteries was minimal, despite the fact that some form of ecstatic prophecy or divination appears in most of them.<sup>20</sup> The one notable exception was the Mithraic cult, whose origins in Persian religion explain the important role attributed to Spirit as the regenerative agent. A passage from a third century A.D. Mithras liturgy, which may reflect first century tradition, is especially significant in this respect. Taken from an Egyptian magical papyrus, it speaks of spiritual rebirth by the "breath" of the Spirit (cf. John 3:7f; 20:22):

May it please thee to translate me, who am trammelled by the nature which underlies me, to an immortal genesis... that I may be born again in spirit; that I may be initiated, and the sacred Spirit may breathe on me!<sup>21</sup>

The minimal emphasis upon spirit does not mean that the mysteries bore no influence upon the formation of early Christian pneumatology. We have noted that *pneuma* in Hellenistic thought was conceived as a more or less material substance. As a psychological concept, spirit became associated with the soul, imprisoned in the body and awaiting liberation, that it might escape its earthly bondage and ascend to its place of origin in the heavens. Numerous scholars have suggested that this notion combined with the ancient (and, we should stress, obscure) "Anthropos" myth

of a fallen "divine man," to produce the dying-rising savior motif of the mystery religions. Subsequently, they maintain, this pre-Christian synthesis of Greek and Oriental themes formed a prototype of the Johannine Jesus (who "descends" and "ascends"), as well as of the Pauline Second Adam.<sup>22</sup> The Anthropos — the "Man" or "Son of Man" — embodies the heavenly life-substance, enters the material world, and gathers or liberates the human soul-substance (the "divine spark" of Orphic thought), thereby redeeming man from bondage to the material world and returning him, or rather, his soul-essence, to his place of origin in the world of light.<sup>23</sup>

The question as to how much early Christian theological reflection on the significance of Jesus' incarnation and resurrection was influenced by Hellenistic mysticism, and how much it in turn influenced the gnostic speculation of Valentinus, the Odes of Solomon, etc., will probably never receive a sure answer. Because there is such a lack of dependable witnesses to the real extent and depth of Hellenistic syncretism, the intertestamental period as a whole remains obscure. There is clearly a danger of over-stressing certain tendencies in early Christian thought because of their similarity to earlier non-Christian themes which might account for them. Reitzenstein, A. Loisy and others exaggerated the similarities between the mystery cults and Christianity, because they saw prototypes of Christ in the vegetable gods of the mysteries and in emerging pre-Christian gnosticism.

Two observations should be made in this regard. H. Anderson, in his book *Jesus and Christian Origins*,<sup>24</sup> has pointed out that "rebirth in communion with the vegetation deity is certainly not the same as resurrection with Christ, for in the former is presented a completely individualistic, timeless elevation from the lower to the higher realm of being, and in the latter a grafting into the body corporate of the historic community of the Church." In the second place, we should add that the Christian proclamation does not view redemption as liberation from the material world through identification with a "saved-savior." Nor does it guarantee immortality of the soul — although such a statement might startle and scandalize many Christian faithful. Instead, the Christian message focuses upon the presence of new, divine life in the midst of a transformed, historical order, where the future consummation in the Kingdom of God is proleptically (by "lived" anticipation) realized in the present age of the

Church. Only for this reason is the Church truly an "eschatological community," one that has already "passed from death to life" (Jn 5:24). And only for this reason do its sacraments and rituals, its historical roots and its doctrine of community, as well as its openness to the future and its life in the Spirit, have meaning.

The so-called "Hermetic" literature consists of writings from the early Christian period (2nd-3rd centuries) that shed further light on the Hellenistic concept of *pneuma*.<sup>25</sup> The *Corpus Hermeticum* (CH) is a body of Hellenistic mystical texts which purports to be the revelation of Hermes Trismegistos, "Thrice-great Hermes," who is identical to Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom. The syncretistic, proto-gnostic character of these writings derives from the complex intermingling of Greek and Oriental motifs found at Alexandria and throughout Egypt during the two centuries immediately before and after Christ.<sup>26</sup>

The Corpus as we have received it is relatively late. Written by several different authors over many decades from the end of the first century A.D., its sources derive from the pre-Christian period. Nevertheless, the CH is not particularly reliable for determining direct influences on New Testament theology. Similarities of language between these writings and the Gospel of John, for example, can usually be traced to a common theological terminology which was current throughout the Hellenistic world at the turn of the Christian era. Before we turn to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are far more significant for our purposes, we should simply note the most distinctive features of *pneuma* that appear in the Hermetica.

The authors of the CH are generally faithful to the traditional Greek concept of spirit. Here, too, it is essentially a natural phenomenon: air in motion (wind), breath, and consequently bearer of life. Platonic-Stoic metaphysical presuppositions are evident in the designation of *pneuma* as one of the higher material elements which permeates all things (CH 1:5). Like Philo, the authors of the Hermetica describe the nature of *pneuma* in highly ambiguous terms. It appears at one time as the agent of movement and life within the cosmos, then again as the source of thought, the driving force behind the rational faculty in human beings. It can be depicted as a created substance or element, an immanent, pervasive force within the material world; yet elsewhere it seems to transcend matter, to



stand in close association with mind (*nous*), light (*phôs*) and life (*zoê*), each of which originates in God and is bestowed upon men. In the Poimandres, Jewish influence leads to an association of spirit with truth (*alêtheia*) and word (*logos*).

The closest parallel to Jewish and Christian pneumatology appears in CH 1:30, where the preacher is inspired by the divine spirit to proclaim life-giving truth or knowledge (*theopnous genomenos tês alêtheias...*). In 1:5, the Spirit of God that appears at the beginning of the Genesis cosmology (Gen 1:2, LXX) is described as the "pneumatic word" (*pneumatikon logon*). This recalls the intimate relationship that exists between Pneuma, Logos and Sophia in the later Jewish Wisdom writings. Each is an agent of creation, both of the world and of mankind. A major distinction exists here between the Old Testament and the Hermetica, however. Whereas in Palestinian Jewish tradition the creative function of these figures was gradually extended to include national and moral re-creation or rebirth, in the CH the "pneumatic word" is restricted to a cosmogonic role.

Still more significant is the fact that the *pneuma* of the Hermetic writings never functions as a vehicle of revelation; nor (with the exception of 1:30) does it act as the inspirational power behind prophecy. Philo tentatively, and with considerable inconsistency, attributed these functions to spirit on the basis of his Old Testament heritage.<sup>27</sup> In the Hellenistic environment of the mysteries and Hermetica, however, *pneuma* remained essentially a created element, a natural phenomenon that in no case could be identified with the transcendent God, either of Jewish or of Platonic thought.

Except in the Mithras liturgy of Persian extraction, *pneuma* exercises neither a regenerative nor a revelatory role in the extant non-Jewish writings of this period. To rediscover those functions in pre-Christian Judaism, we need to turn to the remarkable collection of sectarian documents known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## NOTES

1. Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, p.53, minimizes this difference: "One can express by the word *pneuma* nearly everything which is denoted by *ruach*, and vice versa." To support this conclusion, he shows that both terms denote the natural phenomenon of air in motion, the life-force in humans and animals, non-corporeal spiritual beings, and the power of divine inspiration. Although he does underscore certain differences between Greek and Hebrew usages, Büchsel regards them as being merely quantitative.
2. H. Kleinknecht, art. *pneuma*, *TWNT* VI, p.330-357, who notes that the God who stands behind the Greek concept of spirit is "ein ganz anderer," p.357.
3. That is, *aer kinoumenos*, a higher element of Platonic-Stoic metaphysics. The term *pneuma* first appears in Aeschylus, *Persae* 110; cf. Herodotus 7:16:1 *pneuma anemon*. See C.H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London, 1935), p.122, and his *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953), p.213ff. Other useful studies of *pneuma* in Greek usage include Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, p.32ff; D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (Cambridge, 1967) p.202ff; and the dated but still valuable work by R. Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (1927), (reprint: Darmstadt, 1966), p.308ff.
4. Kleinknecht, art. *pneuma*, p. 343f, observes that the Delphic priestesses were inspired by *pneuma* to utter their mysterious prophecies; and he traces this use of the word into the NT: *pneuma* and *prophetuein*, Lk 1:67; II Pet 1:21; cf. *glossolalein*, I Cor 12-14.
5. Kleinknecht, citing Cicero (Div. I.19.37) and Plato (Tim. 71e).
6. This tendency is exemplified by the nonetheless useful study by T. Bowman, *Das hebraische Denken im Vergleich mit dem Griechischen* (2nd ed.) (Göttingen, 1954); cf. the revised English version, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (London, 1960), esp. p.58-73 and 200-208.
7. The ethical dimension of Platonic dualism is worked out in the minor Socratic dialogues, esp. in the *Theaetetus*, which examines knowledge as "true judgment" (187bff). Judgment (or belief, *doxa*, to *doxazein*) may be defined as "intellectual conviction" which orients a person's being and activity with relation to the external world. Cf. A.E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and His Work* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p.320ff.
8. For "existential" and other usages of *alêtheia* in ancient Greece, see R. Bultmann, art. *alêtheia*, *TWNT* I, p.239-251; and his "Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 27 (1928) 113-163, reprinted in *Exegetica* (ed. E. Dinkler) (Tübingen, 1967), p.124-173.
9. For the impact of Philo's allegorical method on the exegesis of the Alexandrian school, see J. Breck, *The Power of the Word* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), ch. 2.
10. E.R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light* (Oxford, 1935); and *An Introduction to Philo*

- Judaicus* (Oxford, 1962), offers excellent evaluations of Philo's thought and religious experience.
11. Goodenough, Introduction, p.140. See as well the art. "Philo" by C. Colpe, *RGG*<sup>3</sup>, III, p.341ff; and Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, p.348ff.
  12. H. Leisegang, *Der Heilige Geist* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1919) (reprint: Darmstadt, 1967), p.136ff, developed this point in depth.
  13. Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, p.52, describes *pneuma* as the subject of a "monistic naturalism." See M. Pulver, "Das Erlebnis des Pneuma bei Philon," *Erano Jahrbuch* (Zürich, 1945), p.116, on the Stoic-pantheistic character of Philo's thought.
  14. C.K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1966), p.111f, also p.9f,22; D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, p.223ff; and U. Wilkins, *Weisheit und Torheit* (Tübingen, 1959), p.157ff.
  15. Opif 135,144; Spec IV.123; Det Pot 83; cf. Plant 18ff, where *pneuma* is described as the "image" (*eikôn*) of the divine reason.
  16. Gig 27,47 *to sophias pneuma theion*; cf. Migr Ab 34f and Wis Sol 7:7,22; 9:17.
  17. See M.-J. Legrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ* Paris, 1931), p.562; and C.H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p.220.
  18. On the ecstatic element in Philonic piety, see Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, p.449-454.
  19. On the whole question of the mystery religions, see the somewhat dated but still useful treatments by Reitzenstein, *Mysterienreligionen*; H.R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1929); R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (New York: Meridian, 1956), esp. p.156-161; and W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (Göttingen, 1907), esp. p.267ff on sacramental rites in gnostic sects.
  20. From magical texts and witnesses to various prophetic movements in the Hellenistic age, as well as from Philo, it is clear that a "spirit of ecstasy" was well known at the time. In these documents *pneuma* parallels traditional Greek usage, being a natural phenomenon or divine agent which is never personified. Their cosmological, demonological roles also distinguish these spirits from the Spirit of intertestamental Judaism. See Büchsel, *Geist Gottes*, p.103ff.
  21. Quoted in Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration*, p.164.
  22. See, for example, C.H. Kraeling, *Anthropos and Son of Man* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1927), p.128-186; E. Brandenburger, *Adam und Christus, Exegetisch-Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Römer 5:12-21 (I Kor. 15)* (Neukirchen, 1962), p.68-157; and E. Schweizer, *TWNTVI*, p.390ff.
  23. E. Schweizer, *TWNTVI*, p.391, discusses this theme in gnostic thought.
  24. (New York: Oxford, 1964), p.31.
  25. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, discusses at length the

- concept of *pneuma* in the Hermetica, p.213ff; see also his *Bible and the Greeks*, p.122ff. Texts and commentaries can be found in the now outdated edition of W. Scott, *Hermetica*, vols. 1-3 (Oxford, 1924-1926); and A.D. Knock - A.J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, vols. 1-4 (Paris, 1945-1954). See also A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* I-IV (Paris, 1945-1954); and R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig, 1904).
26. H. Dorries, *RGG*<sup>3</sup>, III, p.265, offers almost a caricature of the syncretistic nature of these texts: "The outer dressing is Egyptian, the content is without question essentially Greek. The foundation is a transformation of Platonic philosophy into a form of religious revelation. Yet the philosophical elements are mixed with Neopythagorean, Orphic, as well as Jewish concepts."
27. See E. Bréhier, *Les Idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1925), p.134f; and Leisegang, *Der Heilige Geist*, p.119ff.



## The Dead Sea Scrolls

The discovery of the Qumran library of *Dead Sea Scrolls* in 1947 marks one of the most extraordinary and significant moments in the annals of biblical archaeology. The story of the providential finding of the Scrolls by a bedouin boy, and of the intrigue and frustrations surrounding their purchase and publication, has often been told and need not be repeated here. It is a genuinely fascinating story, however, and anyone concerned with the growth of early Christianity should be familiar with it.<sup>1</sup>

It is somehow fitting that the way back to Qumran via the Scrolls has been a tortuous one, and that the Jewish sectarians who produced these writings — presumably members of the widespread Essene sect<sup>2</sup> — should yield their secrets with such reluctance. Long and arduous as the task has been, specialists at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and elsewhere have done superb work in deciphering the Scroll fragments and placing their contents in the public domain. Their efforts have provided scholars, and the Church as a whole, with invaluable source materials for advancing our knowledge of the theological, liturgical and social matrix in which the Apostolic Community first took shape. Much of the Dead Sea material, to be sure, remains to be published, and the scholarly world is presently up in arms over delays that have occurred since the early 1970's. This frustration, however, should not lead to a discounting of the labor expended and the contributions made by Qumran specialists in the first two decades following the Scroll's discovery.

The Scrolls have particular significance for our own topic, in that they serve as the principal bridge between the Spirit-dualism of Iranian religion and the image of Spirit revealed in the Gospel and First Epistle of John.

One of the earliest effects of the Qumran manuscript find on New Testament studies was to lead scholars to re-evaluate the long-accepted designation of St John's Gospel as the "Gospel of the Hellenists."<sup>3</sup> Examined through the prism of the Scrolls, and in the light of its Hebrew and Jewish heritage, the Fourth Gospel no longer read as a product of

Hellenistic syncretism.<sup>4</sup> Yet on the other hand, the Qumran documents offered new and convincing evidence of how thoroughly syncretistic pre-Christian Judaism had actually become.

Since their discovery, the Dead Sea Scrolls have amply confirmed the importance of Zoroastrian and later Avestan thought for shaping major themes of Jewish apocalyptic and wisdom speculation. In this chapter we focus on the impact those Iranian sources bore upon the concept of Spirit which appears in the Scrolls and in the closely related *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. This will provide us with a comprehensive picture of the ancient spirit-dualism, modified by Wisdom and Rabbinic thought, that lies behind the opposition between the "spirit of truth" and the "spirit of error/deception" found in I John 4:6. It will also throw light on specific characteristics attributed to the "Paraclete" and the "Spirit of Truth" in the Fourth Gospel.

#### *(A) Iranian Dualism.*

At this point it would be useful to spell out in some detail certain dualistic themes in the teaching of Zarathustra and his followers that we touched on in Part I. The songs of Zarathustra are deeply impregnated with the dualistic thought of the Indian Rig Veda and old Iranian religion. Even so, they reflect a high degree of independent creativity on the part of the prophet himself.

The dualism of the Gathas can be characterized as ethical and eschatological. Reflecting continual tensions between the followers of Zarathustra and the bands of marauding nomads that threatened their livelihood and well-being, the dualism appears in the moral struggle between good and evil, life and death, salvation and eternal judgment. Only in the Younger Avesta (and especially in the late Sassanian tradition) does the dualistic framework assume cosmic proportions. There the chief thrust is no longer soteriological, concerning the people's salvation before God; it is ontological, opposing two antithetical principles of Good and Evil, whose struggle determines the fate of the cosmos as a whole. There, too, it becomes rigorously deterministic. In the original Yasnas, however, the motif of free will — the ability and responsibility of the individual to *choose* between Truth and Lie — is of paramount importance.

We recall that the high God Ahura Mazda brought forth twin sons, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu: the Holy and Evil Spirits, or better, because of their responsibility for material blessings and deprivations, the Productive and Destructive Spirits. Mankind is divided into two opposing camps. Those under the dominion of the Holy Spirit walk according to the Truth and manifest righteousness, whereas those under the Evil Spirit are followers of the Lie and practice unrighteousness. In contrast to Greek thought, which tends to subsume ethics within cosmology, Iranian dualism remains essentially ethical, even when it concerns the cosmic opposition of the two Spirits. And its ultimate concern is theological: to provide a conceptual framework by which to understand and express the working out of salvation within the life of God's people.

