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BIBLICAL SOCIOLOGY. II

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The previous instalment of material under this title is introductory. It indicates ground that must be traversed before the territory of biblical sociology can be reached and cultivated. We are now to deal more directly with the subject. As already stated, our investigation first considers ancient Israel in its original character as a system of social institutions common to Semitic antiquity; and from this we go on to the process by which the original institutions were transformed into the distinctive system of Judaism.

I. THE APPROACH TO ISRAELITE SOCIETY

One of the most important facts calling for emphasis in advancing toward sociological study of ancient Israel is ethnic affiliation. The society at the forefront of the biblical stage is merely one of the many groups constituting the great Semitic race. The Israelites are Semites, just as the Germans are Aryans. The Aryan race includes a number of peoples who have certain characteristics in common, and whose languages have developed from common root-words. In the same way the Semitic race consists of a number of distinct peoples. Biblical sociology relates to ancient Semitic society. We approach the subject from the standpoint of the Semitic race as it existed before the Christian era.

The Semites are identified with the region lying at the junction of Europe, Asia, and Africa. In ancient history they were distributed over the Arabian peninsula, the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, and the valley of the Nile. These localities contained populations wholly or partly Semite. The Arabian peninsula was the field of the Arabs. The valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates were the seats of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The Nile valley was the

home of the Egyptians. At the eastern end of the Mediterranean were the Phoenicians, on the seacoast; while farther inland were the Canaanites, Arameans, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and *Israelites*. All these groups exhibit the same racial characteristics; and their speech evidently grew out of a proto-Semitic language whose elements were common to them all. It has remained for modern science to point out broadly the ethnic affiliation of Israel; but the legends of Genesis admit the same fact in a narrower spirit. The ancestors of Israel are said to have been Mesopotamians who migrated westward from Babylonia; and a number of Semitic peoples are said to be related to Israel through these Babylonian forefathers.¹ The entire situation suggests that the common homeland of the Semites was Arabia. On this point Professor G. A. Barton, in his able work on Semitic origins, writes as follows:

The peculiar conditions of life which the Arabian deserts and oases have presented for milleniums are the matrix in which the Semitic character, as it is known to us, was born. It is a land of barren and volcanic mountains, of broad stretches of dry, waste, unproductive soil, and wide areas of shifting sand, interrupted by an occasional oasis—a land where, for the most part, water is difficult to obtain, where famine is always imminent, where hunger, thirst, heat and exposure are the constant experience of the inhabitants. The Bedawi are always underfed, they suffer constantly from hunger and thirst, and their bodies thus weakened fall an easy prey to disease; they range the silent desert, almost devoid of life, where the sun is all powerful by day and the stars exceedingly brilliant by night. This environment begets in them intensity of faith of a certain kind, ferocity, exclusiveness, and imagination. These are all Semitic character-

¹It is noteworthy that while Israel, in the legends of Genesis, admits kinship with other Semitic peoples, the descent of the Israelites themselves is always described as more honorable than that of their neighbors. Israel is derived from Abraham, the friend of God. But some blot marks the origins of their neighbors. The Moabites and Ammonites, on the other side of the Jordan, are said to have resulted from the incest of Lot, a nephew of Abraham, with his own daughters (Gen., chap. 19). The Ishmaelites were descended from Abraham through a slave-woman, Hagar, who belonged to Sarah, the wife of Abraham (Gen., chap. 16). The Edomites were sprung from a grandson of Abraham, Esau by name, who foolishly despised the sacred privileges of his birthright (Gen., chap. 25). This gives us another insight into the nature of the biblical material.

istics wherever we find the Semites; and there can be little doubt that this is the land in which these traits were ingrained in the race.²

From their prehistoric home the Semites went out and acquired the permanent locations already noted, in which they appear as the Semitic peoples of ancient history.

