Little is known about the Persians before the sixth century B.C. They were an Indo-European people who lived in relative obscurity on the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf as vassals of the Medes.

In 550 B.C. the Persians emerged from the shadows under the leadership of Cyrus the Great, who struck an alliance with the Babylonians and openly rebelled against the Medes. Armed with this first success, Cyrus chose to enlarge his holdings by attacking the kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor. His own official account of the campaign is instructive: "In May he [Cyrus] marched to the land of Lydia. He killed its king. He took its booty. He placed in it his own garrison."

Until he was killed in battle in 529 B.C., Cyrus had several occasions to record similar accounts; in a quarter of a century he brought almost the entire Fertile Crescent under Persian control, creating an empire that stretched from India to the Aegean. Under Cyrus' immediate successors, Cambyses (530-522 B.C.) and Darius I (522-486 B.C.), Syria, the Levant, and Egypt were added to the empire, and the system of imperial administration was refined.

The great palace of Darius, located at Persepolis, depicts the subservience of some 28 peoples included in the vast empire. The governmental structure was modeled after its Assyrian predecessor, but with a greater efficiency and more humane treatment of the subject peoples. Each of the 21 provinces (satrapies) was governed by a provincial ruler, and the subject peoples were permitted to keep their local deities and customs. Great imperial post roads connected all parts of the empire, and a uniform system of coinage did much to weld the parts of the empire together. Tolerance for diversity and unity in organization helped the Persian Empire maintain its ascendency for some two hundred years, until Alexander the Great crushed the Persians in the fourth century B.C. Consequently, the Persian armies that invaded Greece in 490 B.C. represented the largest, wealthiest, and best organized empire of the Iron Age. (This Persian expedition will be covered in Unit III.)

THE LEVANT

Situated midway between the two great centers of civilization in the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile valleys, the Levantine kingdoms were inevitably caught up in the political-military struggles of the Near Eastern superpowers. For most of the Bronze Age, the Levant was occupied largely by foreign troops; however, it underwent dramatic changes in ethnic composition during the great migrations that occurred around 1200 B.C., and from this flux of peoples emerged the Hebrews, to whom Western civilization owes many debts and perhaps some regrets.

The ancestors of the Hebrews appear to have come into the Levant during the Bronze Age; scholars suggest that the Biblical account of "Abraham's call" (Genesis 11:31-12:2) may allude to the great migration of

the Amorites around 2000 B.C. (The Amorites were Semitic-speaking, patriarchal tribes who occupied a number of cities in the Tigris-Euphrates valley at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.). Since we have no extra-Biblical accounts of the Hebrews, we can neither confirm *nor* deny the reconstruction of Hebrew life in Canaan and Egypt using the methods of the historian. Biblical accounts, however, do provide a basis for a speculative reconstruction that closely parallels events for which we do have additional sources. For example, the story of Joseph and his brothers, who left Canaan and remained in Egypt for almost a century, is commonly associated with the Hyksos rule in Egypt (1674-1558 B.C.). Furthermore, the Exodus from Egypt (c. 1250B.C.) marks the beginning of another great migration of peoples which we know to have occurred about this time.

Biblical accounts of Hebrew conflict with their neighbors (the Philistines, for example) upon returning to the "Promised Land" seem to reflect the unsettled conditions in Palestine at this time as a number of newly arrived groups fought for control of the Levant. Whether or not the Hebrews were fulfilling Yahweh's command by engaging in this life and death struggle is a question for the theologian; the historian can state merely that such a struggle appears to have taken place and that the Biblical narratives are in agreement with other historical documents in essential points.

During this time the Hebrews were ruled by judges, but by 1025 B.C. they decided to choose a king to rule them, as was the custom among many nations. Again, whether or not we accept the account in I Samuel of the events leading up to the selection of Saul as the first king, this much is clear: upon their settlement in Palestine the Hebrews abandoned the nomadic life and established themselves in sedentary agricultural villages--many of the laws associated with the covenant established by Yahweh with his chosen people are understandable only within the context of an agricultural society; and the rise of kingship seems to be a logical consequence (based on what we have discussed earlier) of the needs which arise as agricultural life progresses and grows more complex.

The reign of Saul, the first king, ended around 1000 B.C. with his death in battle against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, and the elders of the tribe of Judah elected David as their king. The campaigns undertaken by David against the Philistines and other enemies are summarized in II Samuel 9-20, and David attained to heroic status (despite his imperfections, which are thoroughly pointed out) by his success in unifying the twelve tribes into a true kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem.