Ahura Mazda, the Father and Creator, technically stands above the Truth-Lie dualism. Yet he, too, like his twin sons and the whole of humankind, is obliged to choose, to align himself with Good or with Evil. Whereas Ahura and Spenta Mainyu chose Truth, Angra Mainyu chose Evil, thereby setting in motion an antagonism which is reflected in the course of human events. According to Yasna 32:1ff, Ahura made his choice in concert with Vohu Manah and Asha, the latter of whom is the personification of Truth. The passage declares that the object of his choice was Armaiti, "Right-thinking" or "Piety," another of the seven Amesha Spentas that originate in the godhead and come forth as personified divine attributes. These various hypostases are not clearly differentiated in Zarathustra's thought. Nevertheless, it is clear that to his mind the essence of Truth *is* Piety: right conduct — indeed, "orthopraxis" — that takes the form of acts of faithfulness towards members of the community and obedience to the divine will. The prophet's reform had a double aim: to defend his people against the external threat raised by invading tribes (perceived to be under the dominion of Angra Mainyu), and to abolish the corrupt *daeua* worship of the old Iranian religion. His people's daily struggles gradually became "spiritualized" after the fashion of apocalyptic, where the earthly antagonism between warring parties is played out on an eternal, heavenly stage. In the end, a final judgment would vindicate the righteous and allow them to dwell in eternal bliss in the world to come.

Zarathustra's genius lay in his ability to temper his dualistic heritage with a genuine, if somewhat ambiguous, monotheism. His disciples were

not so successful. In the later Haptanhaiti Gatha and Younger Avesta, Ahura Mazda tends increasingly to become identified with Spenta Mainyu, while the Amesha Spentas are reduced to divine attributes. The initial impetus of the prophet's reform diminished as the cosmic dualism of the ancient religion reasserted itself. Sraosha, the principle of obedience, became personified as lord of the material world, who engages in combat against the *daevas* and their leader Aeshma. Teamed with Vohu Manah, Sraosha achieves ultimate victory over the forces of Evil. The fruits of his victory are twofold: cosmic peace and harmony, and an eternal union of the elect with God.

Behind the mythological scenes of warfare, there stands the controlling theological conviction (central as well in the Qumran and Johannine writings) that salvation is achieved through a struggle against evil, led by the Spirit who guides the faithful in the ways of truth. A summary statement made earlier bears repeating: just as in Hebrew thought, the Zoroastrian concept of Holy Spirit is that of a revealing, blessing, protecting and saving agent of the divine will, one which manifests the presence of God among the faithful, who seek communion with him in obedience.

In the thought of both Iran and Qumran, God created the two Spirits, while He Himself stands above the plane upon which their antagonism is played out. Thereby the dualism is subordinated to the more fundamental monotheism of each tradition. A popular view among commentators needs to be corrected in this respect. Qumran teaching should not be contrasted with that of the Gathas by arguing that only the former preserves a monotheistic vision of the deity. For, once again, it is only in the later Avesta that Zarathustra's thought is modified — in fact deteriorates — into an absolute cosmic dualism.

An equally important yet often misunderstood point is that for both the Gathas and the Dead Sea Scrolls the dualism is ultimately between Truth and Lie, rather than between the two Spirits. The basic criterion by which a person is identified is ethical: followers of one Spirit or the other are known not so much for their doctrinal profession as for their *moral conduct*. Ethical behavior attests to the nature of one's commitment. Yasna 32:1-2 confirms this point by indicating that the *daevas* of the old religion, together with their adherents, also honored Ahura Mazda as the supreme Lord.<sup>5</sup> Their conduct, however, belied their professed faith and



betrayed their true "orientation" as followers of the Lie. We might say, then, that the Lie consists basically of hypocrisy.

The faithful, on the other hand, are those whose commitment to Ahura leads them to obedience and moral rectitude. They "walk" in the way of righteousness and truth. Without diminishing the importance of doctrinal profession, it is fair to say that this same criterion ultimately distinguished the Qumran sectarians from other Jews, as it did the Johannine community from the "antichrists."

### *(B) Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

Final "testaments" attributed to prominent Old Testament figures were a favorite genre in intertestamental Judaism.<sup>6</sup> Based on the model of Jacob's dying words reported in Genesis 49, the testaments consisted of moral exhortations and prophecies concerning the future of the people. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Test XII) follow this pattern. Filled with warnings against sexual promiscuity and apostasy in the end-time, they include an intermingling of diverse theological themes that suggest their close affinity with the scrolls of the Dead Sea community.

The Testaments present an intriguing problem to specialists in Judaism and Christian origins because they have obviously been "doctored" with Christian interpolations. No consensus has been reached, however, as to the exact number or location of these additions. Before the discovery of the Qumran writings, it was argued by some that the Testaments were in fact a Christian work disguised in Jewish garb.<sup>7</sup> Comparison with the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, has led most scholars today to minimize the number of supposed interpolations and to affirm the Jewish provenance of the work.<sup>8</sup> It has even been suggested that the Testaments were produced by members of the Essene sect; but that view has been abandoned because of clear theological differences between them and the Scrolls.

Nevertheless, parallels between the Testaments and the Qumran writings are numerous and striking. And there where they share a common theological perspective, they appear most clearly to have influenced the several authors of the "Johannine school."<sup>9</sup>

Running throughout the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is an ethical-eschatological dualism very similar to the one found in the Gathas

of Zarathustra. Here, however, the antithesis is not Truth-Lie, but Truth-Deception (or Error, *planê*). The force of the Avestan word *druj* is basically "disorder," "destruction," and therefore "evil." It stands diametrically opposed to *asha*, the principle of cosmic harmony, hence "righteousness" or "truth."<sup>10</sup> This opposition, we recall, reflects the historical circumstances of the agrarian peasants who faced continual threat from plundering nomads. Different historical circumstances which prevailed in Palestine prior to our era are reflected in the demonology and truth-deceit dualism of the Test XII. And this pattern, taken up by the author of I John, is further adapted to his own situation. Whereas in the Test XII and the Qumran Scrolls the dualism is fundamentally moral, in the Johannine writings it is equally *christological*, serving to defend the true faith against the attractive deceptions of false teaching.

It is clear that the work of the Spirit in the intertestamental period was far more in evidence than official dogma allowed.<sup>11</sup> With the last of the prophets, the Spirit was believed to have withdrawn from Israel in anticipation of the coming messianic age.<sup>12</sup> In that day every faithful believer would possess the Spirit, as would the Messiah himself (Ps Sol 17:37; 18:7; T Jud 24; T Lev 18:7). Yet a variety of spirits was known to be at work in the present age, many of whom inspired prophetic speech.<sup>13</sup>

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs pneumatology and demonology are closely interwoven. The chief concern is to ascribe the various impulses toward human sin and corruption to appropriate evil spirits. Lord of the demons is Beliar, the devil or prince of deceit (T Sim 2:7; T Jud 19:4). At the Visitation (the appearance of the Messiah[s] and judgment in the end-time), the Messiah will conquer Beliar and his forces, and liberate those souls who have been held in captivity by them (T Dan 5:10). Beliar himself will be bound and cast into eternal fire (T Lev 18:12; T Jud 25:3).<sup>14</sup>

In the Qumran Scrolls, Beliar is identified with the Angel of Darkness, who opposes the Angel of Light. In the Testaments, however, Beliar is presented as opposing God directly. This "absolute" dualism, pitting the representative of evil against the Author of good and of creation itself, is similar to that of the later Avesta, whereas the "modified" dualism of the Scrolls is closer to the thought of the original Yasnas. In both the Testaments and the Scrolls the principal agent of evil is the *pneuma tês planês*,

the "spirit of deception/error."<sup>15</sup> He and his wicked cohort ("every spirit of Beliar," T Iss 7:7) stand as a multitude against the single *pneuma tês alêtheias*: the spirit of truth, understanding and sanctification.<sup>16</sup>

In the Testaments as much as in the thought of Qumran, however, the dualism remains basically ethical rather than metaphysical. Although in the former tradition Beliar wages war against God rather than against a corresponding spirit, God remains the ultimate Lord of creation. There is nothing in the Testaments that suggests an ontological parity between the two, and the divine sovereignty remains absolute. Therefore it is the *Messiah*, and not God Himself, who will bring about the final victory:

There shall arise for you from the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Levi the Lord's salvation. He will make war against Beliar; he will grant the vengeance of victory as our goal. And he shall take from Beliar the captives, the souls of the saints; and he shall turn the hearts of the disobedient ones to the Lord, and grant eternal peace to those who call upon him. (*T Dan 5:10f*)

The most explicit description of the spirit-dualism of the Testaments appears in Test Judah 20:1-3 and 5a:

So understand, my children, that two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. In between is the conscience of the mind [or: spirit of understanding] which inclines as it will. The things of truth and the things of error are written in the affections of man, each one of whom the Lord knows... *And the spirit of truth testifies to all things and brings all accusations.*<sup>17</sup>

The similarity between the final line of this passage and the description of the work of the Spirit-Paraclete in John 16:7-15 is striking and unmistakable. There as here, the Spirit of Truth exercises a basic *teaching function* within the believing community, while at the same time He "convicts" the antagonists of their error. This combined didactic and forensic role, so characteristic of the Spirit in Johannine tradition, was undoubtedly shaped by the kind of spirit-dualism that appears in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and in the Qumran Scrolls. Before we can establish that link, however, it is necessary to indicate the similarities and differences between the Test XII and other Jewish texts of the period, and to assess their degree of dependence upon Iranian sources.

The two spirits of this passage from Test Judah represent not so much a spirit-dualism as we find in the Gathas, as they do the *yezer*-dualism which is so prominent in Rabbinic thought. The two spirits are practically

indistinguishable from the two *inclinations* between which the human conscience (or “spirit of understanding”) must constantly choose. As in the Gathas, free-will for ethical decision is the principal theme. The fact that man’s works are “written upon the heart” (Kee: “written in the affections of man”) and are known to God, does not at all limit human freedom or responsibility for making appropriate moral choices. If the spirit of truth “testifies to all things and brings all accusations,” it is after the fact: he prepares the balance, as it were, in anticipation of the day of judgment. His primary function, however, is to guide the good inclination in man away from darkness and error, and towards light and truth.

It would be an over-simplification, then, simply to identify the two spirits with the two inclinations that reside in the human heart. “In between (the two spirits) is the conscience of the mind which inclines as it will.” A similar image appears in Test Asher 1:3-9, which is the earliest known reference in Jewish literature to the “good-yezer” (*yezer hatob*). The context is the important description of the “Two Ways,” destined to play a central role in early Christian thought:

God has granted two ways to the sons of men, two inclinations (*duo diaboulia*), two lines of action, two models, and two goals. The two ways are good and evil; concerning them are two inclinations within our breasts that choose between them. If the soul wants to follow the good way, all of its deeds are done in righteousness and every sin is immediately repented. Contemplating just deeds and rejecting wickedness, the soul overcomes evil and uproots sin. But if the mind is disposed toward evil, all of its deeds are wicked; driving out the good, it accepts the evil and is overmastered by Beliar, who, even when good is undertaken, presses the struggle so as to make the aim of his action into evil, since the devil’s storehouse (or: treasure of the inclination) is filled with the venom of the evil spirit.<sup>18</sup>

The conclusion to this passage likewise prevents us from making any easy identification of the two spirits with the two inclinations. If the “evil spirit” (*pneuma ponêron*) refers to Beliar rather than to the spirit of error, however, one could conclude that the two spirits of good and evil, and the two inclinations of good and evil, are in fact interchangeable concepts. Be that as it may, it is clear that the doctrine of spirits and inclinations is far from consistent in the Testaments. Other passages such as Test Asher 3:2 (“Flee from the evil inclination, destroying the devil by your good works”); Test Benjamin 6 (“The inclinations of the good man are not in



the control of the deceitful spirit, Beliar, for the angel of peace guides his life" — together with the rest of the chapter); and Test Naphtali 2:2-5 ("The Lord forms the body in correspondence to the spirit, and instills the spirit corresponding to the power of the body...so also the Lord knows the body to what extent it will persist in goodness, and when it will be dominated by evil") show the ease with which the author(s) could combine and confuse the various figures of Beliar, the spirit of error, a spirit of evil, and the evil inclination.

The significant element is not so much a particular identification, however, as it is the ethical and anthropological presuppositions that lie behind these concepts. We have already noted the writer's tendency to ascribe various human sins to the working of appropriate evil spirits. In the above quotation from Test Asher, the major theme is that of the Two Ways, which makes its first appearance here in Jewish writings and is carried over into the early apostolic age.<sup>19</sup> A propensity or inclination for both good and evil is implanted in each human person by the Creator. By choosing one or the other through the exercise of free will, the individual determines the course of every action (as in the Gathas). If one chooses the good, all of one's works are good, and even sin leads to quick repentance. But should one choose evil, even ostensibly good works (or the prior good intention — which one is not clear) will inevitably be perverted to serve the ruling spirit that dwells within the heart. That spirit, which "fills the treasury of the inclination" (Charles), is at times identified with Beliar himself, who dominates the soul and orients all of its works towards wickedness.

Test Asher 3 presents a modification of this theme by introducing the possibility of destroying the evil inclination (or Beliar himself) through the performance of good works: "Flee from the evil tendency (inclination), destroying the devil by your good works." In Test Benjamin 6 it is further argued that an angel of peace protects the good man from the spirit of error. Here the two spirits appear to struggle for control over the two inclinations (the "angel of peace" is one with the "spirit of truth"). This angel of peace guides the soul of the good man, whom the Lord indwells and enlightens. Accordingly, the good man strives for simplicity, his aim being to abolish the power of evil by following the Way prescribed by the angel of peace or spirit of truth. The underlying ethical dualism is

modified here by the possibility of exercising the God-given freedom to choose truth over error, a choice that leads to a life of good works and faithful obedience. What decides the moral outcome of one's life, then, is not the struggle between two opposing principles (spirits or inclinations) of good or evil, but the *exercise of free choice*. The determinism implied by the struggle of the two spirits for domination of the human will is thereby subordinated to the more fundamental conviction that moral rectitude and faithfulness to God are the results of a wise use of human freedom.

In the Gathas, to the contrary, a metaphysical dualism represented by the twin Spirits controls the ethical dualism: the victory of one Spirit or the other determines individual moral orientation as it does the destiny of the cosmos as a whole. Although the human will is theoretically free to choose good or evil, the truth or the lie, in fact that freedom is sharply limited by historical circumstances. To Zarathustra's mind, humanity is divided into two classes, followers of the truth and followers of the lie, and he offers little theological reflection on the nature, source, or consequences of sin committed by the *asha-vans* or followers of the truth.

The author(s) of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, however, drawing upon their Hebraic heritage, recognized both the ubiquity of sin and the sanctifying power of the divine Spirit. By integrating the older traditions of "two spirits" and "two inclinations" into an ethical doctrine of the Two Ways, they merged a metaphysical dualism with moral and eschatological themes to produce an analysis of human sin that is far more subtle, yet far more realistic than the one put forth by Zarathustra.

All the same, this analysis in the Testaments left a number of loose ends. For example, the relationship between the spirits, the inclinations, and the figure of Belial is never spelled out in a really consistent way. Nevertheless, it achieved a synthesis which took account of both the dualistic world-view of Iranian thought and the profound consciousness of sin and responsibility that permeates the Old Testament. As a result, the teaching of the Testaments was destined to endure throughout the intertestamental period and into the Christian era. With specific regard to the spirit/*yezer* dualism, it left its mark especially on Rabbinic — and to a lesser degree, Johannine — pneumatology and moral theology.

One final element in the teaching of the Testaments remains to be considered: the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days, and its relation-

ship to the coming Messiah.

Two key passages in the Testaments announce the coming of an eschatological figure who combines characteristics of prophet, priest, and king: Test Judah 24 and Test Levi 18. As messianic prophecies they raise particular questions because of their similarity to accounts of Jesus' baptism recorded in the Gospels.

The two passages, which can be appropriately characterized as messianic hymns, are worth quoting in full:

And after this there shall arise for you a Star from Jacob in peace: And a man shall arise from my posterity like the Sun of righteousness, walking with the sons of men in gentleness and righteousness, and in him will be found no sin. *And the heavens will be opened upon him to pour out the spirit as a blessing of the Holy Father. And he will pour the spirit of grace on you. And you shall be sons in truth, and you will walk in his first and final decrees. This is the Shoot of God Most High; this is the fountain for the life of all humanity. Then he will illumine the scepter of my kingdom, and from your root will arise the Shoot, and through it will arise the rod of righteousness for the nations, to judge and to save all that call on the Lord. (Test Judah 24)*

Test Levi 17 prophesies the progressive corruption of the traditional priesthood prior to the coming of the eschatological priest-king. Ch. 18 begins with the warning, "When vengeance will have come upon them from the Lord, the priesthood will lapse." The long prophetic hymn continues:

And then the Lord will raise up a new priest to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed. He shall effect the judgment of truth over the earth for many days. And his star shall rise in heaven like a king, kindling the light of knowledge as day is illumined by the sun. And he shall be extolled by the whole inhabited world. This one will shine forth like the sun in the earth; he shall take away all darkness from under heaven, and there shall be peace in all the earth. The heavens shall greatly rejoice in his days and the earth shall be glad; the clouds will be filled with joy and the knowledge of the Lord will be poured out on the earth like the waters of the seas. And the angels of the glory of the Lord's presence will be made glad by him. *The heavens will be opened, and from the temple of glory sanctification will come upon him, with a fatherly voice, as from Abraham to Isaac. And the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him. And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him [in the water]. For he shall give the majesty of the Lord to those who are his sons in truth forever. And there shall be no successor for him from generation to generation forever. And in his priesthood the nations shall be multiplied in knowledge on the earth, and they shall be illumined by*

the grace of the Lord, but Israel shall be diminished by her ignorance and darkened by her grief. In his priesthood sin shall cease and lawless men shall rest from their evil deeds, and righteous men shall find rest in him. And he shall open the gates of paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and he will grant to the saints to eat of the tree of life. *The spirit of holiness shall be upon them.* And Beliar shall be bound by him. And he shall grant to his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits. And the Lord will rejoice in his children; he will be well pleased by his beloved ones forever. Then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will rejoice and I [Levi] shall be glad, and all the saints shall be clothed in righteousness.