We now go on to emphasize another salient fact: *Israel was the latest Semitic people to achieve nationality.* This proposition may be made one of the landmarks in the approach to Israelite society. Other facts may be exhibited in relation to it. All the Semitic peoples come forward out of the darkness of prehistoric times into the light of history through a turmoil of war and conquest. All society is at first necessarily nomadic. One of the great steps in the process of social development is the passage from the nomadic, or wandering, life to the settled state. This transition marks a momentous period in the life of any people. Most of the Semites that played a part in ancient history were settled and civilized long before the people of Israel had found a permanent home in the world. While the forefathers of Israel were yet wanderers in the desert of Arabia, the great civilizations of the ancient East had arisen and were already in process of decay. Babylonia, at the eastern extreme of the Semitic area, and Egypt, at the western, had begun the descent from their highest power. The Semitic world, indeed, was already old before the Israelitish nation was born.

The cross-roads and central point of the Semites was the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. The general name of this region before the arrival of the Israelites was *Canaan*. The great routes of Semitic trade ran through this land. Its main highways went not only along the coast, but farther back through the fertile strip that lay between the sea and the desert. Under these conditions it was natural that a considerable part of the inhabitants of Canaan should be a commercial people from very early times. One of their functions was to aid circulation of

² Barton, *Semitic Origins* (New York, 1902), p. 28. This book is indispensable to the English student of Semitics. The first chapter is a thorough discussion of "The Cradle of the Semites," concluding, as in the quotation, in favor of Arabia.

Semitic industrial products. The Canaanites had no national government. They were organized into a number of small "city-states." On the coast itself were Tyre and Sidon; while inland were many other cities, less famous, but equally important in the social history of the country. The larger cities that served as trading centers in Canaan were always fortified. Through them went the arteries of trade. Outside their walls, in the open country, were dependent, unwalled villages, or "daughters," as the Hebrew narrative calls them.³

In the centuries immediately preceding the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, this land had been ruled by three different oriental powers. The first of these was the Babylonians, who held sway there so long that their language was adopted as a medium of communication among the upper classes. But in the fifteenth century before Christ, Babylonian rule was terminated in Canaan. At home Babylonia was troubled by the rising military power of Assyria, her northern offshoot. In Canaan itself she was confronted by the Egyptians, who seized part of the territory. Governors from Egypt were placed in such Canaanite cities as Tyre, Jerusalem, Askelon, Gezer, and Hazor. But the rule of the new masters did not long extend over this region. Before a century had passed the governors of these districts were forced to appeal to the home government for military aid, saying that they were unable to hold the territory. Presently the land was relinquished, partly to local Canaanite princes, and partly to the Hittites, whose seat was northward in Asia Minor. It was at this interesting period of history that the Israelites broke from the Arabian desert into the land that was to be their home for more than a thousand years.

Up to this time the nation Israel had not been born. Hitherto the ancestors of Israel had been wandering clans of the desert, living the life of Semitic nomads. It is impossible to say what the special course of their history had been before the invasion of the land of Canaan, for no written records dating from that prehistoric age have survived. No people ever begins a historical narrative during the nomadic life; and the Israelites were no

³ I Judg. 1:27 f.

exception to this rule. It is true that uncritical reading of the Bible gives the impression that we possess a literally correct account of Israel's history before the settlement in Canaan. But in discussing the nature of the biblical material, we saw that these accounts have come down to us through the hands of authors who stand many centuries removed from the events described. The Bible does not give us contemporary narratives of the forefathers in the desert; it gives the traditions current among the Israelites long after they had acquired the land of Canaan. Unless we fix this fact securely in mind at the outset we shall find it a matter of increasing difficulty to understand the problem of the Bible. It is not that we must reject as untrustworthy the narratives referring to the period before the conquest. But we may handle the traditions of the earlier time only with great caution.

It has been pointed out above that one of the important items of agreement between modern research and biblical tradition is that the people of Israel are one of the families of the Semitic race. On this proposition modern science and ancient tradition are in harmony. We further noted that, among all the peoples of history, nomadic life has preceded settled life. With this necessary truth biblical tradition is also agreed. The ancestors of Israel, as is well known, are said to have roved the desert before establishing themselves in Canaan. Where biblical tradition agrees with the results of modern research into the history of other peoples at corresponding stages of progress, it may be safely received without question. Where the biblical tradition diverges from the general results of scientific investigation, we are not summarily to dismiss it as untrustworthy. We should remain in a state of suspended judgment until the traditions about earlier times have been examined (1) in the light of biblical evidence about conditions after the settlement, and (2) in view of pertinent evidence from the field of general history. The more the Bible is examined in this way, the more we are impressed with its fundamental trustworthiness as a sourcebook for the sociologist.