David's son, Solomon, "excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom" (I Kings), but it is clear that the grandeur of his palace was purchased by a forced levy of slaves and oppressive taxation. Clearly, Solomon wished to copy the magnificence of other Oriental despots, and the oppressiveness of his rule created a legacy of discontent which was bequeathed to his son and successor, Rehoboam.

Taking advantage of the change in rulers, the ten northern tribes

seceded and set up their own kingdom known as Israel. The two southern tribes, established as the kingdom of Judah, remained loyal to Rehoboam. Between 925 and 586 B.C., therefore, the voice of the Hebrews was divided between the capitals of Jerusalem (Judah) and Samaria (Israel). This division weakened the authority of the king and seriously impaired Palestinian resistance to the encroachments of enemies; in 722 B.C. the northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians under Sargon III and the people dispersed throughout the empire (hence the designation "The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel"). In 586 B.C. the kingdom of Judah was captured by the Chaldeans, and many were carried into captivity in Babylon. The inability of the Israelites to find strength in unity resulted in the loss of their kingdom and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

HOMERIC GREECE

As we have noted in Unit I, the Mycenaean civilization came to an end with the invasion of barbarian tribes from the north about 1200 B.C., but this vanished civilization left a lasting and important heritage for subsequent Greek society.

The first legacy was a common historical tradition; every Greek city traced its ancestry back to the semi-divine heroes of the Mycenaean era. An individual seeking status might find a line of succession tying him to a distant hero, and even political claims to territory might refer back to this distant period. A second legacy, perhaps retained beyond its usefulness, was the conception of the hero as exemplified by the Homeric warrior, together with a code of conduct which placed honor above all else.

The disruption of Mycenaean civilization resulted in migrations that lasted for three or more generations. The refugees from Thessaly and northern Greece travelled directly across the Aegean to the coastal areas of Asia Minor, while the refugees from Pylos wandered to Athens and later with the Athenians across to the islands and central coast of Asia Minor. It is here that the epic poems of Homer appear to have been composed, and the life they depict may well be a description of life in these dark times rather than in the earlier Mycenaean civilization.

The displacement to new lands had at least three important consequences--geographic isolation, the return to a simple agrarian economy, and the need for warlike activity (or at least preparation for it). The lands to which the refugees moved were usually mountainous and deeply indented with gulfs, bays, and inlets. Such environments fed isolation, which, in turn, created strong bonds of loyalty and a tradition of common action.

The economy of the Dark Age was basically agrarian; the fundamental social unit was the household, land and buildings owned by one man, and expanded to include his slaves, tenants, and livestock. The earlier caste system of Mycenae, with its veneer of warrior artistocracy laid

over a broad base of neolithic farmers, found no place in this situation, and the aristocrat was primarily a farmer who got his hands dirty just like any other farmer; under the subsistence levels of production current in most areas, wide social distinctions could find little support.

In this pastoral and agrarian economy almost no social or economic mobility existed, and the pace of change towards the future city-state (*polis*) was slow. A set of political, economic, and social institutions were shaped to provide order and security. The chieftain served as head of a small kingdom, leading the people in war and settling disputes among groups and individuals. The power of the king was limited, however, by a strong nobility which acted as a counterbalance; here geography played an important role, for the severe fragmentation of Greece by mountains made it difficult for a state to expand, and was thus a factor favoring the power of oligarchies. It became a custom to pass the city offices around, by election, from one leading family to another, and land ownership was a measure of power and prestige.

The increase in people and belongings during the years of the Dark Age was neither abrupt nor uninterrupted, but progress and growth proceeded in a general and steady way. By 800 B.C. the Greek world once more began to have a history. Growing prosperity had increased the birthrate, and some cities were beginning to feel the effects of excessive population. This pressure, coupled with the need for new markets and the ruthless policies of powerful, land-hungry nobles, led to an explosion of colonization from about 750 to 550 B.C. By the end of this great wave, over six hundred Greek colonies had established themselves from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Crimea.

Colonization had the effect of increasing markets, products, and avenues of trade throughout the Mediterranean. New settlements began to ship grain back to cities which had once been hard put to feed themselves, and wealth began to pour into Corinth and Athens and every other city touched by the new tides of commerce.