These magnificent hymns to the coming messianic priest-king can be read in at least three different ways: 1) as Christian passages interpolated into the Test XII; 2) as Jewish prophecies, into which the italicized passages have been interpolated by a Christian hand, to make them accord with the Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism; or 3) as Jewish prophecies with no Christian interpolations, other than the bracketed phrase in T Lev 18:7, "in the water."

Most components of these passages reflect Hebrew tradition, especially Numbers 24:17 ("a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel") and Isaiah 11:1-10, which describes the "resting" (*anapausetai*) of the Spirit of the Lord upon the "shoot from the stump of Jesse," that is, the Davidic king. Other elements derive from related messianic passages of the prophecies, such as Psalm 2:7 ("He said to me, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'"; cf Ps 44/45); and the predictions of a universal outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28f and Zechariah 12:10.

Other elements, however, appear to have no parallel in Old Testament tradition. These include the italicized descriptions of the opening of heaven, the effusion of the Spirit upon the Messiah, and the voice of the "holy Father." Understandably, the question arises as to whether these elements — or the passages as a whole — are in fact Christian interpolations into the original Jewish writing.<sup>20</sup> If they are, we have a simple case of reporting *ex eventu*: the would-be "prophecies" are in reality accounts of Jesus' baptism projected back into the intertestamental period. If they are not, then these passages are of exceptional importance for the Church. For they would then be authentic elements of divine revelation that mark a further stage in the preparation of Israel for the coming of the Messiah.



Several considerations, in fact, make it unlikely that these hymns were Christian compositions that were inserted into the Testaments. In the first place, they fit perfectly into their context. The Testaments regularly end with a warning against sin and apostasy in the last days, followed with a more or less developed promise of a coming priest and/or king who will act as savior and judge.<sup>21</sup> Such promises often appear as well in hymns or stereotyped confessional fragments.<sup>22</sup> As for the elements that appear to have no analogy in Hebrew writings — the heavenly voice, the opening of the heavens, and the reference to the “Father” — it is perhaps sufficient to note the Rabbinic tradition of the *bat qôl* or voice from heaven that communicates public revelation; the “opening of heaven” in Old Testament passages to signify a theophany (e.g., Gen 28:12, “Jacob’s Ladder”; Ezek 1:1, “the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God”); and the prophetic petition to God as “Father” (e.g., Is 63:16, “For Thou art our Father...Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Thy name”). While these elements play a dominant role in the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration — and the title “spirit of holiness” (*pneuma hagiosunês*) finds a (unique) New Testament usage in Romans 1:4 — they also figure in Old Testament and Jewish writings. Nothing, therefore, obliges us to read them as Christian interpolations into the text of the Testaments.<sup>23</sup> It is more likely, in fact, that Christian witnesses were influenced by the Test XII, shaping their retelling of Jesus’ baptism in order to demonstrate, on the basis of popular messianic expectation, that He is the prophet, priest, and king who inaugurates the reign of God in the eschatological age of the Church.

Finally we should note the curious affirmation in these hymns that those who receive the outpouring of the Spirit from the Messiah will become *his* sons, that is, sons of the Messiah. A double effusion of the Spirit appears here. In the first instance, the promise of Isaiah 11 (cf 61:1ff) will be fulfilled when the Spirit is poured out upon the Messiah as a permanent, indwelling gift or blessing from the Father. This prophecy, made explicitly in Test Judah 24:2-3, is expressed in Test Levi 18 in other, synonymous terms: “from the temple of glory, sanctification will come upon him ... and the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him.” The divine glory and sanctification are images of the outpouring of the Spirit, as Test Levi 18:7 makes clear.

To this first effusion, however, there is added a second. Having received the Spirit himself, the Messiah will then bestow it upon the faithful, making of them his own "sons in truth" (*tois huois autou en alêtheia*). Again, the gift of the Spirit is affirmed explicitly in Test Judah, but in Test Levi it is couched in another, synonymous image: "he shall give the majesty of the Lord to those who are his sons in truth forever." As 18:11 demonstrates, the "majesty of the Lord" refers to the "Spirit of holiness," who empowers "his children" to overcome the power of Belial (or Beliar) and "to trample on wicked spirits."

This messianic outpouring of the Spirit upon the faithful "sons" or "children" has a double effect. On the one hand, it enables them to withstand the attacks of demonic powers that threaten to lead them into the Way of corruption and death. On the other, it guides them in the Way of truth and righteousness. The saints will "walk in the first and final decrees" of the Lord and be "clothed in righteousness" forever. *The function of Spirit, then, is to defend the elect against the forces of evil, while inspiring them to acts of moral rectitude, of "righteousness and truth."*

Rather than excise these messianic passages from Tests Judah and Levi as Christian interpolations, we can accept them as a further decisive element that prepared intertestamental Judaism for the coming of the Spirit-Paraclete. For this same twofold function characterizes the Spirit of Johannine tradition, who defends the Christian community against the deceptive teaching and immorality of the antichrists, while inspiring them to "walk in the light as He is in the light" (I Jn 1:7). On the other hand, the Fourth Gospel speaks more clearly and eloquently than any other Christian writing of a *double effusion*: the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Messiah (Christ) at his baptism in the Jordan (Jn 1:32, the only account that states the Spirit "rested" or "remained" upon Him, *emeinen ep' auton*, the characteristic Johannine expression for "indwelling"); and the sending of the Spirit by the Messiah to dwell within the faithful (Jn 15:26; 16:7; 20:22; cf 19:30).

From the point of view of a radical historicism that leads to a "theology of immanence," all prophecy is *ex eventu*, and passages such as those from Test Judah 24 and Test Levi 18 can only be understood as interpolations by a Christian hand. A different, equally radical approach, of course, would be to deny the historicity of the Gospel accounts altogether and

hold that they are artificial constructs based entirely on Old Testament and intertestamental Jewish messianic passages.

There is another way to read the evidence, however, one that admittedly requires a leap of faith. That is to discern in Israel's long history — and to a lesser degree in other ancient cultures as well — the presence of the living God, who progressively communicates through the revelatory activity of the Spirit knowledge of Himself and of His saving purpose, the “divine economy of salvation.”

This reality of God's person and activity forms an essential part of Israel's experience, as it does the experience of the Church. Read with eyes of faith, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, like the Dead Sea Scrolls and other “marginal” Jewish writings such as the Wisdom of Solomon, complement the revelation which is communicated through the body of Scriptures accepted as canonical. Together with the Pentateuch and classical prophecies, these intertestamental Jewish documents provide new and inspired insight into the working out of the divine will within the framework of changing historical and cultural circumstances.

Although many theologians today reject the notion, revelation is indeed “progressive,” adapted to the experiences of the people to whom God discloses Himself. Although these writings we are considering stand outside the canon or “norm” of accepted Scriptures, they can certainly be received, read and cherished by Christian people as marking a further stage in the ongoing process of divine revelation.

### (C) “*Spirit of Truth*” / “*Spirit of Perversity*”

Turning to the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves, we may begin with the key passage that deals with the teaching on the two Spirits, I QS 3:13-4:26.<sup>24</sup>

This portion of the Rule of the Community follows an introductory section that includes the initiatory rite for entering the Covenant, together with conditions for rejection of those who remain unclean or impure because of their refusal to accept purification through *required rituals* and *inner repentance*. Both are necessary. The ritual act is powerless to cleanse moral defilement unless it “seals” a genuine conversion and a sincere commitment to the Covenant-precepts. Such inner purification is accomplished through the action of the Spirit, when the initiate's flesh is

“sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water” as he submits his soul to the ordinances of God (3:8f).<sup>25</sup> The threefold purifying and atoning action of the Spirit recalls the petition of similar structure which forms the thematic center of the penitential Psalm 50/51:10-12.

*A*: It is through the *Spirit of true counsel* concerning the ways of man that all *his sins shall be expiated* (atoned for) that he may contemplate the light of life.

*B*: He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the *Spirit of holiness* (Holy Spirit) uniting him to his truth.

*A'*: (*H*)is *iniquity shall be expiated* (atoned for) by the *Spirit of uprightness and humility*.

This emphasis upon the expiation of sin through sprinkling, resulting from the cleansing activity of the Holy Spirit, alludes to the promise of Ezekiel 36:25, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.” In the theology of the Qumran Covenanters, the outward sins of the flesh received purification through ritual washing with water, whereas true expiation of inward, moral sin was accomplished by the Spirit of Holiness, received upon full initiation into the community. At the time of the Visitation, these two rites — which have been distinguished as a levitical water-washing followed by the Spirit-giving priestly rite<sup>26</sup> — would merge into a single eschatological initiation described in I QS 4:20f, “God will then purify every deed of man with His Truth...He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the Spirit of Holiness; like purifying waters He will shed [sprinkle] upon him the Spirit of Truth to cleanse him of all abomination and falsehood” (Vermes). The end-time promise of Ezekiel, “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you” (36:26), is fulfilled in the experience of Qumran by the purifying, atoning gift of God’s own Spirit of Truth.

This introduction brings us to the two-Spirits teaching of I QS 3-4, a remarkable passage that serves as a thematic outline of the whole of Qumran theology. Many attempts have been made to analyze its structure and pass judgment on its compositional integrity. While it has long been recognized that the passage is to some degree chiastic in form,<sup>27</sup> further examination of the language and movement of thought has indicated that



the present text is composite, with 4:15-26 representing a separate unit.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of content, the latter passage presents a spirit-dualism not unlike the Rabbinic teaching on the two "inclinations" (*yezer, diaboulion*) which inhabit in unequal portions the heart of every man. The former passage 3:13-4:14, however, appears to hold in unresolved tension two contradictory themes. As in the Gathas of Zarathustra, the Spirits of Truth and Perversity each have dominion over a separate class or "camp" of men. Yet this is coupled in 3:21b-25a with the qualification that evil among the sons of light (members of the community) is to be explained by the influence upon them of the Angel of Darkness (= the Spirit of Perversity). The cosmic or metaphysical dualism of the Iranian Gathas, represented in modified form by I QS 3:13-21a and 3:25b-4:14 (as by the War Scroll and other sectarian writings), is tempered by a concern to acknowledge and explain the presence of moral evil among the covenanters themselves. In 3:13-4:14, this concern is articulated by 3:21b-25a, which appears to be an interpolation into its present context. Excising this "excursus" as an extraneous element, inconsistent with the overall theme of the passage, we discover that 3:13-4:14 is a chiastically structured unit whose thematic center is 3:25b-4:1. Further analysis yields a similar structure for 4:15-26, of which 19b-23a serves as the conceptual focus.

*Introduction (3:13-17a)*: The Master (*maskil*, Instructor or Initiator<sup>29</sup>) shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess, the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation for chastisement, and the time of their reward. From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they accomplish their task without change. The laws of all things are in His hand and He provides them with all their needs.

A (3:17b-21a): He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two Spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the Spirits of Truth and Falsehood [*lit.* Perversity]. Those born of Truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of Falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light [= the Spirit of Truth] and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness [= the Spirit of Perversity] and walk in the ways of darkness.

B (3:25b-4:1): It is He who created the Spirits of Light and Darkness and

founded every action upon them and established every deed (upon) their (ways). And He loves the one everlastingly and delights in its works forever; but the counsel of the other He loathes and forever hates its ways.

*A' (4:2-14)*: These are their ways in the world for the enlightenment of the heart of man, and that all the paths of true righteousness may be made straight before him, and that fear of the laws of God may be instilled in his heart: [there follows the catalog of virtues]. These are the counsels of the Spirit to the sons of truth in this world.

And as for the visitation of all who walk in this Spirit, it shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light.

But the ways of the Spirit of falsehood are these: [there follows the catalog of vices] ... so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.

At the visitation of all who walk in this Spirit shall be a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God, eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions. The times of all their generations shall be spent in sorrowful mourning and in bitter misery and in calamities of darkness until they are destroyed without remnant or survivor.

(*tr. Vermes*)

The passage begins with an introductory address to the "Master" or "Instructor," concerning the "nature" or "generations" (i.e., the moral character) of men and the influence upon them of the "spirits" they possess, their consequent ethical behavior, and their final judgment or vindication at the visitation. Recalling Genesis 1:27f, it is affirmed that God has created man to have dominion over the earth. Stress is placed upon divine foreknowledge or predestination, as it is upon divine providence.

The first paragraph (*A*) then introduces the two Spirits of Truth and Perversity. It stipulates their origin in light or darkness, which marks the fundamental polarity in Qumran thought, and then proceeds to declare their dominion over two distinct and separate classes of men. *A'* spells out the "ways" of these two Spirits upon the earth, describing first the deeds and rewards of the sons of light, then those of the sons of darkness.<sup>30</sup>

The thematic center (*B*) recapitulates the entire thought of the passage, affirming that God created both Spirits according to His divine plan — implying a doctrine of strict predestination — and stating His attitude

toward each Spirit. Whereas He "loves" the Spirit of Light/Truth, His everlasting loathing is directed not against the Spirit of Darkness/Perversity as such (for this Spirit is also His creation), but against its "ways" and "counsel." This distinction, curiously overlooked by virtually all commentators, is a significant one. It brings the thought of the passage into line with Zoroastrian teaching, according to which Ahura Mazda created the twin Spirits, one of which chose evil and thereby set itself in eternal enmity against God. While the Qumran Spirit of Perversity was evil from its creation, and the element of choice is eliminated, God's hatred is directed not against it as such, but only against its influence upon men who are under its sway. The divine wrath, in other words, focuses not upon personal, created beings (Spirits or persons) but on their unrighteous behavior. The metaphysical dualism thus resolves into an ethical one, as it does in the first Johannine Epistle.

The shift from this notion of two distinct groups or camps of men, each subjected to one or the other Spirit, to the Rabbinic idea of two impulses or Spirits dwelling within each person, occurs in 3:21b-25a, and prepares for further development in 4:15-26.

*Excursus (3:21b-25a):* By the Angel of Darkness are the errors of all the sons of righteousness; and all their sins and iniquities and guiltiness and deeds of transgression are in his dominion according to the secrets of God for His appointed time. All their afflictions and the set times of their troubles are under the dominion of his hostility and all the spirits of his portion are set to trip up the sons of light, but the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth are the help of the sons of light. (tr. Leaney)

Members of the Covenant community are not exempt from moral corruption and personal suffering. The Angel of Darkness (the title is taken from the preceding verse and only here is set over against the Angel of Truth) is the direct cause of such affliction, "according to the mysteries of God." Nevertheless, the God of Israel, together with His Angel of Truth, aids the covenanters in their struggle towards light and life.

This theme is taken up and developed in 4:15-26 in a synthesis carefully worked out in chiasmic form, further suggesting that it was composed independently of 3:13-4:14. Here we follow the more accurate translation of A.R.C. Leaney.

*A (4:15-16a):* These Spirits constitute the history of all men; and in their

divisions all their hosts receive their heritage or their generations, and in their ways they will walk; and every deed of their activity is according to a man's *inheritance* of either great or small in their divisions, to times of eternity.

*B (16b-18a)*: For *God has established them in equal parts* until the last time and has set *eternal enmity* between their divisions: abhorrent to truth are the works of Perversity and abhorrent to perversity are all the ways of Truth. Fierce is the struggle between all their principles, for *they will not walk together*.

*C (18b-19a)*: But God in the secrets of His prudence and glorious wisdom has granted that there shall be a *period* to the existence of *Perversity* and at the fixed time of His visitation He will *destroy* it for ever.

*D (19b-23a)*: Then shall come forth for ever Truth upon the earth, for it has been contaminated with the ways of evil during the dominion of Perversity until the set time which has been decreed for judgment.

Then God in His Truth will make manifest all the deeds of man and will purify for Himself some from mankind, destroying all Spirit of Perversity, removing all blemishes of his flesh and purifying him with a Spirit of Holiness from all deeds of evil. He will sprinkle upon him a Spirit of Truth like waters for purification from all abominations of falsehood and his contamination with the Spirit of uncleanness.

Thus will upright ones understand knowledge of the highest and impart the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way; for God has chosen them for an eternal covenant and for them is all the glory of Adam.

*C' (23b)*: All *Perversity* (will be) *gone*. All deeds of treachery will be put to *shame*.

*B' (23c-25a)*: Until now shall the Spirits of Truth and Perversity contend and in the heart of man *will walk in wisdom and in folly*. According to a man's inheritance of Truth and Righteousness will he *hate Perversity*, and according to his heritage in the lot of Perversity he will do evil in it and so will *loathe Truth*. For *in equal parts God has established them* until the time which has been determined which is also for making new.