The prehistoric Israelites come before us, then, as nomads.

One of the facts that make nomadic life necessary is the precarious food supply offered by the uncultivated earth. The wandering tribes of Arabia today suffer hunger a large part of the time, owing to scanty food.⁴ This problem, therefore, must have had a large place in the life of Israel before the invasion of Canaan. Here again we are in agreement with biblical tradition. For we are told that long before the Israelites gained possession of this land, the forefathers experienced a terrible famine (Gen., chaps. 41 ff.). In their distress they settled in the land of Goshen. The region bearing this name was located on the northeast border of Egypt, fronting the desert. It was a fertile country, adapted to the needs of shepherds, but not to the demands of a more settled population. Goshen, therefore, was a primitive, outlying section of Egypt.

Considered in itself, there is nothing improbable in the claim that the nomadic forefathers of Israel sojourned in this place. The Bedawi, or desert wanderers, have often pastured their flocks here;⁵ so that Goshen has frequently been a temporary home for peoples that have had no political connection with Egypt. This being the situation we can easily see why the Egyptian religion had so little influence upon the religion of Israel. The Pentateuch, which has so much to say about the experiences of Israel in that country, is remarkably innocent of detailed knowledge about the religion of Egypt. How long the Israelite clans remained in Goshen it is impossible to say. It is important to emphasize that the tradition of a huge host leaving Egypt, and striking thence into the desert, is out of the question.⁶ The idea that the clans in Goshen became there a great nation was elaborated in view of the achievement of Israelite nationality and the imperial pretensions of the kings. The sources embodied in Judges, Samuel, and Kings prove that the nation Israel, of historical times, was a composite social body, whose descent is to be traced not only to the earlier Israelite clans of the desert, but also to resident populations already in Canaan before the arrival of

⁴Doughty, *Arabia Deserta* (Cambridge, 1888), index, "Hunger."

⁵H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History* (New York, 1903), p. 54.

⁶H. P. Smith, *op. cit.*, chap. iv.

Israel. The invaders gave their name to a mixed population which was afterward reduced to comparative unity. These considerations, together with the fact that large bodies of people cannot find subsistence in the desert, show us that the Israelites must have been few in number at this period. They seem to have wandered in the wilderness again after leaving Egypt. But in time they invaded the land of Canaan, and thus at last reached the home with which they are identified in history.

In describing the Israelite invasion of Canaan the biblical narratives reveal differences of conception that call for exercise of critical judgment. The general impression regarding the conquest is that when the invaders entered the land they swept all before them in a magnificently victorious campaign. According to this view of the situation, the movement had the character of a short, sharp, thorough-going conquest under a single general by the name of Joshua. The narrative most closely connected with this view is found in the book bearing the commander's name. The apparent purpose of the book of Joshua seems to be merely to describe the Israelite conquest of Canaan. The climax of the narrative is in the tenth and eleventh chapters, where the conquest is represented as complete: "So Joshua smote all the land, the hill-country, and the south, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, and he utterly destroyed all that breathed" (10:40). "So Joshua took the whole land. . . . And the land had rest from war" (11:23). There is no ambiguity nor uncertainty about the passages here quoted. But the general impression given by the book of Joshua is at variance with what we learn from other biblical narratives with equal claims to attention and greater claims to respect as trustworthy sources of information concerning these distant ages.

The true nature of the situation is very plainly indicated by the accounts following Joshua in the Old Testament. Although the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings come *after* Joshua in the present arrangement of the Bible, they embody material more ancient and more trustworthy than the passages reproduced above. This is one of the commonplaces of modern biblical knowledge. In the opening chapter of Judges it appears that the struggle of

the Israelites to possess Canaan, instead of taking place under the direction of Joshua, did not begin until Joshua had passed away. For in the first verse of Judges we read: "And it came to pass *after the death of Joshua* that the children of Israel asked . . . Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites to fight against them?" As we continue, there unrolls before us a picture very different from that given by the other account. In reading on from the opening sentence just quoted, we do not come into the full swing of the narrative until we reach the twenty-seventh verse. Up to this point we are introduced only to affairs of the southern part of the territory invaded by Israel. This region was given the general name of Judah, since it became identified with the Israelite family of that name. The Judahites are said to have gone up first against the Canaanites. But the material in the earlier part of the chapter is confused. The account seems at first harmonious with Joshua (except in the matter of Joshua's death); but from the twenty-seventh verse onward, when we come into the full tide of the narrative, the difference between Judges and the other book is in bold relief. We reproduce a part of this highly important section, giving explanatory insertions in brackets:

And [the clans of] Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of [the walled city of] Beth-shean and its villages; nor the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages; nor the inhabitants of Dor and its villages; nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; *but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.*

And [the clans of] Ephraim drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; *but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.*

[The clans of] Zebulun drove not out the inhabitants of Kitron; nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; *but the Canaanites dwelt among them.*

[The clans of] Asher drove not out the inhabitants of Acco, nor the inhabitants of Sidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob; *but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out.*

[The clans of] Naphtali drove not out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; *but they dwelt among the Canaanites.*

This highly important passage relates to the northern and larger part of the territory that became the land of Israel. Here the great difference between Joshua and Judges first comes fully

into view. Instead of sweeping the land clear of its former inhabitants, the invading Israelites merely acquired the open country districts, leaving the Canaanites in possession of a crowd of walled cities together with numberless villages round about the cities. In the southern part of the territory the conquest was also partial, as we shall see by carrying our examination along to the nineteenth of Judges. Here we find a remarkable account of an Israelite who traveled through the land many years after his ancestors had settled in it. Beginning in the tenth verse we quote:

He rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus (the same is Jerusalem). . . . When they were by Jebus the day was far spent. And the servant said unto his master, come, I pray thee, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it. And his master said unto him, we will not turn aside into the city of a foreigner that is not of the children of Israel; but we will pass over to Gibeah.

How long this was after the Israelite settlement we cannot say; but it certainly is explicit with reference to our present point. Not only did the invaders fail to dislodge the Canaanites in the north; but they had no better success in the south. Going on to the fifth chapter of II Samuel, our attention is arrested by evidence that Jerusalem remained in possession of the Canaanites down into the period of the Israelite monarchy in the earlier part of the career of David:

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land; who spake unto David saying, except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither. . . . Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion. . . . And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. . . . And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem.

These notices are enough to show that the conquest of the southern part of the land, like that of the north, was a partial one.

Reverting to the situation as a whole, we may conceive the invasion of Canaan as having everywhere swept the Israelites into the country districts, leaving the original inhabitants masters of the fortified cities. Exhaustive study of the Bible proves that *this* conception of the conquest is true to the facts.

Our approach to Israelite society has now brought us near enough to begin a definitive treatment of the institutions common to Israel and the rest of the Semitic world. The work just ahead will not carry us into the center of the problem of biblical sociology; but it is a necessary part of the introductory discipline. When we catch our first glimpses of it in the narratives of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, and in the traditions of the Pentateuch, the social system of Israel was in the general category of ancient Semitic life. The wonderful social process by which this people made its great and peculiar mark on the world was through modification of the earlier system that we are now to examine from different standpoints.

II. KINSHIP INSTITUTIONS OF ISRAEL

Social institutions are not independent facts. They are phases of a single reality common to them all. This one reality is human life considered as organized into a system of relations between persons. The social problem is always many special problems in one. What is needed here, then, is a conspectus; and it is finally a matter of minor importance whether our first view be upon one side of the subject or another, if only the actual social system under investigation be somehow put clearly before us. Our survey begins with an examination of those aspects of Israelite society relating to the family in general. The justification for beginning at this point in the social mechanism will appear as we proceed.