The political and social consequences were as important as the economic; the old political structure had been controlled by aristocracies whose power was based on land holdings, but new sources of wealth and prestige began to threaten their domination. In the sixth century B.C. a new class of people appeared--merchants who owned little land and whose influence was measured in terms of money rather than acreage or illustrious ancestors. As a result, class interests became an important factor in political and economic life; and the intensity of conflict varied from city to city, at times flaring into open social rebellion.

Thus a change in economic activity occasioned a succession of changes in political and social situations as well; and these, in turn, put a strain upon the ability of the Greek city-states to find viable solutions to pressing problems. It will be with these solutions and the Classical Age they heralded that Unit III will be concerned.

P.J.B.
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See also: Reading List for History, Unit I

* Available in paperback editions

PHILOSOPHY - RELIGION

Because philosophy proper begins about 600 B.C.--almost at the end of this period--and because what is done between 600 B.C. and 500 B.C. is a very elementary introduction to philosopny yet organic with its growth for the next several hundred years, we will postpone any discussion of it until the next unit. We shall confine ourselves here to a brief notation on the religion of ancient Greece as a natural outgrowth of the religion of the earlier period discussed in the first unit and to the radically different and much more sophisticated story of the emergence and maturing of the religion of the Hebrews during this same period.

GREECE

Our knowledge of the Greek religion of this period depends largely on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Hesiod's works, which we will examine here only in terms of the kind of religious ideas that are found in them.

Homer's concepts of the gods were quite like those held in Mesopotamia. They were anthropomorphic--imaged in the form of human beings. They were like people with much enlarged powers, having command over natural forces, but not themselves being those forces. They were like people in that they had all of the common, not too commendable weaknesses and vices of people while very often lacking--though sometimes possessing--the virtues of people. They constituted a sort of heavenly family with father Zeus, a sky god, and his wife, the earth mother Hera. Zeus was a god of the conquering Aryans who invaded Greece from the north many years before, and Hera was an earlier cow goddess of the indigenous culture. It has been suggested that their marriage represents the marriage of the conquering and the subjugated peoples, the one being a paternalistic and the other a maternalistic culture, and that this conflict of cultures is reflected in the stormy days of their marriage described in the traditions--Hera, the jealous wife, and Zeus, the henpecked and philandering husband.

The names of many other Greek deities are very familiar to us through frequent use in numerous ways in our literature and language. There was Apollo, the god of shepherds and farmers who became the god of revelation and the patron deity of Delphi. The priestess of Apollo at Delphi became very famous in the classical period of Greek history for her oracles, so much so that no significant undertaking was begun without her being consulted. It was one of her oracles that launched Socrates on his philosophical career. There was Athena, the goddess of wisdom and patron deity of Athens; Artemis, the goddess of wild nature and protector of

animals and children; Demeter, another mother earth deity who presided over agricultural fertility; Poseidon, the horse deity who became ruler of the seas; Dionysius, the god of wine and ecstatic rites; and many others.

Continuing from earlier times, the common life of the people was replete with sacrifices and ceremonies and rituals, and not really different from religion in any other part of the world during this period, at least during the earlier part of the period. As the period advanced, however, the anthropomorphic trend everywhere present was here carried forward so thoroughly that a nullifying and deadly gap was created between the gods and nature and between the gods and people. The mystery of the hiddenness of nature powers was gone. The exciting dynamic of their unseen immediacy was gone. The sense of the continuity of the whole created order from the hidden powers of nature through its visible realities to human beings themselves was gone. People had less and less need for the gods, and the gods had less and less to offer people. What was gained in the aesthetics of sculpture was really nothing more than the artistic perfection of the human form, and for that very reason what was lost was the much more important inner genius of religion. When gods are reduced to people, the essential unity of human being with the mysterious and unfathomable depths of the powers that move the whole ordered universe is gone. By the time we arrive at the end of this period (500 B.C.), the trend set in motion by Homer in the ninth century B.C. had developed into a tragic degeneration of religion from its earlier and purer, even though more primitive, form.

The price was too high. In making their gods into people the Greeks had lost their gods. In the earlier primitive magic there was an implicit half-faith in the orderliness of the natural forces and processes because magic was reduced to formula, and formula must presume a regularity and a dependability in the powers we deal with. In the full development of the Homeric religion, giving the gods human form and personality also gave them the arbitrariness, unpredictability, and temperamentality of people, and thus nature was left without either an immanent or a transcendent principle of order.