*A' (25b-26)*: And He knows the activity of their deeds in all the times fixed for them and allots their *inheritance* to mankind to know good or evil. And He bestows upon all living beings their lots, to live according to the Spirit in them at the coming day of visitation.

Here again, in contrast to 3:13-21a and 3:25b-4:14, the two Spirits carry on their struggle within *all* men. Although the Spirits have been allotted "in equal parts" to the created order, so that a balance is maintained between them until the visitation, God has bestowed them in *unequal portions* upon each individual (4:16). Thereby a man's deeds will



depend on the measure of his "inheritance" of each Spirit. If he possesses a greater measure of the Spirit of Truth, his works will be virtuous; if a preponderance of the Spirit of Perversity, then his works will be wicked.

Whereas the "excursus" of 3:21-25 seeks only to explain the presence of evil among members of the community itself, this passage (4:15-26) represents a synthesis of the two basic themes of 3:13-4:14, namely the presence of good and evil in every man, and the grouping of all men into two opposing camps, each of which is dominated by one or the other Spirit. If a man's primary inheritance is of the Truth, then he will belong to the camp of the good Spirit, and conversely, if his inheritance is primarily of Perversity, then he will belong to the division ruled by the evil Spirit. Thereby two very different themes — indeed, two fundamentally different dualistic perspectives — are drawn together and reconciled: the external opposition of classes of men, and the inner moral struggle within the heart of every man. In Johannine thought, a similar resolution appears in the First Epistle. There the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error or Deception hold dominion respectively over two distinct camps, the faithful and "the world"; yet evil also makes its inroads into the believing community, leading the author to utter moral admonitions with a decidedly "Qumranian" ring: "walk in the light," "do the truth," etc. (I Jn 4:6; cf 1:7; 2:4-6).

Opinion has tended to polarize regarding the origin of the two Spirits teaching. Most investigators of the Scrolls find here, as in Qumran literature generally, a cosmological dualism and consequent determinism which they attribute to Iranian influence.<sup>31</sup> Others find a purely ethical dualism with emphasis upon free will. The teaching of the Scrolls they see to be a natural development of themes already present in the Old Testament.<sup>32</sup> While sound arguments can be advanced for both views, parallels with the Gathas make it clear that Iranian thought bore heavy influence upon the Dead Sea sectarians, particularly in the dualistic passages of the Community Rule and the War Scroll. The most important parallels include the following:

Both the original Gathas and the Qumran Scrolls presuppose a fundamental monotheism, to which is subordinated a Truth-Lie/Light-Darkness dualism represented by two opposing Spirits. Cosmic reality, including mankind, is divided into two classes or divisions, each of which is under the lordship of one of these Spirits. The Spirit of Truth (Bounte-

ous Spirit) leads the righteous to Light and Life, whereas the Spirit of Perversity (Aggressive or Deceptive Spirit) leads his followers to eternal destruction. Each Spirit was created by God, who loves the one and hates the "works and counsel" of the other.

In both the Gathas and I QS the dualism can be described as "ethical" and "eschatological." The cosmic struggle between the two Spirits is ultimately waged in the heart of every individual, determining one's moral orientation and one's lot at the final judgment. In contrast to gnostic teaching, grounded in a Platonic anthropology, the flesh is not the source of evil but is merely the sphere of conflict. Flesh is not corrupt by nature, yet it is sinful and requires purification.<sup>33</sup> The variety of human spirits, and of works issuing from their influence, derives from possession by one of the two cosmic Spirits. The antagonism between the two is destined to last until the Visitation or Judgment, when the evil Spirit will be destroyed and Truth will arise victorious forever. The righteous followers of the Spirit of Truth will be purified (Gathas: at the Bridge of the Requirer; I QS: by the lustral purification of the Spirit<sup>34</sup>) of all stains of wickedness acquired under the influence of the evil Spirit. Their inheritance will be eternal bliss and blessings, while the wicked will perish in the flames of Darkness.

Furthermore, both the Gathas and I QS look forward to an eschatological age described as the "new creation" or the "new world."<sup>35</sup> In that end-time, the righteous will possess "the glory of the Man" (I QS 4:23), referring to the "new Adam" or "Anthropos" which has been plausibly traced to Iranian origins.<sup>36</sup> In both traditions the means to salvation is *knowledge*, which is an ethical category referring to true perception of the ways of righteousness, manifested by good works. Those works attest to the genuineness of personal faith and to the dominion of the Spirit of Truth over one's personal existence, a dominion that will lead to final healing and purification from sin.<sup>37</sup>

Thus we find in the two-Spirits passage of the Community Rule an uneasy juxtaposition of Judaic and Iranian ideas. The tension between, on the one hand, predestination and determinism as functions of a creation theology<sup>38</sup> and, on the other, freedom of the will and moral responsibility reflecting a "psychological" dualism,<sup>39</sup> remains unresolved. The interpreter's problems with the text arise largely from the apparently

inescapable, but eminently unfair conclusion that the wicked, predestined to live subject to the Spirit of Perversity and compelled to do his works, will nonetheless be judged and punished on the basis of those works (I QS 4:26) as though they were fully accountable for them. If the author(s) of the Rule could draw together in 3:13-4:26 such basically incompatible themes, however, it is because his/their major concern was not freedom and determinism, but the *conflict between Truth and Falsehood* which divides man from man, and man from himself. The criterion for determining which Spirit dominates a man's behavior, therefore, is not the commission of sins, for sin stains even the sons of righteousness, who must be purified at the Visitation by the Spirit of Truth. Rather, the criterion by which one is judged a follower of Truth is one's manifest *love of Truth* and *hatred of sin*. This is the meaning of 4:24, "According to a man's inheritance of truth and of righteousness will he hate perversity, and according to his heritage in the lot of perversity he will do evil in it and so will loathe truth." The man who loves Truth and hates sin has his *origin* in the source of Light (3:19), despite his lapses into evil ways. The converse holds for the one who "hates the truth." While this does not settle the free-will/determinism problem, it does explain how sons of righteousness can commit sin without being eternally condemned for it.

The point that needs to be stressed here, and which has led to such disagreement among interpreters as to the precise nature and origin of the dualism in I QS 3-4, is this: represented in I QS, I QM and I QH we have a spirit-dualism that was constructed upon *two basically incompatible traditions*. The Old Testament themes of individual freedom and responsibility, of a voluntary embracement or rejection of sin, and of divine grace bestowed in response to righteous behavior, rests uneasily beside the Iranian notion of a cosmological (or metaphysical) and ethical dualism in which the human heart is the battle ground upon which the two Spirits wage their ceaseless struggle for control. The matter is complicated by the fact that the dualistic theme itself is a composite of two distinct and originally independent traditions, one essentially *ethical*, the other *metaphysical*. According to the former, two spiritual forces or propensities (*yezer*) reside in the human heart and incline it toward good and evil. Here freedom of the will is preserved. The will (termed in Test Judah 20:1ff the "spirit of insight or understanding") exercises choice, thereby obeying one

or the other inclination without submitting itself wholly to it. This represents what German existentialist theology would call an *Entscheidungstheologie*, according to which one decides anew in every "ethical moment" whether to cleave to the good or to succumb to the temptation of the evil inclination.

In its original form the *yezer* theme involved simply the "evil inclination," the *yezer hara'*, which appears in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen 6:5; 8:21) and in Ecclesiasticus (15:14), as it does in Rabbinic writings (e.g., Pirke Aboth 2:15; 4:1). Here the evil impulse is not *intrinsically* evil and may be described as *hara'* only because of its power to tempt men to sin.<sup>40</sup> Precisely when and how the notion of a *good* inclination developed remains unclear.<sup>41</sup> There are too many missing textual links to do more than hazard a guess; but it seems probable that the *yezer* idea of the Old Testament and Wisdom tradition combined on the one hand with the doctrines of the two Spirits/Ways of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and on the other, with the Qumran teaching on the two Spirits to produce the *yezer*-dualism of Rabbinic thought. This stream of dualistic tradition is essentially ethical. Appearing in the Test XII, the DSS and Rabbinic writings, it is rooted in the Old Testament and received explicitly dualistic form under the influence of the ethical-eschatological dualism of Iran.

The second dualistic theme apparent in the Qumran documents can be characterized as metaphysical or cosmic. It derives apparently from the cosmological dualism of later Iranian religion in its Zurvanite form.<sup>42</sup> Even here the dualism is subordinated to an overriding monotheism, although the relationship between the two is more ambiguous than in the songs of Zarathustra. Whether this dualistic theme was introduced into Qumran directly or indirectly is impossible to determine. It is properly characterized as a "metaphysical" or "cosmic" dualism, however, depicting as it does the division of mankind into two separate classes of the righteous and the wicked, governed by one of the two Spirits.

It was the attempt to combine these two streams of dualistic thought with the monotheism of ancient Hebrew tradition that led to the ambiguity evident in I QS 3:13-4:26. While it is impossible to prove direct dependence of Qumran thought upon Iranian sources, parallels between the Scrolls and Avestan tradition are numerous and striking, and we may



safely conclude that the dualism characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic and the Dead Sea writings derived ultimately from that source.

Otto Betz has distinguished between a "spirit-teaching" and a "spirits-teaching" in the Qumran Scrolls.<sup>43</sup> The former refers to God's Holy Spirit, while the latter concerns the dualistic theme of the two spirits of truth and deceit, light and darkness. Is such a distinction tenable? On grounds of our earlier discussion, we would have to answer with a qualified affirmative. For Betz the decisive point is this: According to the "spirit-teaching," the line between good and evil is one that separates the human spirit from sin-prone flesh. Sin takes the form of willful acts committed against the precepts of Torah. According to the "spirits-teaching," however, the conflict is played out in the supernatural realm. In this case sin is a consequence of predetermined human nature and consists in the carrying out of evil works under the influence of the evil spirit. These two originally independent themes, deriving respectively from the Old Testament and from Iranian sources, cannot be finally isolated in the Scrolls. They appear more or less assimilated in several documents, and no formal attempt was made to synthesize or reconcile them. Therefore substantial evidence can be adduced to show that in the DSS the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth are identical.<sup>44</sup>

In sectarian theology, then, no appreciable distinction exists between the Spirit, the Holy Spirit (or Spirit of Holiness) and the Spirit of Truth. But this does not alter the fact that behind the pneumatology of the Scrolls there stand diverse and basically irreconcilable spirit teachings. Without trying further to isolate these various streams of tradition, we may consider briefly what the texts say about the nature and function of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.

The Damascus Document (CD) takes up and makes explicit an identification implied in later Old Testament tradition, particularly in the Book of Job.<sup>45</sup> In CD 5:11 and 7:4, the human spirit, which is subject to defilement by transgressing the Law, is called the "Holy Spirit" in man.<sup>46</sup> This identification of the human with the divine Spirit is ultimately grounded in the creation theme of Gen 2:7, where God breathes into Adam the breath of life. To the sectarians, as to the authors of I Enoch, God is the Lord of spirits (I QH 10:8). He creates every good and evil

spirit (I QH 1:8f; cf 13:8; I QS 3:25) as well as the human *ruach* (I QH 1:15; 4:31; 12:11f; 13:19; cf Test Naph 2:2).

Returning to I QS 3:13-4:26, we find certain specific functions ascribed to the Spirit of Truth. Created by the God of Knowledge, this Spirit is identified, as we have seen, with the "Prince of Lights," the "Angel of Truth" and the "Spirit of Holiness" (4:21, in the context of lustral purification at the eschaton). He has dominion over all the sons of righteousness (members of the Dead Sea community), offering them help together with God when they are led astray and struck down by the Angel of Darkness. His function, therefore, is to minister in this world, to illumine the minds of the righteous, and to inspire them to just conduct by placing in their hearts fear of the final judgment.

From the Spirit of Truth originate human spirits or counsels (psychological or moral attitudes) of humility, patience, compassion, eternal goodness, understanding, intelligence, and wisdom, which, taken together, elicit faith in God and in His works (compare the "fruits of the Spirit," Gal 5:22). Such faith is manifested as zealous fulfillment of divine ordinances and as love extended (exclusively) toward other members of the Alliance. The Spirit of Truth also purifies men from the stain of idolatry and inclines them towards the virtues of modesty, prudence, and "discretion concerning the truth of the Mysteries of Knowledge," referring to the sectarians' obligation to guard the esoteric secrets of the community. At the Visitation, those who "walk in the Spirit of Truth" will obtain healing, blessings and an eternal life of joy. At that time the "Truth of the world" — a synonym for the Spirit of Truth, poured forth for the final purification of the faithful in the endtime<sup>47</sup> — will arise forever. This appears to be the only passage in the Scrolls in which a strictly *eschatological* function is attributed to the Spirit.<sup>48</sup> A common Priestly motif, in which water and Spirit act together to purify and sanctify the righteous, it has its probable origin in Ezekiel 36:25-27.

In the dualistic passage I QS 3:13ff and throughout the Scrolls, the principal operations of the Spirit are *purification, revelation* and *sanctification*. Although purification and sanctification are often mentioned together as different aspects of the same work, there is evident in these writings a concept of movement or growth in the spiritual life. A member of the community is purified by the Spirit in order to receive divine

revelation, saving knowledge of the Mysteries of God. As in Old Testament prophetic teaching, the Spirit inspires the hearer of the Word to respond with obedience. Thereby the Spirit leads him in the "way of Truth" towards sanctification and perfection.<sup>49</sup> The relationship between the purifying, revealing and sanctifying operations of the Spirit becomes clearer in the light of their Old Testament background.

The Hebrew Scriptures speak of both a present and a future eschatological purification by the Spirit of God (Ps 50/51:10f; Ezek 39:29; cf 36:25ff). Water as a purifying agent is mentioned several times in Numbers (19:8f, 13, 20f; 31:23, "water for impurity"). Frequently Spirit and water appear together as co-agents of the final purification and blessing (Is 44:3; cf 32:15; Ezek 36:25ff; 11:19). Alone or in combination with water lustrations, the Spirit purifies novitiates and brethren of the Alliance and atones for their sin.<sup>50</sup> Thereby they become "sons of truth," who live in obedience to the divine will expressed in Torah.<sup>51</sup>

I know that man is not righteous except through Thee, and therefore I implore Thee by the Spirit which Thou hast given me to perfect Thy favors to Thy servant forever, purifying me by Thy Holy Spirit, and drawing me near to Thee by Thy grace according to the abundance of Thy mercies. (*I QH 16:11f, Vermes*)

The water rites referred to in the Qumran writings allude to the repeated lustrations practiced by the sect for the cleansing of sin. Despite certain superficial similarities, they are markedly different from the sacramental rite of Christian baptism. The Spirit is not conveyed to the believer through or in conjunction with the medium of water<sup>52</sup> either in the present (*I QS 3:6-10; 5:13; etc.*) or at the Visitation and in the last age (4:18ff). Nor is belief expressed here in a new birth such as found in the mystery religions or in John 3:5-6.<sup>53</sup> They do, however, provide an important and perhaps immediate background for the baptism of John the Forerunner: an eschatological baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and initiation into the New Israel.<sup>54</sup> The promise of *I QS 4:21*, then, has more than a coincidental relationship to the statement of the Baptist recorded in Mark 1:8 — "(God) will sprinkle upon him the Spirit of Truth like lustral water ..." and "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with (the) Holy Spirit."

The *revelatory* function of the Spirit is well attested in the later Old Testament and in intertestamental writings. The content of revelation is

described variously as knowledge and fear of God (Is 11:2), as truth or righteousness (Is 45:19; cf 59:21), and as wisdom (Pr 8; Wis Sol 7:7ff). In the Qumran Scrolls truth and knowledge are revealed through the divine Law. "Truth and knowledge" are in fact virtual synonyms of Torah and its proper exposition.<sup>55</sup> God reveals himself through Scripture, making Himself known by the Spirit, who gives "insight" or inspiration for correct interpretation.<sup>56</sup> Thus it is affirmed that the Spirit "enlightens the heart of man" (I QS 4:2; compare the prayer before the Gospel reading in the Byzantine liturgy: "Illumine our hearts, O Master who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge..."). In the Thanksgiving Hymns especially, revelation is a principal work of the Spirit, through whom God reveals to the psalmist (the Teacher of Righteousness?<sup>57</sup>) His "marvellous Mysteries" (I QH 1:21).

And I, gifted with understanding, I have known Thee, O my God, because of the Spirit that Thou hast put in me; and I have heard what is certain according to Thy marvellous secret because of Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast opened Knowledge in the midst of me ... (I QH 12:11ff)

Thou hast upheld me by certain truth, and in Thy Holy Spirit Thou hast set my delight ... (I QH 9:32)

Thou hast favored me, Thy servant, with the Spirit of Knowledge. (I QH 14:25; cf 13:18; 16:2f)

Because I know all these things I will utter a reply of the tongue, praying and entreating and turning back from all my sins, and searching Thy Spirit of Knowledge and clinging fast to Thy Holy Spirit, and adhering to the truth of Thy Covenant, and serving Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and loving Thy Truth. (I QH 16:6f; translations: Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

The Spirit "put into" God's people reveals knowledge of Torah which leads to appropriate ethical behavior. As in Old Testament teaching, the Spirit inspires the righteous man both to hear and to obey the divine Word. But in the experience of the Dead Sea Community the Spirit does not actually "abide in" man, effecting in him a spiritual regeneration, as it does in the more exalted passages of post-exilic prophecy. In the Scrolls, as in the Old Testament and Rabbinic thought, the Spirit is the source of prophetic inspiration (I QS 8:16; CD 2:12), but it is in no way associated with a mystical indwelling which leads to the spiritual union of man with God. Rather, man's relationship to God depends directly upon his obedi-



ence to the divine will as expressed in the divine Law. The Spirit, which leads community members toward the eschatological perfection of that relationship in the last age, reveals through Scripture the truth and knowledge necessary for life in the present. As in Johannine tradition, faith and moral comportment, belief and behavior, are inseparable. To *know the truth* is to *do the truth*. Revelation of divine truth through the Scripture is the foundation of ethics, the life of righteousness. The revelatory work of the Spirit, then, is inseparable from his sanctifying operation, by which revelation is "interiorized" as the ground of the moral life.