It is very hard for the modern mind to realize the strength of kinship in the early history of society. Only with an effort can we see the importance of the blood bond in primitive times. But in early history *kinship* is the only conceivable social cement, as it is among the more backward peoples of the world today. It is the one basis on which the structure of society can be reared. It is the one tie about which relations between the members of society may turn. The modern civil state in which we live puts the tie of blood in a subordinate and inconspicuous place. But in an early society like ancient Israel the civil state was unthinkable. When we consider the biological aspects of the material

with which sociology deals, this emphasis upon the blood-bond in early society does not seem strange. Amid the complexity of the modern state, the simple, elemental relations of life are overlaid by an imposing network of artificial relations. The institutions of modern society are a deposit which obscures the fundamental facts of the social situation. But in early history a simpler organization of human life thrust the facts of kinship clearly into the foreground. All social relations turned at first around the ties of blood; and where no *de facto* blood relation could be shown it was assumed by legal fictions.

Not only is our introductory view of Israelite society suggested by these general considerations; it is in line with the conventional disposition of ethnic material within the Bible itself. For one of the common biblical terms applied to Israelite society is the phrase *beni Israel*, meaning sons or children of Jacob, the alleged ancestor of the tribes or clans that came into Canaan from the desert. We hear much about families, clans, and tribes in Israel. The "fathers" are spoken of with an emphasis and meaning which the term lacks in modern usage. The people collectively and their putative ancestor were known by the alternative terms Israel and Jacob. Thus we see that the biblical material itself suggests a point at which our examination may begin.

In considering the invasion of Canaan, we saw that this movement was effected by different kinship groups, for example, the family of Manasseh. Each group conquered a home for itself in the coveted land. The country districts, into which the invaders poured, were mostly in the highlands—the hilly districts. The south largely consisted of the "hill country of Judah;" while the north was in great part the "hill country of Ephraim." The unconquered parts, already spoken of as remaining in possession of the earlier inhabitants, were mostly in the valleys and the lowlands. At many points the Canaanites could look up from their walled cities and see the distant movements of their new neighbors in the highlands. The familiar saying, "The mountains are round about Jerusalem," refers to but one locality; but there were many other untaken Canaanite cities that could "lift up

their eyes unto the hills." The newcomers, then, were highlanders and rustics. It would have been impossible for these primitive kinship groups from the desert to lead any other life at first than that of the open country. The cities of the Canaanites—with their manufactures, their markets, their schools, and their long centuries of civilization—these places would at first have been impossible for Israel. The invaders could more easily acquire the habits and pursuits of the rural districts. The Israelites in the desert had been a pastoral people. When settling in Canaan they became in large measure tillers of the earth; although many of them remained shepherds and stock raisers, or combined these more primitive pursuits with farm life. For centuries after the settlement the life of the Israelites was of a primitive character; and their controlling forces were very largely the rustic interests. Their social organization was determined by that of the desert clans from which they had sprung; and they were not a little influenced by the kindred peoples of the desert that were always coming in contact with them on the frontier of the land.

The period following the settlement is generally spoken of as the "age of the Judges." We are told repeatedly in the book of Judges that "in those days there was no king in Israel" (21:25, etc.). Absence of a king raises the presumption that there was no national organization or machinery at that period. This throws out into sharp relief the local institutions based on kinship which always precede larger structures in the evolution of society. The development of ancient Israel corresponds in essential features to the processes of universal history. The important statement that there was no king in Israel in the period of the Judges is followed by the further item, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Can a sympathetic interpretation deduce from this additional statement the existence of anarchy in the absence of a general government? Let us examine the words carefully. Hasty reading might lead us to suppose that before there was a national organization in Israel every individual—every person—did precisely as he pleased. But study of the books of Judges and Samuel shows that there was government in Israel even though there was no *national* government. In

that early age there was a rude but powerful organization and control of society based on kinship.

Gideon . . . blew a trumpet; and [the clan of] Abiezer was gathered together after him. And he sent messengers throughout all [the clans of] Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him. And he sent messengers unto [the clans of] Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them" (6:34 f.).