There were two major outcomes of this bankruptcy of Greek religion. The first of these was the emergence of the mystery religions as a dominant and popular force. A mystery religion was one in which the devotee was believed actually to participate in the life of the deity through secret rituals and ceremonies. There was usually a ritual cleansing such as bathing or baptism, a secret instruction in the traditions and doctrines of the religion, an introduction to the secret symbols and sacred objects related to the sacred myths, a narration or dramatic enactment of the sacred myth, and a final crowning of the initiate with symbolic wreaths. Sometimes these initiations were extravagant and wild. In one ceremony, known as the taurobolium in Mithraism, a pit was dug in the ground and a grating of logs laid over it. A bull was slaughtered on the grating and the initiates walked under the grating through the pit while the blood dripped on them from the sacrifice. The bull was a sacred sacrifice to the god, and it was believed that the god entered the blood of

the bull and in the blood of the bull the worshipper made direct contact with the god. In the Dionysian mysteries the sacrificial animal was torn apart while still alive and was eaten raw by initiates worked up into ecstatic states of mind. Alcoholic drinks were used honoring Dionysius, the god of wine, and so drunkenness was regarded as possession by the god. Such religious rites provided what was missing in the official religion--a belief in, and an emotional sense of being in direct personal contact with, the god.

The Eleusinian mysteries celebrated the legend of Demeter and Persephone--the descent of nature into the underworld and her return to the earth in the spring. This mystery was more moderate in its practices than the Dionysian religion. The Orphic mystery took the quite different path of asceticism. There were very strict rules of purity--abstention from eating meat, from sexual indulgences and other common pollutions. Some of the mathematicians and philosophers of Greece were members of this order, which had great influence on Western philosophy and religion. The New Testament of the Christians reflects this influence, at least in the language of Paul in his letters to the churches when, for instance, he talks about the "mystery that is in Christ" and the "wisdom" that was "hid in him from the foundations of the world--now made manifest in him." The fourth Gospel (John) also reflects at least the language of the mysteries when Jesus is made to say such things as "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life."

The other major outcome produced by the failure of the religion of the Homeric gods and the general failure of the culture was the emergence of the tragic dramatists and poets. But of these you will learn more in the section on literature. It remains for us in this connection only to speak of the work of Hesiod. As in the case of Homer, the major consideration of Hesiod's works will be found in the section on literature and mythology. Here we need only a very brief comment on the significance of Hesiod for philosophy. His contribution (about 750 B.C.) to the final emergence of philosophy lay in his presenting the gods and the orders of the cosmos as emerging from an original chaos, and in his retaining the older idea that they were sometimes identical with the powers or orders of nature. He thus preserved the primitive ultimacy, the immanence, the intimacy, and the dynamism of the "gods." At least of equal, if not greater, importance for philosophy, he laid the foundations for the philosophical concept of what had been intuitively but dimly grasped in primitive consciousness--the oneness, the ultimate unity of all things, and creative order as a dimension immanent to reality itself.

More important still was Hesiod's view that morality was rooted in this order and that Zeus, therefore, had been responsible for the establishment of an order of justice among people. Once established, however, the order of justice was self-maintaining, like any other natural order of things, and in the long run, therefore, was bound to reward the good and punish the wicked; and so nature, by being in part moral order, was not completely indifferent to people's moral struggles and values. Thus the arbitrariness of the gods of Homer was brought under a much more significant limitation than the old principle of fate, which had done little

more than determine the final demise of human beings and gods.

Perhaps most important of all was Hesiod's idea that while the moral law was an immanent order of the cosmos, it applied only to human beings and gods. The rest of nature was governed by "natural" law. In Hesiod, therefore, human beings came to be seen clearly for the first time not only as more developed, more complex animals but also as creatures of a different kind, while remaining a genuine part of nature. We find here the birth of what we have come to call "humanism" with its key concepts of natural, rational morality as obligatory on people and, therefore, with its central virtues of self-restraint, self-discipline, and life under the tension of the human ideal.

THE HEBREWS

We have included the period from 1700 to 1200 B.C. (Abraham to Moses) in this unit because it is so brief a part of Hebrew history that it seemed not worth separate treatment in the earlier unit. Furthermore, it is mostly a period of tradition rather than history and is so much a part of succeeding events that it seemed more logical to include it here.