Purified by the Spirit and instructed in the Law, members of the Alliance walk in paths of righteousness toward sanctification and spiritual perfection. The Spirit is "poured out" by God to *strengthen* them and to *defend* them against their adversaries (I QH 7:6f). Human flesh, devoid of any strength of its own and constantly subjected to temptation, is made "firm" only in the Lord's Spirit: "The way of man is not established (made firm) except by the Spirit which God created for him..." (4:31, Vermes). Perfection is a pathway along which one moves from sinlessness to love for the brethren and for God (4:32; 14:24, 26). The guiding force along that pathway is the Spirit Himself, who leads the faithful toward sanctification by instilling in them fear of the Lord and of the final Judgment (cf I QS 4:2; I QH 1:21-23; 9:23). Yet the assurance of vindication turns the prospect of judgment into a source of joy (I QS 10:13). In I QH 16, the poet describes this movement toward sanctification as growth from sin to perfect fulfillment in truth of the covenant relationship with God:

Because I know all these things my tongue shall utter a reply. Bowing down and confessing all my transgressions, I will seek Thy Spirit of knowledge; cleaving to Thy Spirit of Holiness, I will hold fast to the truth of Thy Covenant, that I may serve Thee in truth and wholeness of heart, and that I may love Thy Name<sup>58</sup> ... I know that man is not righteous except through Thee, and therefore I implore Thee by the Spirit which Thou hast given me to perfect Thy favors to Thy servant for ever, purifying me by Thy Holy Spirit, and drawing me near to Thee by Thy grace according to the abundance of Thy mercies... Grant me the place of Thy lovingkindness which Thou hast chosen for them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments, that they may stand in Thy presence for ever. (I QH 16:6f, 11f, 13f; Vermes)

This splendid hymn has been appropriately called "the summit of the spiritual piety of Qumran."<sup>59</sup> More eloquently than any other passage of

the Scrolls, it celebrates the operation of the Spirit that leads from initial purification of sin, through revelation of true knowledge of God, and on to final sanctification which permits the righteous to stand forever in the divine presence. Once again the emphasis falls upon the unity of "knowing the Truth" and "doing the Truth." To adhere to "the truth of Thy Covenant" is to "serve Thee in truth" with a perfect heart.

According to Johannine tradition, the content of that truth is the very person of Jesus Christ, the revealing Word and Son of God. To the Covenanters of Qumran, of course, "truth" has a different meaning that reflects traditional Hebrew usage. As we shall point out in the final section of this study, however, it goes beyond that usage to signify the *content of revelation* communicated to members of the elect Community. Thereby it serves as a conceptual prototype of the eternal Logos who incarnates and makes known the fullness of divine Truth within the Church.

#### (D) "Truth" in the Theology of Qumran

The Hebrew word *emeth* originally meant something quite different from the Greek *alêtheia*, although our translations usually render each as "truth."<sup>60</sup> In typical Greek usage, truth is a *rational* category which signifies the intellectual apprehension of a relationship of correspondence between a fact and a statement about that fact. If a statement corresponds to a given reality, it is said to be "true." At a deeper level, truth implies an "unveiling," or "revelation," the word *alêtheia* being a compound of the privative *a* and the root verb *lanthanô*, "to be hidden, unknown, unseen." To speak the truth means to express for rational comprehension and evaluation the full nature of the fact or the matter in question. Insofar as it conceals an essential aspect of that fact or matter, a "half-truth" is no truth at all but is merely deception. For this reason *alêtheia* stands absolutely opposed not only to *pseudos*, "lie" or "falsehood," but also to *planê*, "deceit," "deception," or "error" (cf Test Judah 20; I John 4:1-6 and the opposition between the "Spirit of Truth" and the "Spirit of Deception/*planê*").

The Hebrew word *emeth*, on the other hand, originally denoted a *moral* quality of faithfulness, firmness and steadfastness, especially as predicated of Yahweh. In the prophetic writings, as we noted earlier, the

concepts truth and error also signify man's fidelity or infidelity toward God. Under foreign and especially Persian influence, the moral opposition between truth and error, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, gradually developed into a moral dualism rooted in the pre-exilic prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea, and particularly in the primitive belief in good and evil spirits that influence human behavior.

Throughout the Old Testament truth signifies, among other things, moral knowledge which is acquired by hearing the Word of God uttered by the Spirit through the mouth of the prophet. The Spirit may be described as a "Spirit of Truth" <sup>61</sup> insofar as it proclaims the true Word of the Lord. Under the influence of Persian thought, post-exilic prophecy identified the Word with divine revelation, and the Spirit became a circumlocution for Yahweh in his activity as revealer. Truth as expressed by the divine Word now played a major role as a powerful instrument of blessing and judgment. When the Jewish Wisdom figure assumed the functions of the Spirit and Word of post-exilic prophecy, truth in some contexts became synonymous with revelation. In this case, however, truth did not mean "reality" as such but rather signified expression of the divine will and purpose. The identification of truth with Torah, the revealed teaching of God, followed accordingly, as in Psalm 118/119 and Ecclesiasticus.

In cultures of the Ancient Near-East, truth (personified as *maat* or *asha*) expressed ethical responsibility and relationship. In the Gathas, as in the Old Testament, it denoted in particular a relationship of absolute trust and fidelity between God and His human creatures. Divine judgment was qualified as true because it was appropriate to the situation: it accorded with the breach of faithfulness caused by human sin. In meting out true judgment, God manifested his characteristic righteousness (*tsedeq*, *tsedaqah*).<sup>62</sup>

In the writings of the Dead Sea community the concepts truth, righteousness and justice are closely interwoven. Truth is predicated of God and His activity within the world: His works are truth (I QS 1:19; 10:17; I QM 13:2, 9, etc.) and righteousness (I QH 4:40). His precepts and judgments are likewise qualified as "true" ((I QS 1:15, 26, etc.). That is, they are dependable, just, appropriate. But more than that, their truth is derived from their source, which is God Himself. God's righteous

judgments and His revealed will for human behavior (Torah, the whole body of moral teaching which governs conduct toward God and neighbor) are true because they have their origin in Him who is the very embodiment of Truth: "Thou art truth, and all Thy works are righteousness..." (I QH 4:40; cf 13:18f).

Because the community as a whole has its source in God, it too can be described as "true" (I QS 2:24, 26 "the Community of truth"; cf 5:5f), and its members as "sons of truth" (I QS 4:5f; I QM 17:8; I QH 6:29, etc.). They are those who "do the truth," i.e., fulfill the commands of Torah (I QS 1:5ff; 8:1f; I QpHab 7:10-12 "the men of truth who observe the Law, whose hands do not slacken in the service of truth"). Expressions of this kind appear especially in dualistic contexts, where the "sons of truth" are set over against "sons of iniquity" or "sons of darkness" (I QS 3:21; I QM 1:1, etc.). Reflecting the eschatological conflict between Truth and Falsehood, Light and Darkness,<sup>63</sup> these titles make it clear that to the Qumran sectarians "truth" had acquired a cosmic aspect unknown in older Hebrew writings. In addition to the moral quality of faithful obedience, *emeth* signifies as well the ultimate vindication of God and His righteous followers in the End-time:

At the time of the Visitation [God] will destroy [Falsehood] forever. Then Truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the dominion of Falsehood until the appointed time of judgment, shall arise in the world forever. God will then purify every deed of Man with His Truth. (I QS 4:19f; Vermes)

A similar emphasis appears in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. There truth possesses the ethical value of *emeth* in the Old Testament and Dead Sea Scrolls: "do the truth," "abide in the truth," "true judgments," "way of truth," etc. In the prophetic writings of Israel (e.g., Is 59:14ff) there appears an implicit opposition between truth and unrighteousness which hardened into the rigid truth/lie // righteousness/unrighteousness dualism of the Test XII and DSS. We may recall that in the dualistic context of the later Avesta, truth (*asha*) as practiced by the pious was practically synonymous with obedience (*sraosha*). Divine revelation included a call for obedience which would recreate unity and harmony between the material and spiritual spheres by healing the rupture brought about by the Lie (sin). In the Test XII "doing the truth" preserves a state of righteousness which is free from sin (Test Iss 7:1-5; cf Test Ash 5:3; Test



Dan 1:3; 6:8-10). The moral life is characterized by an absolute either/or: truth demands total obedience, allowing no falsehood whatsoever (Test Ash 5:3f). As in the Qumran Scrolls (I QS 1:5-7; 8:2; I QpHab 7:10ff, etc.), obedience to the truth means obedience to the precepts of Torah (Test Rub 3:8; Test Ash 6:1). Those who cleave to the Lord's truth, or follow the way of truth, shall be made sons of truth by the "Spirit of grace."<sup>64</sup> One "does the truth" by exhibiting love for the brethren (Test Rub 6:9; cf I John 3:18), or, more comprehensively, by keeping the Law of the Lord (Test Ben 10:3). This is closely paralleled with "doing righteousness."<sup>65</sup> Again as in the Scrolls, "to do the truth" or "to perform righteousness" means to fulfill the demands of Torah. "Doing the truth," therefore, is the characteristic mark of the sons of truth, members of the believing community.

The terms *emeth* and *alêtheia*, however, cannot be simply identified with the content of Torah. Certainly in these late Jewish writings, truth retains its basic Hebrew meaning of God's faithfulness or trustworthiness, which elicits trust and obedience from His children. Mutual fidelity between man and God, given practical expression in the precepts of Torah, is the essence of their Covenant relationship. The sectarians believed that they alone possessed true revelation of the divine will and its accompanying promises. In the midst of a corrupt and rebellious generation, the community stood as a bastion of truth, a Community of God (I QS 1:12), a house of holiness for Israel (I QS 8:5). Its covenant relationship was maintained by the very fact that its members faithfully preserved the truth. Nevertheless, this does not simply mean that they possessed Torah, for the books of Moses and other Old Testament writings belonged to all Jews. Rather, it signifies that the elect of Qumran, and they alone, possessed the key to *correct interpretation* of Torah.<sup>66</sup> God reveals His truth in and through the Hebrew Scriptures, as He does through the writings of the sect. Such revelation, however, is vouchsafed only to the elect and explains why biblical commentaries, *pesharim*, *peshet*, played such an important role in the life of the community. It is by means of the inspired *peshet* that the divine Mystery<sup>67</sup> is explained, thereby revealing to the sectarians God's will and purpose for their existence in the End-time, which is understood to be the present age.

Divine truth is revealed by God to the community through the person

of the Teacher of Righteousness. He is in essence a Teacher of Truth, who defends true scriptural interpretation against the false exposition of the Man of Lies (I QpHab 2:1ff; 5:10f). The effect of his teaching is to lead members of the sect to observe righteous behavior in the midst of an evil and corrupt age, and thereby to prepare them to face the final Judgment.

The Mysteries (*raz*) or heavenly Secrets (*sod*) revealed by God through His Spirit can also be termed "true" or "truth": "truth of the Mysteries of Knowledge" (I QH 4:6); "Thy truth ... Thy wonderful Mysteries" (I QH 7:26f); "Thou hast confirmed the secret of Truth in my heart" (I QH 5:9; cf 11:4, 9f). The divine Mysteries or Secrets, then, are communicated as revelation to the "community of truth" and made known through correct exposition of Scripture. They pertain to the "divine economy," the teleological design of God for the course of history which will be fulfilled at the Visitation.<sup>68</sup> Closely related to Wisdom as disclosure of God's hidden plan for the salvation of the elect, Truth is the revelation and manifestation of divine reality itself. Therefore the psalmist praises and offers thanks to God,

for Thou hast enlightened me through Thy Truth. In Thy marvellous mysteries, and in Thy lovingkindness to a man of vanity, and in the greatness of Thy mercy to a perverse heart Thou hast granted me knowledge... Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord, and who is according to Thy Truth?... Yet Thou bringest all the sons of Thy Truth in forgiveness before Thee, to cleanse them of their faults through Thy great goodness, and to establish them before Thee through the multitude of Thy mercies for ever and ever. (I QH 7:26-31, *Vermes*)

In addition to its dualistic and eschatological aspects, Truth in the Scrolls has a *soteriological* purpose. As the disclosure and manifestation of divine Mystery, it enlightens the believer with the knowledge of God that leads from darkness to light and from death to life. "Truth" as the content of Mystery is in its essence, therefore, a term of *revelation*, signifying the saving purpose of God made known to the initiates through correct interpretation of Scripture.<sup>69</sup> The "truth of the Mysteries of Knowledge" is revealed to the elect by the Spirit of Truth (I QS 4:6). Hidden until the time of Judgment (I QH 9:24), that Truth will be finally revealed in eternal glory by the Spirit for all nations to behold (cf I QS 4:19ff; I QH 11:26; 16:1-10).

With this conceptual background, Pauline tradition could take up the theme of Mystery and apply it to the saving work of God in Jesus Christ,

hidden from the foundation of the world and revealed through the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:1-6), just as the evangelist John could proclaim the incarnation of divine Truth in the person of the eternal Logos (Jn 1:14, 17; 14:6). The apostolic writers, like the Teacher of Righteousness, understood by the term "truth" the mystery of God's saving love, concealed until the present eschatological age and revealed to the elect by the Spirit of Truth. Accordingly, the apostles could easily have made their own the Teacher's hymn of thanksgiving quoted in part above (I QH 16). For in their experience as well as in the experience of the Qumran Covenanters, God by the Spirit bestows upon the community of the faithful both knowledge and purification, enabling those who love Him and keep His commandments to dwell in His presence forever.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter (*parakleton*), to be with you forever: the Spirit of Truth. (*John 14:15f*)

## NOTES

1. Some of the older works on the discovery and significance of the Scrolls are still among the most valuable. See, for example, M. Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (London, 1956); and *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London, 1958); G. Vermes, *Discovery in the Judean Desert* (New York, 1956); K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (London, 1958); J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (Baltimore, 1958); J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London, 1959); F.M. Cross, Jr, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (New York, 1961); M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (New York, 1961); F.F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, 1964); G.R. Driver, *The Judean Scrolls: The Problem and a Solution* (Oxford, 1965); M. Black (ed.), *The Scrolls and Christianity. Historical and Theological Significance* (London, 1969). Most recent studies on the Scrolls have concentrated on specific texts, such as Y. Yadin's work on the recently published Temple Scroll. For translations of the major texts, see Burrows (above); A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Cleveland: Meridian, 1962) (good translation by G. Vermes; often highly questionable interpretations of the texts); and G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968).
2. See the overview by J.H. Charlesworth, "The Origin and Subsequent History of the Authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Four Transitional Phases among the Qumran Essenes," *RevQ* 10 (1980), 213-233. G.R. Driver's ambitious efforts (*The Judean Scrolls*) to prove that the Scrolls date from the late first and early second centuries A.D. and were produced not by Essenes but by a Zadokite group under the leadership of the Zealot Menahem (killed in A.D. 66, and identified by Driver as the Teacher of Righteousness), has never won acceptance. See W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, "Qumran and the Essenes: Geography, Chronology, and Identification of the Sect," in M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christianity*, p.11-25, who date the Teacher after c. 135 B.C. and the major literary activity of the Qumran Essene community in the period between 140 and 100 B.C.
3. In 1957, F.C. Grant, *The Gospels: Their Origin and Growth* (New York: Harper), could still entitle his section on the Fourth Gospel "the Gospel of the Hellenists." His otherwise valuable treatment suffers from inadequate attention paid to the Scrolls.
4. See F.-M. Braun, "L'Arrière-fond du Quatrième Evangile," in *L'Evangile de Jean* (Louvain, 1958), p.179-196; and "L'Arrière-Fond Judaique du Quatrième Evangile et la Communauté de l'Alliance," *RB* 62 (1955) 5-44; W.F. Albright, "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of John," in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology* (Dodd Festschrift) (Cambridge, 1964), p.153-171; W. Grossouw, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," *StCath* 26 (1951) 288-299, and 27 (1952), 1-8; and the following articles by K.G. Kuhn: "Die in Palästina gefundenen hebraischen Texte und das Neue Testament," *ZThK* 47 (1950), 119-211; "Die Sektenschrift und die iranische