Historical Periods

In no case is it true that we can separate religion and philosophy from history any more than we can finally separate art or music from history. They are all as much a part of history as are military battles, the reign of kings, the migration of peoples, and the development of an economy. However, it is in a special sense true of Hebrew history and religion that they are inseparable. To the Hebrew himself, his history was the act of God, and the activity of God, of course, is the subject matter of religion. The life of the Hebrews in a special way, then, really is a religious history--history understood as religious. We cannot trace the multitude of details of this history of course, but it will be advantageous to establish some broad periods of Hebrew history (somewhat arbitrarily) within which we shall show the development of its religion and the intimacy of its history.

Period I - from Abraham to Moses (about 1650-1220 B.C.). The Hebrew tradition itself sets the beginning of its history in the migration of a man named Abraham (Abram) from Ur of Chaldea, a town south of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in present-day Iraq, to Palestine, with a side trip to Egypt. In all probability he was part of a general migration of Semites called Arameans that took place in the middle of the seventeenth century B.C. It is even possible that Abraham led such a migration and was not a lone migrant. This migration coincides with the establishment of control of a significant part of Egypt by the Hyksos (Semitic) kings in 1680 B.C., which, in turn, supports the Biblical tradition of Abraham's visit to Egypt. In this same period the Semitic

tribes of Rachel migrated to Goshen, on the northeast border of Egypt. Considerably later, in the fourteenth century B.C., the Semitic Habiru (note the similarity to the word *Hebrew*) also settled in Goshen.

In time the Hyksos kings were displaced by the pharaoh Ahmose I (1580-1557 B.C.), who began the development of Egyptian power and splendor that climaxed in the person and reign of Amenhotep III (1411-1375 B.C.). Amenhotep IV, Akhenaton (1375-1358 B.C.), produced the first known monotheism in history, but his monotheism died with him. The pharaoh who enslaved the Hebrews to build the cities of Ramesses and Pithon was Ramesses II (1292-1225 B.C.), and it was during the reign of his successor, Merneptah (1225-1215 B.C.), that Moses led the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt (about 1220 B.C.).

Period II - from the Exodus under Moses to the unified kingdom of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon (1220-933 B.C.). This period includes the trek of the Hebrews under Moses' leadership to the Sinai peninsula, where a covenant was established between the people and Jehovah; their life as a loose confederation of wandering tribes in the desert; their bit by bit conquest of Canaan (Palestine), originally in isolated hill territories, tribe by tribe, but at last in domination of the whole central coastal territory; the leadership of these isolated tribal settlements by local leaders called judges; the demand for a king and the anointing of Saul as the first king of a united Israel, to reign from 1028 to 1013 B.C.; his succession by David, who reigned from 1013 to 973 B.C.; and his succession, in turn, by Solomon, who reigned from 973 to 933 B.C.

Period III - from the division of the kingdom to the final deportation of the southern tribes to Babylon (933-586 B.C.). The end of Solomon's reign ended the period of the united kingdom of only 95 years. From the division of the kingdom in 933 B.C. onward, Israel was to survive only as a divided people. At Solomon's death the ten tribes of the north seceded over the issue of taxes. Solomon, the "wise man," had taxed his people so heavily to support the grandeur of his reign that the people asked his successor Rehoboam for relief, but instead of relief Rehoboam gave them heavier taxes, and so the ten tribes of the north seceded under the reign of Jeroboam I and established a new religious capital in Bethel. The period includes the defeat of the ten northern tribes--referred to specifically as "Israel" since the division of the kingdom--by the Assyrians from the east and the deportation of large numbers of the people to Assyria in 722 B.C. It also includes the defeat of the southern tribes by Babylon in 597 B.C. and their final deportation to Babylon in 586 B.C. The period further includes the great religious movement of the moral prophets, beginning with Amos in about 760 B.C. and continuing to the end of the period and into the Babylonian captivity. The end of the period was marked by the prophetic work of Jeremiah (625-585 B.C.) and Ezekiel (592-570 B.C.).

Period IV - from the final deportation of the Jews from Jerusalem by

the Babylonians to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (586 B.C.-A.D. 70). This period actually belongs in the next two units but is listed here to complete the picture. We will treat it in due course in the appropriate units.