- Religion," *ZThK* 49 (1952), 296-316; "New Light on Temptation, Sin and Flesh in the New Testament," in K. Stendahl (ed.) *The Scrolls and the NT*, p.94-113; and "Johannesevangelium und Qumrantexte," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica* (Cullmann Festschrift) (Leiden, 1962), p.111-122.
5. See Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, p.52.
  6. For the Greek text of Test XII, see R.H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford, 1908/1960); M. de Jonge, *Testamenta XII Patriarchum* (Leiden, 1964/1970); and esp. H.W. Hollander, H.J. de Jonge, and T. Korteweg, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Leiden, 1978). For critical introduction and text, see S. Agourides, *Diathekai tôn XII Patriarchôn* (Athens, 1973). For critical analyses and notes: R.H. Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London, 1908); his *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament II*, p.282ff; and H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I*, (New York: Doubleday, 1983), p.775-828 (good English translation with notes) — translations of the Test XII are taken from this version.
  7. Thus M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of Their Text, Composition, and Origin* (Leiden, 1953).
  8. See esp. M. Philonenko, *Les Interpolations chrétiennes des Testaments des Douze Patriarches et les Manuscrits de Qumrân* (Paris, 1960). The more obvious interpolations — of which there are perhaps ten or twelve in all — affirm the God-manhod of the awaited Savior or allusions to the crucifixion: "because God has taken a body, eats with human beings, and saves human beings" (T Sim 6:7); "against Christ, the Savior of the world" (T Lev 10:2); "although your sons will lay hands on him in order to impale him" (T Lev 4:4), etc.
  9. M.-A. Chevallier, *L'Esprit et le Messie dans le Bas-Judaïsme et le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1958), p.116ff, gives a cursory list of parallels which indicate the close relationship between Test XII and the DSS. Most important are 1) dualism; 2) Messiah is a transcendent, eschatological figure (Test XII: of Levi or Judah; DSS: of Aaron and Israel); 3) two inclinations or two spirits; 4) Belial (Satan) surrounded by his army of evil spirits; 5) fear and love of God, love of neighbor, are fundamental motifs; 6) an ethical dualism of sincerity (or simplicity) / lie (or deceit) complements the theological dualism. For a thorough discussion, see B. Otzen, "Die neugefundenen hebraïschen Sektenschriften und die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen," *StTh* 7 (1954), 125-157.
  10. See M. Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathustra*, p.28.
  11. Cf. Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, p.394ff, and W. Foerster, "Der Heilige Geist im Spätjudentum," *NTS* 8 (1962), 117-134.
  12. In addition to the passages noted earlier, suggesting that the motive for the Spirit's withdrawal was the sinfulness of the people (Ps 74:9; I Macc 14:41; II Bar 85:3), see also Tos. Sotah 13:2; Sot. 48b; Yoma 9b; Sanhed. 11a; and Strack-

- Billerbeck, *Kommentar* I, p.127; Moore, *Judaism* I, p.421.
13. E.g., Dan 5:11,14; 6:4 (holy) Spirit of ecstatic prophecy; Jub 25:14 spirit of righteousness (holy Spirit); Mart Is 1:7; 5:14 "his lips spoke with the Holy Spirit"; cf the association and identification of Spirit with Wisdom discussed above.
  14. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, p.296, note, gives further detail on demonology in the Test XII. Cf. O. Böcher, *Der johanneische Dualismus im Zusammenhang des nachbiblischen Judentums* (Gütersloh, 1965), p.27-39, on parallels between Qumran, Test XII and the Johannine writings, esp. regarding demonology. P.A. Munch, "The Spirits in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Acta Or* 13 (1935) 257-263, reduces *pneuma* in the Test XII to a psychological concept. While it may be said that the spirits reflect and inspire various psychological states, this kind of reductionism does violence to the texts by imposing upon them modern scientific categories.
  15. T Rub 2:1; 3:2,7; T Sim 3:1; 6:6; T Lev 3:3, *pneumata tês planês kai tou Beliar*; cf I QS 3:18ff, "Spirit of Evil/Perversity."
  16. *Pneuma tês alêtheias, pneuma suneseôs kai agiasmou*: T Lev 18:7; cf I QS 3:6-8; 4:21, where the Spirit sanctifies by purifying like lustral water.
  17. *Kai to pneuma tês alêtheias marturei panta kai katêgorei pantôn*.
  18. Translation modified from Kee; I have substituted the more literal "inclination" for his "mind-set," "disposed," etc.
  19. Didache 1-6, in the context of baptismal instruction; cf Barnabas 18-20. As H.C. Kee notes (*Testaments*, p.816, n.1), this ethical tradition is "anticipated in the choices set before Israel by Moses (Deut 30:15) and by Joshua (Josh 24:15). It is stated explicitly in Jer 21:8-14, and further developed in Sir 15:11-17 and in 2 En 30:15. In earliest Christian writings it is echoed in Mt 7:13-14, elaborated in EpBar 17 and Did 1; in post-apostolic literature it is a popular motif: AposCon 7.1; Clementine Homilies 5.7; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom* 5.5. Notable here is the effort to set authentic works of mercy over against merely external manifestations of piety."
  20. Some thirty years ago M.-A. Chevallier, *L'Esprit et le Messie*, p.125-133, defended this view with a careful analysis of the various components that make up these two passages. Although we do not accept his conclusion, his study of the relation between Spirit and Messiah is still valuable.
  21. T Reub 6:8; T Sim 7:2; [T Iss 5:7f]; T Zeb 9:8; T Dan 5:10f; T Naph 8:2-3; T Gad 8:1; T Ash 7:3 (excluding the probable Christian interpolations: "He shall come as a man eating and drinking with human beings"; and "God speaking like a man"); T Jos 19:11 (again excluding the Christian substitution of "[honor Levi and Judah] because from their seed will arise the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world, and will save all the nations, as well as Israel," for the probable original: "because from them shall arise the salvation of Israel"); and T Ben 11:2.

22. T Dan 5:7-13; T Naph 8:2-8; T Jos 19; cf T Sim 7:2; T Iss 5:7-8; etc., where the stereotyped prophecy of a coming savior from Levi and Judah sounds like a confessional formula.
23. Therefore we cannot accept the conclusion of A.J.B. Higgins, "The Priestly Messiah," *NTS* 13/3 (1967), 211-39, that the Test XII "are Christian in their present form" (p. 229). His attempt to demonstrate that intertestamental Judaism knew of no "priestly Messiah" leads him to attribute all evidence for such a belief in Test XII to a Christian source.
24. The scholarly articles that treat this subject are far too numerous to cite. Among older studies that retain particular value are the following (complete citation in the bibliography): K.G. Kuhn, "Die in Palastina..."; "Die Sektenschrift und die iranische Religion" (on Qumran parallelism and John; see also his "Johannesevangelium und Qumrantexte"; and R.E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles"); A. Dupont-Sommer, "L'instruction sur les deux Esprits dans le 'Manuel de Discipline'"; W.D. Davies, "Paul and the DSS: Flesh and Spirit"; F. Nötscher, "Geist und Geister in den Texten von Qumran"; P. Wernberg-Moeller, "A Reconsideration of the two Spirits in the Rule of the Community, IQS 3:13-4:26"; A. Anderson, "The Use of 'Ruah' in IQS, IQH and IQM"; H.G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in OT Imagery"; J.H. Charlesworth, "Dualism in IQS 3-4 and in the Fourth Gospel." See as well M. Burrows, *More Light on the DSS*, p. 280-284; E. Schweizer, "Gegenwart des Geistes," p. 488-493; D. Hill, *Greek Words*, p. 234-241; J. Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, p. 357-362, who treats esp. the early Patristic development of the two Spirits teaching; and H. Braun, *Qumran und das NT II* p. 250-265. For a useful annotated bibliography of Qumran studies from 1974-1984, see C. Koester, *BTB* XV/3 (1985), 110-120.
25. Translation from G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), p. 75. This is the most readable translation in English, and we have drawn primarily from it, using as well A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (tr. G. Vermes) (New York: Meridian-World, 1961), and A.R.C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966). This last study contains an excellent introduction to the Rule, together with a detailed commentary. Where none of these is cited, the translation is our own, from the Hebrew text of E. Lohse, *Die Texte aus Qumran*, Darmstadt 1964.
26. B.E. Thiering, "Inner and Outer Cleansing at Qumran as a Background to New Testament Baptism," *NTS* 26 (1980), 266-277; and his "Qumran Initiation and New Testament Baptism," *NTS* 27 (1981), 615-631.
27. See J. Licht, "An Analysis of the Treatise on the Two Spirits in DSD," *ScrHier* IV (1965), 88-100, with a schematic outline that divides the passage into three main paragraphs: 3:13-4:1; 4:2-14; and 4:15-26. A.R.C. Leaney, *The Rule*, p. 145, generally follows Licht's analysis.
28. J. Murphy-O'Connor, "La genèse littéraire de la Règle de la Communauté," *RB* 76 (1969), 541f; D.C. Allison, Jr., "The Authorship of IQS III,13-IV,14," *Rev*

Q 10 (1980), 257-268. Both scholars regard 3:13-4:14 and 4:15-26 as independent fragments interpolated into the original Rule at a late stage of composition. Allison offers sound evidence, on the basis of parallels with IQH (the Thanksgiving Hymns), that 3:13-4:14 was composed by the Teacher of Righteousness. J. Duhaime, "L'instruction sur les deux esprits et les interpolations dualistes à Qumran (IQS III,13-IV,26)," *RB* 84 (1977), 566-594; and "Dualistic Reworking in the Scrolls from Qumran," *CBQ* 49 (1987), 32-56, follows the analysis of J. Murphy-O'Connor and P. von der Osten-Sacken, according to which the passage developed in three successive stages: 3:13-4:14; 4:15-23a; 4:23b-26, "each one with its own characteristics and its particular view of dualism," ("Dualistic Reworking," p. 41). Duhaime isolates 3:13 (in its later form) and 3:18b-25a as additions developed in two steps, 3:18b-23a; and 3:13, 3:23b-25a. My reasons for adopting another view, based on the chiasmic structure of the passage, are given below.

29. The *maskil* is the one initiated who initiates others into revealed mysteries (cf Leaney, *The Rule*, p. 67, 72f). T.H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 43, thus renders 3:13, "This is for the man who would bring others to the inner vision."
30. The juxtaposition of titles is interesting here. Since Truth originates in a "fountain of light," the good Spirit can be called variously Spirit of Truth and Prince or Spirit of Light. Perversity, on the other hand, originates in a "fountain of darkness." Therefore the evil Spirit can be designated Spirit of Perversity and Angel or Spirit of Darkness. The expression "Prince of Light(s)" occurs elsewhere in extant Jewish writings only in a single verse of the Damascus Document (CD 5:18), where it stands opposed to Belial, referring either to Satan or to his envoy. Duhaime, "Dualistic Reworking," p. 54f, regards this verse as an interpolation into CD, adding a cosmic dualism to the original text. (Cf. 2 Cor 6:15, "What accord has Christ with Belial?" The passage 6:14-18 has often been regarded as deriving more or less directly from Qumran. See commentaries *ad loc.*) In IQS, however, the titles Prince and Angel appear to be equivalent to Spirit.
31. Kuhn, Dupont-Sommer, Albright, Burrows, May, Ringgren, *et al.* J.H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in IQS 3:13-4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," in his *John and Qumran* (London, 1972), p.76, distinguishes multiple types of dualism and rightly regards the dualism of IQS as "modified" rather than absolute.
32. E.g., Wernberg-Moeller; M. Treves, "The Two Spirits in the Rule of the Community," *Rev Q* 3 (1961), 449-452.
33. W.D. Davies, "Flesh and Spirit," p. 170f; E. Brandenburger, *Fleish und Geist, Paulus und die dualistische Weisheit* (Neukirchen, 1968), p. 42ff, 86ff. Brandenburger clearly recognizes the negative character of flesh in the DSS, but he correctly denies the presence of a spirit-flesh dualism in the Scrolls.
34. Note, however, that the work of purification is attributed by Zarathustra to the purging fire of judgment, whereas IQS regards it as the work of the Spirit of



- Truth.
35. IQS 4:25; Y. 30:9; cf Is 65:17; 66:22; I En 91:16; Acts 3:21; Rev 21:1ff.
  36. R. Reitzenstein, *Mysterienreligionen*.
  37. IQS 4:6; cf the "healer of existence" (*abum. bis*), Y. 31:19; 44:2; and "soul healing judge" (*abum. bis. ratum*), Y. 44:16.
  38. Cf. H.G. May, "Cosmological Reference"; and K.G. Kuhn, "Die Sektenschrift," who notes the similarity between IQS 3:13-4:26 and Yasna 30:3-5. This latter reads: "(3) The two primal-spirits, the twins, were, as it has been handed down in tradition (or revealed), the Better and the Evil in thought, word and deed. Between them the wise choose aright, but not so the foolish. (4) When these two spirits came together, they created the first Life and Non-Life and ordained that finally the Worst would fall to the share of the followers of falsehood, but the Best Mind (Vahishta Manah) to the followers of right. (5) Of these two spirits the Spirit of Falsehood [lit. the wicked one, *dregva*] chose to do the worst, but the Most Holy Spirit (Spenishta Mainyu), clad in the firm heavens, chose to do the right (*asha*, truth) and so, too, do they who with truthful deeds seek willingly to please Ahura Mazda." [Tr. H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), p. 78f.]
  39. Wernberg-Moeller, "Reconsideration."
  40. See G.F. Moore, *Judaism I*, p. 480.
  41. Moore, *ibid*, attributes the origin of the good inclination (*yezer tob*) to Rabbinic exegesis of Gen 2:7, where the anomalous spelling with two yods was taken to signify two inclinations. This can at most be regarded as an attempt to establish biblical justification for a teaching already developed on other grounds. An ethical dualism is not entirely foreign to the OT, as indicated by passages such as Deut 30:15-20 ("I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil"; cf Jer 21:8, "the way of life and the way of death"); Ps 1, contrasting the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked; and Prov 2:13, "the paths of uprightness" and "the ways of darkness." The opposition between a "good" and "evil" impulse could easily have developed out of this conceptual background, although the most decisive influence upon the *yezer* theme still seems to have been the Iranian Spirit-dualism.
  42. H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, p. 79; J.H. Charlesworth, "Dualism," p. 87-89.
  43. *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (Tübingen, 1960), p. 143ff.
  44. W. Foerster, "Der Heilige Geist im Spätjudentum," *NTS* 8 (1962), p. 128ff. J. Coppens, "Le Don de l'Esprit d'après les textes de Qumran et le quatrième évangile," in *L'Évangile de Jean* (Paris, 1958), p. 213ff, points out that the Spirit in IQS 3:6-8 has no article and is not specifically linked to God; therefore "nothing proves that we must understand this to be a reference to God's Holy Spirit." This passage, however, attributes to the Spirit functions which elsewhere (esp. in 3:13-4:26 and in IQH) are unquestionably those of the Holy Spirit. The problem of distinguishing between the Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and the Holy

Spirit is one of tradition-history rather than of sectarian pneumatology.

45. Job 27:3; 33:4; 34:14f (see above).
46. Cf. Betz, *Offenbarung*, p. 126ff.
47. See W.D. Davies, "Flesh and Spirit," in *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 172-174.
48. Unless IQS 9:3ff, the "institution of the Spirit of Holiness," is to be so understood. Cf. Davies, *ibid.*
49. Contrary to Coppen's view, "Le Don de l'Esprit," p. 212, 219, the final stage in the process of sanctification is not "union with God." Passages such as IQH 16:11f and 18:27-29 signify merely the indwelling of the Spirit which establishes the covenant-relationship between the sectarians and God, whereby the faithful "stand in the everlasting places where shines the eternal light of the dawn."
50. J. Schreiner, "Geistbegabung in der Gemeinde von Qumran," *BZ* 9 (1965) 177, argues that Spirit and water never work together as agents of purification. Twice Spirit and water are mentioned in conjunction with purifying rites: IQS 3:4-12 and 4:20-26. In the latter case, the Spirit replaces the water rites in the endtime: "the Spirit of Truth (will) gush forth like lustral water." Schreiner maintains that water and Spirit are contrasted in 3:4-12 rather than joined as cooperative agents. He does not support his argument exegetically except to note that elsewhere it is God Himself who purifies (IQS 11:14; IQH 1:32; 3:21; 4:37; 6:8; 7:30; 11:10, 30; 16:12). B.E. Thiering, "Qumran Initiation," p. 619f, makes a similar distinction between the "flesh-washing" and the "Spirit-giving (in the present era)" in IQS 3:6-9. While such a distinction may hold elsewhere in the Scrolls, this passage clearly refers to the purification by Spirit and water in the present age, granted to members of the Community who adhere to "all the precepts of God." That is, both Spirit and water cleanse the repentant convert from sin, and the passage 3:6-9 is best read as the one "proof-text" in which Spirit and water are explicitly linked as agents of purification. Water rites are the standard means of purification in the sect; and elsewhere the task of purifying or cleansing from sin is specifically ascribed to the Spirit as God's instrument (IQH 16:11f). Although the water rites are not sacramental and do not bestow the Spirit (or serve as the external, ritual complement to that bestowal), the sectarians apparently believed that God, operating through the agency of His Spirit, rendered the rites efficacious. This link between Spirit and water is an important one, particularly for the interpretation of I John 5:8, where the "three witnesses" to Christ are Spirit, water and blood.
51. IQS 3:6f; 9:3ff; IQH 3:21; 7:6; cf 6:8; 11:10ff. R. Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament*, (New York: Herder, 1965), p. 124, states with regard to IQS 9:3f, "We do not seem far from the view that the community is 'a temple of the Holy Spirit' (I Cor 3:16; Eph 2:22); the ideas of II Cor 6:16 or I Pet 2:5, 9 bear unmistakable resemblance to IQS 8:5f" ("the House of holiness for Israel"). See his article, "Die 'Anbetung in Geist und Wahrheit' (Joh. 4:23) im Lichte von Qumran-Texten," *BZ* 3 (1959) 90f, on IQS 9:3-5; also O. Betz, *Offenbarung*, p.

- 120ff.
52. As Wernberg-Moeller contends, "Two Spirits," p. 439.
  53. F. Nötscher, "Heiligkeit," p. 170, n. 107, states regarding the relation of Qumran lustrations to the Johannine baptism: "There (Jn 3:5ff) water is not merely an image, and in Qumran purification is not yet rebirth."
  54. For a comparison of the Essene rite compared with Johannine and other forms of Christian baptism, see in addition to the articles of Charlesworth ("Dualism") and Thiering the discussion by M. Black, *Scrolls*, p. 92-101.
  55. O. Betz, *Offenbarung*, p. 53-60.
  56. See F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).
  57. G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen, 1963), discusses the various hymns of which the Teacher is the probable author; see esp. p. 168-177. For the role of the Teacher in revelation, see O. Betz, *Offenbarung*, p. 61-68; and D. Allison, "The Authorship of I QS III, 13-4:14." As to the identity of the Teacher, H. Burgmann, "Wer war der 'Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit'?", *Rev Q* 10 (1981), 553-578, concludes that the question cannot be answered on the basis of presently available evidence.
  58. The reading here is conjectural. Vermes reads "Thy Name," whereas Dupont-Sommer supplies "Thy truth."
  59. G.T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition*, (New York: Paulist, 1976), p. 121.
  60. For important studies of "truth" in Jewish scriptures and its bearing on Johannine theology, see R. Bultmann, "Untersuchungen," and the articles by Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, *TWNT* I, p. 233-251; and C.H. Dodd, *Interpretation*, p. 170-178, who argues that the Johannine term *alêtheia* is derived from the Platonic conception of ultimate reality. For the meaning of *emeth* in the DSS, see F. Nötscher, "'Wahrheit' als theologischer Terminus in den Qumran-Texten," in *Vom Alten zum Neuen Testament* (Bonn, 1962), p. 112-125; R. Schnackenburg, "Anbetung in Geist und Wahrheit"; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth: Paul and Qumran," in *Paul and Qumran* (London, 1968), p. 179-230; and I. de la Potterie, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, tomes I & II (Rome, 1977), p. 89f, 600f and *passim*.
  61. Recall, however, that this title does not appear in the OT, but only in Judaism after extensive contact with Persian (Chaldean) religion during the exile.
  62. Of equal importance is the OT association of God's truth with His gracious covenant-love (*chesed*, often rendered "lovingkindness"). In Ps 57:3f, for example, the psalmist takes comfort in the conviction that God, acting as his defender, will send forth "mercy and truth" (*chesed* | *eleos* || *emeth* | *alêtheia*) as powerful instruments of His salvation. The term *chesed* is frequently translated by *charis* ("grace") in the LXX, suggesting that the "grace and truth" which came through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17) fulfill OT messianic expectation: they, rather than the "law

(which) came through Moses," are the true means of salvation. R. Bultmann, "Der religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum JohEv," p. 33, n. 83, has suggested that the apparent hypostatization of *chesed wa emeth* in later OT writings, and accordingly *charis kai alêtheia*, are due to Persian influence, corresponding respectively to Vohu Manah and Asha.

63. Cf. I. de la Potterie, *La Vérité*, vol. II, p. 600 and n. 14.
64. T Rub 3:8f; T Jud 14:1; T Iss 7:5; T Ash 5:4; 6:1; T Jos 1:3; and T Jud 24:3; T Lev 18:8.
65. T Lev 13:5; T Gad 3:1, where doing righteousness results from obeying "words of truth." Cf. the close relationship of *tsedeq* and *emeth* throughout the Scrolls (IQH 1:30; 4:40; 7:14; 11:7; IQS 4:2; 11:14; IQSb 3:24; CD 3:15, etc.) and the parallelism between I Jn 1:6 and 2:29; 3:7, 10. In T Ben 10:3 a variant of "do the truth" reads "do righteousness," and each stands in parallel construction with the admonition to "keep the Law of the Lord and his commandments."
66. O. Betz, *Offenbarung*, p. 53-60.
67. Cf. F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, ch. 1. The term *raz* (rendered in the LXX by *mysterion*, "mystery") is of Iranian origin; it must be interpreted by divine illumination in order to become intelligible: e.g. Dan 2:30; 4:9.
68. See H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, p. 60-63; and esp. R.E. Brown, "The Semitic Background of the New Testament *Mysterion*," *Bib* 39 (1958) 426-448, *Bib* 40 (1959) 70-87; and "The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of 'Mystery,'" *CBQ* 20 (1958) 417-443.
69. For fuller discussions of the revelatory function of truth in the Scrolls, see J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth," p. 186-202, 225-228; and J. Becker, *Das Heil Gottes* (Göttingen, 1964), p. 155ff.



## Conclusion

To conclude this study, we can summarize our findings and briefly evaluate their significance for Johannine pneumatology.

By examining individually the various strata of Old Testament tradition, we traced the growth of the Hebrew concept of Spirit from earliest times through the post-exilic period. Throughout the Ancient Near-East, as in Israel itself, Spirit was perceived as a mysterious divine power, closely associated with the natural phenomenon of wind and the life-force, breath. This association was an obvious and inevitable one, based upon experience. Primitive peoples first observed the significance of breath as a life-force and beheld the power of the wind, conceiving it to be "cosmic breath." Then they transferred the idea to their anthropomorphic picture of the gods. Consequently, the languages of the Ancient Near-East, like Greek, have only one term to express what we distinguish as "breath," "wind" and "spirit."

The Egyptian *ka*, which was originally a physiological concept, assumed theological significance as the divine power that creates and sustains all things. In a similar way, the human seed or seminal fluid was first recognized to be a creative agent, then its role too was projected into the realm of divine life and activity. Human words possess power as externalizations of the breath or life-force. A blessing or curse is effective only because it is the concrete expression of the more fundamental "spirit" or breath which bears it. The words of anthropomorphized deities, therefore, were powerful, creative instruments which both expressed and effected the divine will within the course of human history.

Egyptian religion depicted "spirit," "word" and probably "seed" in creative roles long before similar notions appeared in Babylonian and Israelite religions. Sumero-Akkadian mythology also recognized the semi-independence of the word and attributed to it, as to *sharu*, a creative power. The capricious, destructive force of the wind embodied a degree of mystery which quite naturally led the primitive mind to imagine its divine

origin and to give mythological expression to it. Just as the breath bears human words, so wind, as the cosmic spirit, bears divine words in the form of commands and judgments.

The Hebrew *ruach* embodies many characteristics common to the Egyptian *ka* and the Babylonian *sharu*. Even in ancient tradition, which depicted *ruach* as a divisible charismatic substance or fluid, it inspired select persons to speak the Word of Yahweh. As "wind" it defended the people against hostile neighbors and directed the course of events within their salvation-history. This primitive soteriological function was complemented by an equally primitive eschatological role as bearer of judgment. Especially with the classical Hebrew prophets, this role was assumed by the Word of God, which reveals His presence within world history and brings chastisement, victory and blessing to mankind (cf Is 5:24f; Ps 107:20; 130:5).

From the early idea of *ruach* as divine, charismatic power that sporadically fills national heroes, prophets and the messianic king, there developed in the post-exilic period the understanding of Spirit as the abiding divine presence which indwells and blesses the people as a whole. Yahweh is a self-revealing God, who makes Himself known in and through His Spirit. The holy Spirit of the holy God bridges the gulf between the divine and human spheres, instructing God's children in the Truth and leading them to repentance and faithful obedience. A two-way movement exists between God and the human person, the one reaching out in the Spirit to fulfill His promises to His people, the other responding in faithfulness (*emeth*) to divine covenant-love (*chesed*). The Holy Spirit thus serves as mediator between the people and God. It sanctifies the elect by actualizing in their midst the presence of their Redeemer and by instructing them in "truth," thereby granting them moral knowledge communicated through the prophetic Word. Stated as a formula, *the divine Word is revelation, mediated by the Spirit and spoken by the prophet*.<sup>1</sup> In the post-exilic period especially, Spirit is the inspirational power behind the Word as well as bearer of it. He<sup>2</sup> serves as the source of prophetic utterance and as the sanctifying agent of divine grace which enables persons both to hear God's Word and to obey it.

The closest parallel to the Hebrew concept of Spirit as defender and sanctifier of the people, and mediator of divine revelation, is found in

Iranian religion, especially in the Gathas and in certain portions of the so-called Younger (later) Avesta. But as we have pointed out, the parallel remains largely a formal one. Just as the Babylonian idea that the divine Word inspires men to "truth and justice" may have its origin in the theological reflection of Israel's prophets, so we must consider it probable that many parallel themes between the Old Testament and later Avesta originated with the Hebrews. Attempts to prove that Zarathustra himself was directly influenced by Hebrew thought, however, have never really been successful, and we may safely attribute to his songs a high degree of originality. His dualism, of course, is derived from his Indo-Iranian heritage. The Hebrew belief in false or lying spirits may have been influenced in post-exilic times by this ancient oriental dualism, but it owes far more to the personal experience of moral tension between truth and lie, inspired prophecy over against false prophecy, which dates from the earliest period of Israelite history.

Nevertheless, in the figures of Spenta Mainyu, Vohu Manah and Sraosha, we find remarkable similarities to the Spirit as depicted in exilic and post-exilic Hebrew prophecy, as well as in later Judaism and the apostolic writings of the early Church. The first two, Holy Spirit and the Good Mind, function as creative agents of the divine thought and as mediators of revelation through the prophetic words of Zarathustra. They represent and teach Truth (*asha*) which is the principle of cosmic harmony and the moral bond of unity between God and humanity.

Iranian tradition goes farther than does the Old Testament in representing the Holy or Bounteous Spirit as a "Spirit of Truth." Yet this may be attributed to its dualistic perspective which is all but unknown in Hebrew thought prior to the third century before Christ. In later Avestan tradition, Spenta Mainyu and Vohu Manah recede to the background to be replaced by Sraosha. (A similar process occurs in late-Judaism, as Spirit and Word withdraw from the people's religious consciousness to be replaced by the personified figure of the divine Wisdom.) Originally the principle of obedience, Sraosha is now cast as the Incarnate Word and the mediator between God and humanity. That is, he appears as both *bearer* and *content* of divine revelation. The "pious master of Truth," Sraosha instructs the faithful in the true religion, meaning fidelity to the one God and to his cult, and unites them with God. In addition, he defends the

faithful against the Lie, the cosmic principle of deception and disharmony.

Formally, these Avestan figures clearly stand behind the Hebrew concept of Spirit as the sanctifying mediator of the divine Word. During the period of exile and in the century or two following it, Judaism was directly influenced by Iranian thought and assimilated many of its most profound spiritual insights concerning the being of God and His relations with the created world. Missing from the Gathas and later Avesta, however, is the profound insight regarding sin, guilt and the imperative of repentance which so deeply characterizes Hebrew anthropology. Missing as well is the powerful theological vision of the Old Testament which knows Yahweh to be a God of wrath and judgment, whose righteousness is tempered by grace and love. The saving work of the Spirit, guiding the pilgrim people and manifesting among them the presence of their Covenant-Lord, is theologically more mature in Israel than in Zoroastrian thought. And later Jewish eschatology, centered upon the theme of redemption through corporate or vicarious individual suffering, is far richer in its historical realism than is the Iranian expectation of the eschatological savior and final judgment at the Bridge of the Requirer.

As we saw in Part II, post-exilic Judaism adopted and transformed many elements of Zoroastrian teaching. Nevertheless, it managed to assimilate them with its own religious heritage in such a way as to preserve intact the distinctiveness of Hebrew thought. Theological motifs drawn from this rich and complex heritage were variously woven into Wisdom and apocalyptic speculation, the ethical and eschatological dualism of Qumran, etc. Just as the early Church would later make use of its own complex cultural and spiritual heritage to express theologically the meaning of the person and mission of Jesus, together with its own self-understanding, so Israel drew upon traditions of the ancient Orient in order to express its faith and its hope. In each instance, however, the core of the life and faith of the chosen people remained the unique revelation granted to them by the Spirit of their Covenant-Lord.

In post-exilic Hebrew prophetic tradition, the Spirit proclaims the life-giving Word of God within the Israelite community. His chief function is twofold: to reveal the "truth" (which denotes both the divine economy and God's faithfulness to His covenant promises) and to lead



the people individually and corporately toward salvation in the new, messianic age. This *revelatory-soteriological role* is essentially eschatological: the Spirit actualizes the New Covenant in the end-time by sustaining, renewing and instructing the remnant, thereby creating and maintaining their communion with the Covenant-Lord.

During the intertestamental period, when the Spirit had apparently abandoned Israel in response to the people's continued rebellion against God, the dual revealing and saving function of Spirit and Word was transferred to the hypostatized figure of divine Wisdom. Egyptian mythology had already hypostatized Understanding (Sia), Word (Hu) and Truth (Maat). The goddess Maat, like the Iranian Asha, personified justice and righteousness in human conduct and, by extension, order and harmony within the cosmos. In Babylonian religion the god Kettu also personified Truth and Righteousness. He stood in close parallel with Sharu, breath or wind, the bearer of the divine Word or revelation. Finally, we have seen how the various Spenta figures of Iranian religion served as revealing agents of the high god Ahura Mazda. The Holy or Bounteous Spirit (Spenta Mainyu), acting through the Good Mind (Vohu Manah), teaches *asha* or Truth, which is saving knowledge of the divine will and purpose within the life of the faithful people. Together, Spenta Mainyu and Vohu Manah dwell within the faithful, leading them towards salvation and vindication at the last judgment.

The revelatory-soteriological function of Spirit in late Hebrew prophetic tradition closely parallels the various interrelated activities of the Iranian Spentas. Both the Spirit of Yahweh and the Avestan Bounteous Spirit play a major eschatological role, one which was never assumed by personified Wisdom. Accordingly, the revelatory and saving work of Wisdom is restricted to the present age and is never associated with corporate regeneration or the New Covenant of the age to come. As the embodiment of Spirit and Word, Wisdom was eventually identified with the prophetic Spirit (as in Wisdom of Solomon), as well as with revelation or truth, and with Torah.

Especially in the Wisdom Psalms, the divine Sophia performs a *teaching* function, instructing the faithful in the true *gnôsis* which is "fear of the Lord" and obedience to His will as it comes to concrete, practical expres-

sion in the Law. The Lord Himself teaches Wisdom or knowledge of the Law (cf Ps 93/94:10ff, where *gnôsis* = *nomos* = *alêtheia*). In Wis Sol 10 (cf Is 63) Wisdom assumes the key role in Israel's salvation-history, leading the faithful community along the way of righteousness while defending the people against their enemies. Although never an eschatological figure in the proper sense of the word, by the first century B.C., Wisdom had assumed the functions of Spirit (the inspirational power), Word (the vehicle), and Truth (the content of divine revelation). Her role, therefore, was primarily that of a teacher or instructor in the Law. It remained for the Qumran sectarians to recover the eschatological significance of that teaching and to attribute to the Spirit of Truth the dual function of revealer of Truth and sanctifier of the remnant in preparation for the Visitation at the imminent end of world history.

Our survey of Greek and Hellenistic Jewish sources (Philo, the Mystery Religions, the Hermetic Corpus) pointed out the marked differences in concept between the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach*. Whereas *pneuma* was originally an immanent, natural, physical or psychological force, *ruach* (especially in prophetic tradition) signified divinity itself, the presence in history of the transcendent holy God. Although there is some slight indication in the Hermetica that *pneuma* was understood to function as an inspirational source of divine revelation (e.g., CH 1:30; 1:5, the "pneumatic word"), it was never conceived as a permanent, indwelling mediator of revelation. *Ruach*, on the other hand, gradually developed from a capricious inspirational *dynamis* or charismatic power in primitive Hebrew thought into the indwelling bearer of the divine Word. Thus *ruach* became a virtual synonym for Yahweh in His act of self-disclosure. In the writings of Philo we find an impressive attempt to draw together the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach*, but the synthesis remains incomplete because the two spirit concepts are basically incompatible.

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Dead Sea Scrolls there appears a far more successful synthesis, this time between Old Testament and Iranian teachings on the nature and function of Spirit. The ethical-eschatological dualism of the Gathas — according to which *asha*, righteousness and truth, opposes on a cosmic scale *druj*, unrighteousness and lie — stands behind both the *yezer* dualism of Ecclesiasticus and Test Judah (where the two spirits are in effect opposing, inherent

“impulses”) and Rabbinic teaching on the one hand,<sup>3</sup> and the spirit-dualism of the Qumran Rule, War Scroll and Thanksgiving Hymns on the other. The Scrolls, however, are a heterogeneous collection of such elements as community instructions, biblical interpretations, psalms, and forecasts of apocalyptic drama, which stem from different authors and different periods. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that traces of different and conflicting spirit-traditions appear in the various documents.