Religious Ideas

The periods listed in this section are the same as those defined above. Here we shall treat the religious ideas that developed in these periods, with special regard to those ideas that became specially characteristic of the religion of the Hebrews. It is important to note this distinction and to remember it throughout our treatment because the development of these ideas in no way eliminated or displaced in the popular mind the more primitive ideas and practices of the period or of the geographical region in which Israel was born and developed. These emerging ideas are, indeed, organic to the historic movement of the Hebrew people, and yet they were ideas grasped only by the religious elite of the Hebrews, while the masses understood all such things only in terms of the cultural-religious milieu of the Fertile Crescent in which their destiny was cast.

Period I. Because of what we have said above, there is really no need to say anything more about the religion of the period from Abraham to Moses. It was one with the religion of the region and the times. It is so steeped in tradition and the records so compounded by the mixture of differing traditions and the editing and re-editing as much as a thousand years after the events and times described in the Abraham narratives that it is impossible for us here to unscramble the mixture.

For the sake of simplifying a very complex story then, so that we can handle it for our purpose of making a very brief statement of the characteristically Hebrew religious ideas, we will begin our discussion with the second period, with the establishment of the covenant between Jehovah (Yahweh) and the Hebrews at Sinai under the leadership of Moses (about 1200 B.C.).

Period II. While the Hebrews have always traced their origins back to Abraham as their founding father, and while they were not a nation at Sinai but only a loose confederation of small Bedouin tribes, yet Sinai cannot be overrated in importance. It was to prove to be the central fact that dominated the entire history of these people. Sinai is one of the great milestones in the development of the religious consciousness of humankind. It is the first and only case where a people and a god adopt each other in a contractual relationship.

Moses had fled from a murder charge in Egypt and had been hired by a Midianite priest at Sinai to tend his flocks. Moses married the priest's daughter and learned the cult of the local deity. When Moses returned to lead the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt, he took them to Mount Sinai and introduced them to the god. So here was a people without a god, and a

god without a people--certainly with only a very few people. The genius of Moses was that he struck a covenant between them. The god and the people contracted with each other--the people promising to do what the god laid down in his laws as conditions for his being their god, and the god promising to be their god and to bring them into a fair land and make them a great people if they obeyed his commands. The covenant was to their mutual advantage and was mutually binding. If either party failed to fulfill his obligations under the contract, the contract could be dissolved.

While the particulars of the convenant are variously described (Exodus 20, Exodus 34, Leviticus 19, and Deuteronomy 5) at different periods of Hebrew history, the concept of a covenant (contract) relationship made possible a development of the idea that the relationship between people and god must finally be a moral one, where both people and god were bound by moral obligation, i.e., an obligation freely entered into by mutual consent.

The fulfillment of this potential we see best realized in the teachings of the prophets of the eighth century B.C. and later--in which tradition Jesus clearly stood--and in the Deuteronomic code, which is the one most commonly known. It was formulated as the outcome of the work of the great moral prophets from Amos to Jeremiah and instituted in a national reform by King Josiah in 621 B.C. The covenant was also sometimes given a ritualistic and sacrificial content as in the version in Exodus 34, but even in the expanded version in Leviticus, which is heavily ritualistic, the moral core is retained (Leviticus 19:1-18).

It was in this same Sinai experience that another of the great characteristic Hebrew ideas was really born--the idea that history is the act of God in response to Israel's keeping or breaking the covenant. If Israel fared badly in farming or in battle, for instance, it was believed to be because they had broken the covenant, and if they fared well in personal fortunes or in military victory, it was because they had kept the covenant; thus God was either punishing or rewarding them according to the covenant. It removed the element of the arbitrariness of God and made him the eternal guarantor of divine justice in the affairs of people.

Stated thus baldly the idea sounds very artificial and even superficially primitive, deserving only to be brushed aside as irrelevant. But let us not react with our own brand of superficiality. We must recognize here what we described in our first unit, that the god represents the ultimate power and order of reality, even when the god is more colloquially conceived. The "god" idea is always to any people the ultimate guarantor of the reasonableness of the ultimate order of things. People generally, if not universally, do believe in a cosmic order that must somehow finally encompass the human need for some correspondence between morality and nature and history.

We must now notice a third idea which is importantly present at Sinai--the idea of God as holy. We have already pointed out in the first unit that the religious consciousness holds the ultimate powers (gods) to be