In the thought of the Dead Sea community, however, the titles “Holy Spirit,” “Spirit of the Lord,” and “Spirit of Truth” represent one and the same divine Spirit which reveals true knowledge of Torah and leads the faithful to perform works of righteousness in preparation for the coming Visitation. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs as well as in the Scrolls, the Spirit of Truth is a supernatural power of righteousness that inexorably opposes the Spirit of Error or Perversity, the transcendent power of deception or evil. This spirit-dualism takes two different and ultimately irreconcilable forms in the Scrolls. Either humanity is divided into two warring classes, each of which is predestined to live under the dominion of one or the other Spirit; or else both Spirits dwell within the heart of each individual, struggling one against the other for mastery of the human will. Analysis of the chiasmic structure of I QS 3:13-4:26 revealed an attempt to reconcile these two themes in 3:21b-25a and 4:15-26. While the former passage interrupts the movement of its surrounding context to explain the workings of the evil Spirit even within members of the Qumran congregation, the latter focuses upon the final vindication of the faithful at the Visitation, when Truth “shall come forth forever upon the earth” and the purifying Spirit of Truth will cleanse away all defilement caused by the Spirit of Perversity.

Throughout these pre-Christian Jewish documents, the function of the divine Spirit — depicted as Spirit of Holiness or Spirit of Truth — can be generally characterized as both *revelatory* and *soteriological*. The Spirit purifies members of the community so they can receive revelation through correct, Spirit-inspired interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures and particularly of Torah. Once the faithful have acquired saving knowledge of the divine will and economy, the Spirit progressively sanctifies them in preparation for their participation at the eschatological banquet, prophetically described in I QSa, the appendix to the Community Rule.

As in Old Testament prophetic tradition and in Iranian religion, this revealing, saving activity of the Spirit constitutes a single work with a single purpose. By revealing the Word of God and inspiring the faithful to adhere to it, the Spirit leads the community towards life in the New Age.

A great deal of attention has been given over the years to the problem of the gift of the Spirit according to Qumran thought.<sup>4</sup> Much of the controversy over this question has been due to the attempt by interpreters to find a uniform teaching in the Scrolls. As a cursory reading of the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles makes clear, neither inter-testamental Judaism nor the New Testament presents a single, unambiguous description of the bestowal of the Spirit upon the individual or the community as a whole. We noted earlier that unlike Christian baptismal experience, the Spirit in the Qumran writings is not bestowed through the purificatory water-rites. Nor is an effusion of the Spirit associated with the call and mission of the Messiah, as it is in Isaiah 11 and the Gospel scenes of Jesus' baptism.

In the experience of the Dead Sea congregation, however, there appear to be several moments in the believer's life when the Spirit is bestowed as a divine act: at birth (the natural human spirit which in CD is identified with the Spirit of God); upon entrance into the community (I QS 2-3); during one's life in the community when the Spirit reveals saving *gnôsis* and sanctifies the believer "in the Truth"; perhaps independently in the experience of the Teacher of Righteousness, as a charismatic, inspirational revealer of Truth (as suggested by I QH 7:6; 17:26; and perhaps 16:6-12, referring to an outpouring on the entire community); and finally at the Visitation, when the Spirit of Truth will gush forth like lustral water to purify the elect for salvation and to destroy forever the "Spirit of Defilement" (I QS 4:18-22; cf Ezek 36:25-27).

The Spirit of the Dead Sea scriptures may be described, then, as a purifying, revealing, saving manifestation of divine presence, who dwells among the "sons of light" to disclose to them the Mystery or Truth of God's saving purpose, and to defend them against the corrupting influence of evil, personified as the Spirit of Perversity. As "Revealer of Truth" and "Giver of Life," the Spirit of Truth of Qumran, shaped by the ancient spirit-dualism of Persian origin, directly foreshadows the various images of the divine Spirit presented in the First Epistle and Gospel of John.



There the spirit-dualism is modified by christological concerns and controversies unknown to the members of the Dead Sea community. Nevertheless, the Johannine Spirit of Truth continues to function primarily as revealer and sanctifier, who guides believers towards saving knowledge of God. In these early apostolic writings, fulfillment of the promise of an eschatological outpouring of the Spirit occurs after Jesus' glorification, when the Spirit of Truth comes to dwell within the believing community and imparts to its members full knowledge and understanding of Jesus' teachings (Jn 14:26; 16:13-15; 20:22).

The Spirit in the thought of Qumran thus exercises what can be termed an essential *hermeneutic function*, insofar as it inspires both correct interpretation of the divine will and the believer's ethical response to that will in the form of works of righteousness. In similar fashion, the Johannine communities would experience the operation of the Spirit which inspires both the *witness* of their leading theologian to the person and work of the incarnate Logos, and the *response* to that witness on the part of members of the community, expressed as "doing" or "walking in" the Truth. In Johannine as well as Qumran tradition, faith and works, proclamation and response, are inseparable. In both communities this indispensable union of faith and act is understood to be given or "inspired" by the Spirit of Truth, working within the individual and within the collective body of the faithful. As Revealer of Truth, He bestows the gift of Life by guiding the believing community into both knowledge and performance of "all the Truth."

A particularly eloquent witness to this double function of the Spirit of Truth is offered by the Teacher of Righteousness in the following hymn of thanksgiving and praise.

I, gifted with understanding, I have known Thee, O my God, because of the Spirit that Thou hast put in me; and I have heard what is certain according to Thy marvellous secret because of Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast opened Knowledge in the midst of me concerning the Mystery of Thine understanding, and the source of Thy power and the fountain of Thy goodness. Thou hast revealed to me according to the abundance of grace and destroying zeal. And Thou wilt bring to an end the dominion of darkness, and the shining of Thy glory shall be an everlasting light. (*1QH 12:11-15, Dupont-Sommer/Vermes*)

The element of hope so powerfully expressed here is fulfilled in Christian experience when the risen Lord bestows the Holy Spirit upon

his disciples (the "Johannine Pentecost," Jn 20:22), and through them upon the Church as a whole. As Paraclete, the Spirit defends believers against the attacks of an unbelieving, hostile world (Jn 16:7-11; cf Mk 13:11 and parallels). He is the Advocate or Counselor, who plays out his forensic role before the earthly tribunal of "the Jews," (meaning the religious authorities who reject the claims of Jesus and His followers). Thereby He complements the work of Jesus Christ, the heavenly Paraclete, whose high priestly self-offering before the Father works expiation for the sins of the world (I Jn 2:1f; cf Heb 9:11-14).

This forensic role of the Spirit, which has long been the chief focus of scholarly research in Johannine pneumatology, is coupled with His equally important work as Spirit of Truth. In the Gospel and First Epistle of John, as in the thanksgiving hymn just quoted, the Spirit dwells within the believing community to impart knowledge of the "marvellous secret" of God that leads to eternal life. Under the New Covenant, however, the content of that "secret" has been thoroughly transformed. The saving knowledge imparted by the Spirit of Truth within the present age concerns the person of Jesus Christ as the eternal Word and Son of God, the unique author and source of salvation. "This is eternal life," Jesus declares at the beginning of his 'high priestly prayer' (Jn 17:3), "that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." He is "the way, the truth and the life," who alone leads to eternal communion with the Father (14:6).

In the experience of the Johannine communities, the Spirit both reveals and defends this truth about the person and work of Jesus and sanctifies believers in it. Exercising these complementary functions, by which He serves as the earthly counterpart to the glorified Christ, the Spirit manifests Himself as the "other Paraclete," the Spirit of Truth, whom the Church will honor in the language of its creed as "Lord and Giver of Life."

NOTES

1. Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p. 177, n. 112, "... the spirit was the supernatural power that evoked the revelatory state of mind, while the 'word' referred to the revelation itself."
2. At this stage the personal pronoun used of the Spirit is appropriate: God is present and active *as Spirit*.
3. "Spirit" in Rabbinic usage is primarily a spirit of prophecy. Aside from the *yezer*-dualism which we have discussed, there is little else in Rabbinic literature that pertains specifically to our theme. See E. Schweizer, *TWNTVI*, p. 380; and G.F. Moore, *Judaism I*, p. 237, 421f; II, p. 45f.
4. See particularly J. Schreiner, "Geistbegabung in der Gemeinde von Qumran," *BZ 9* (1965) 161-180; O. Betz, *Offenbarung* p. 125ff, 324ff; and the articles by B.E. Thiering, noted in the bibliography, on Qumran initiation.

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# SPIRIT OF TRUTH

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# SPIRIT OF TRUTH

The Holy Spirit In Johannine Tradition

*Volume 1*

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JOHN BRECK

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### *Volume 2*

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## Preface

Interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit has grown considerably in recent years, following a long period of scholarly as well as popular neglect. This is evidenced by the number of monographs on various aspects of biblical pneumatology that have appeared during the last two decades, as it is by the reissuing of classical texts such as St Basil's *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, published by the St Vladimir's Seminary Press in 1984. Still more significant is the popular focus upon the presence and activity of the Spirit in various aspects of the Church's life, from liturgical renewal to the charismatic movement. However we may assess these diverse currents of spiritual awakening, we can only rejoice in the renewed sensitivity among Christian people to this divine presence and power in our midst, whom Orthodoxy praises and glorifies as "one of the Holy Trinity."

This study of the Holy Spirit in pre-Christian tradition represents a thorough reworking of a portion of the doctoral dissertation I submitted to the Ruprecht-Karl Universität, Heidelberg, Germany, in 1972. In its present form it is addressed especially to students, pastors, and interested lay persons who wish to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the role played by the Spirit of God throughout the Old Testament and intertestamental periods. Yet it should prove to be of use to scholars as well, since it focuses on an important theme that has received little attention from biblical specialists: the origin and development of the "spirit-dualism" which lies behind the opposition between the "Spirit of Truth" and the "Spirit of Deceit" in I John 4:6. This work traces the growth of that theme through the Hebrew Scriptures and considers the importance of extra-biblical sources in shaping the image of Spirit during the thousand years of Israel's recorded history. It will be followed by a second volume on the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel and First Epistle of John.

Much of the recent critical investigation of Johannine pneumatology has focused on the role of the Spirit as "Paraclete." This title, attributed in

the Johannine communities to Christ as well as to the Spirit, has intrigued and frustrated researchers as much as any other subject of biblical inquiry. A wealth of articles and monographs has been produced on the matter in recent years, and the interested reader can find valuable analyses by Hans Windisch, Otto Betz, Raymond Brown and others listed in the bibliography of volume II. The most recent thorough work on the subject is by Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community. The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). This monograph begins with an extensive review of the critical literature on the Paraclete question and should be read by anyone seriously interested in the topic. My purpose is not to reproduce this information, but to complement it by tracing the origin and growth of the Jewish and early Christian understanding of the function of Spirit as "Spirit of Truth."

A secondary but nevertheless important aim of this study concerns those readers who identify themselves as Orthodox Christians. I wish to make clear to them, as to others who may have similar doubts, that certain non-biblical sources can throw considerable and very positive light on passages from the Bible that otherwise would remain unintelligible. Many Orthodox react with mixed feelings, or outright skepticism, to a "history-of-religions" approach to the Scriptures, believing that it is inappropriate to seek insight into the Word of God in extra-biblical traditions. My purpose is to underscore the value of such research, not merely for academic interests, but to confirm the presence and operation of God within the culture and history of "pagan" peoples. I would be especially gratified if the reader came to accept and appreciate the fact that sources such as the hymns of the Iranian prophet Zarathustra and the Qumran Teacher of Righteousness embody spiritual and theological qualities that make of them genuine expressions of a "proto-Gospel." Orthodox tradition has long proclaimed Plato and Socrates to be "holy pagans," recognizing in their teachings authentic inspiration that prepared the Hellenistic world for the coming of the Savior. Similar inspiration led Zarathustra to perceive and celebrate in song the workings of God and His Spirit within the life and experience of His people. While Zarathustra's teachings never possessed the authority of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures, they nonetheless made a significant contribution to Israel's understanding of the presence and activity of the divine Spirit

within its midst, and thereby they played their own part in preparing for the establishment of the New Covenant in the person of Jesus Christ.

A word needs to be said about terminology. Much contemporary writing, sensitive to the very real problems of "sexism" and religious arrogance still prevalent among Christian people, has done away with masculine pronouns for God and the Spirit, just as it has (in deference to the feelings of Jewish readers) substituted terms such as "First and Second Covenants / Testaments" for the Old and New Testaments respectively. If I do not follow this current practice, it is for theological rather than polemical reasons. While God is of course "beyond gender," Orthodox Christianity recognizes characteristics in the biblical depiction of God that seem most adequately expressed, within the limits of human language, by images that reflect the gender differentiation proper to human persons. And by retaining the traditional terms "Old" and "New" Testaments, we are not only reflecting the language of Scripture itself; we are affirming the central Christian belief in Christ as inaugurator of a New Covenant that builds upon and fulfills the covenantal relationship established between God and His people Israel.

I have included often long and detailed footnotes with references to books and articles that develop certain themes discussed in the text, or that offer contrasting or dissenting points of view. This has been done especially with students in mind, for whom such bibliographical detail might prove useful. The general reader would probably do well simply to pass over them.

My friend and mentor, Professor Veselin Kesich, read large portions of the manuscript of this book and made numerous valuable suggestions for improvements. I am deeply indebted to him for his unfailing help, kindness and encouragement. Special thanks go as well to Mr Glen Mules, trustee of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, for initiating the approach by which this book was published and for designing the typography for its production. His tireless efforts at working out bugs and working in multiple corrections and rewrites are deeply appreciated. A similar word of thanks must go to Miss Eleana Silk, seminary librarian, for the incalculable time and energy she likewise contributed to producing this work.

This study is dedicated with particular gratitude and affection to the



Rev. Dr. Boris Bobrinskoy of the St Sergius Theological Institute in Paris, France. His own investigations of the Holy Spirit in Christian life and liturgy have been for me a wellspring of intellectual and spiritual enrichment. May he find here a token of my deep appreciation of our fellowship in the Holy Spirit.

Fr. John Breck, Crestwood, NY — *Feast of Theophany, 1989*

## *Abbreviations*

## Abbreviations

Acta Or	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AiW	Bartholomae, <i>Altiranisches Wörterbuch</i>
AnBib	<i>Analecta Biblica</i>
ANET	Pritchard, <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i>
AO	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
art.	article
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CD	The Damascus Document
CH	Corpus Hermeticum
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ET	English translation
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
Heb	Hebrew
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IJT	<i>Indian Journal of Theology</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
Joh	Johannine
JohEv	Johannes Evangelium (The Gospel of John)
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the OT</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTSA	<i>Journal Theol. S. Africa</i>
LXX	Septuagint: Greek translation of the OT
MDB	<i>Monde de la Bible</i>
NeoT	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>

NRT	<i>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</i>
NT	New Testament
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OT (AT)	Old Testament
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
Rev Q	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RGG <sup>3</sup>	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> (3rd. ed.)
RHR	<i>Revue de l'Histoire des Religions</i>
RSpt	<i>Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
SchTZ	<i>Schweitzerische Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
StCath	<i>Studia Catholica</i>
StEv	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
StTh	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StudBT	<i>Studia Biblica et Theologica</i>
Test XII	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum NT</i> (Kittel)
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
Y	Yasna
YT	Yasht
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZRG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

*Philo:*

Det Pot	Quod Deterius Potiori
Gig	De Gigantibus
Migr Ab	De Migratione Abrahami
Opif	De Opificio Mundi
Plant	De Plantatione
Spec	De Specialibus Legibus
Vit Mos	De Vita Mosis

## *Abbreviations*

### *Dead Sea Scrolls:*

1QH	Thanksgiving Hymns
1QM	The War Scroll
1QpHab	Commentary on Habakkuk
1QS	The Rule of the Community
1QSa	Rule Appendix (or Rule of the Congregation)
1QSb	Collection of Benedictions

## *Biblical References*

*(In alphabetical order and following the conventions of the RSV)*

Acts	The Acts	Jl	Joel
Am	Amos	Jn	John
I Chr	I Chronicles	I Jn	I John
II Chr	II Chronicles	II Jn	II John
Col	Colossians	III Jn	III John
I Cor	I Corinthians	Job	Job
II Cor	II Corinthians	Jon	Jonah
Dan	Daniel	Jos	Joshua
Dt	Deuteronomy	Jude	Jude
Ec	Ecclesiastes	I Kg	I Kings
Eph	Ephesians	II Kg	II Kings
Est	Esther	Lam	Lamentations
Ex	Exodus	Lev	Leviticus
Ezek	Ezekiel	Lk	Luke
Ezra	Ezra	Mal	Malachi
Gal	Galatians	Mic	Micah
Gen	Genesis	Mk	Mark
Hab	Habakkuk	Mt	Matthew
Hag	Haggai	Nah	Nahum
Heb	Herewe	Neh	Nehemiah
Hos	Hosea	Num	Numbers
Is	Isaiah	Ob	Obadiah
Jas	James	I Pet	I Peter
Jer	Jeremiah	II Pet	II Peter
Jg	Judges	Phil	Philippians

Philem	Philemon	S. of S.	Song of Solomon
Pr	Proverbs	I Th	I Thessalonians
Ps	Psalms	II Th	II Thessalonians
Rev	Revelation	I Tim	I Timothy
Rom	Romans	II Tim	II Timothy
Ru	Ruth	Tit	Titus
I Sam	I Samuel	Zech	Zachariah
II Sam	II Samuel	Zeph	Zephaniah

*Notes can be found at the end of each chapter*



Part I

The Spirit in the Old Testament and  
Ancient Near-East