Whether or not the editor of Judges believed that his forefathers lived in anarchy, we may interpret his words liberally. It is not every person, but every *man*, who is said to have done what was right in his own eyes. Now the free men were the only legal persons in the society of that age. They were, in last resort, the only persons that had standing before the law. The men were the heads of the family groups, and of those larger groups of families called *clans*. Society in that period was governed by the usages of the clan. We may therefore give a liberal—but not a literal—rendering of the statements under discussion as follows: *In those days there was no national organization. Society was governed by the clan.*

When we speak of kinship in modern society, we think at once of the family as we know it. *Our* kinship institutions have a *private* character. Outside of our private kinship ties we are bound by various other obligations; but none of these external ties are based on kinship. In Israelite society a different situation prevailed. Outside of immediate family ties, as well as inside, the individual was bound by obligations based on kinship. Society was, indeed, regarded merely as an extension of the family. The immediate family group was part of a larger kin-group which we call the clan, and which the Israelites called the *mishphaha*, מִשְׁפָּחָה. An older term for the clan seems to have been *hay*, הַי. This more ancient word is identical with the Arabic designation of the clan. It appears in the Hebrew name given to Adam's wife: "And the man called his wife's name *Hawwah*, because she was the mother of all hay" (Gen. 3:20). The letters w and y are interchangeable; so that the name *Hawwah* is merely one form of a Semitic word for clan with a feminine ending, *ah*. The traditions of Israel make woman,

instead of man, the personification of the bond of kinship. Adam stands for the human race as a whole, the name being the Hebrew common noun *adam*, אָדָם, used as proper noun.⁷ This is merely a suggestion pointing back to an earlier standard of kinship among the Israelites. It would be worth little in itself were it not that we have a large mass of evidence pointing in the same direction. As already observed, the ruling, or standard, form of the clan after the settlement in Canaan was the patriarchal, in which the fathers, as such, were the heads and chiefs. But, along with the patriarchal standard, there are clear traces of the survival of another form of clan organization which was at one time apparently common to all the Semitic peoples. This was the *matriarchal* clan, wherein kinship was fixed by motherhood and not by fatherhood, and in which descent was traced through mothers and not through fathers. The institutions of Israel after the settlement were exposed to the powerful, but vanishing, influence of matriarchy; and it will be well to consider the earlier standard of kinship first. The field will then be clear to take up the forms of kinship that became standard later.

For one who is familiar only with society in which kinship is fixed by fatherhood, it is difficult to comprehend what is meant by matriarchy. Under this institution the woman does not leave her own people and marry into the husband's family, as under patriarchy. On the contrary, the husband leaves his people and enters the wife's clan. The heads of such clans are the wife's male relatives. It is not the father, but the mother, who gives names to the children. Thus, in the oldest Pentateuchal documents (J and E) the children are usually named by the mother. For instance, the sons of Jacob-Israel, who become in their turn the progenitors of the twelve tribes, are all named by Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob (Gen. 29:31 f.; chap. 30 *passim*; 35:18).⁸ Accordingly, when Jacob married he was received into the family of his wives. After he had lived with their

⁷ W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (London, 1907), p. 208.

⁸ This has been pointed out by Wellhausen, Noldeke, and others. In the P documents, which are the latest literary elements in the Old Testament, the father gives the name.

people for twenty years he carried away his wives and their children by stealth, lest Laban, the head of the clan, should insist on his undoubted right to retain the women and children. "And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children" (Gen. 31:43).

The ancient morality of Israel saw nothing wrong in the marriage of brother and sister, provided they were not the children of the same *mother*. In other words, husband and wife might have the same *father* within the limits of good morals; but if they had the same mother the situation would be regarded with horror as incest. The most conspicuous biblical example of this is the case of Abraham and Sarah, who were at once husband and wife and brother and sister. In Gen. 20:12 Abraham says of Sarah: "She is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother." Another illustration is the case of Amnon, a *son* of king David, and Tamar, a *daughter* of king David (II Sam., chap. 13). Amnon and Tamar were thus brother and sister by the same father. Nevertheless, they were not born of the same mother; and the possibility is mentioned of marriage between them (vs. 13). If they had been married the situation would have corresponded exactly to the case of Abraham and Sarah.⁹ To the modern mind this attitude with reference to marriage is very strange. Our instinct is to prohibit not only the union of maternal brother and sister, as the Israelites did, but that of paternal brother and sister also; and it perplexes us to find such cases in biblical society. This feature of the situation, however, is odd merely because the entire social system of matriarchy is unaccountable to us. Community of descent on the father's side was not regarded as a bar to marriage in ancient Israel because the Israelites had not yet fully passed from the stage of social development in which maternity fixes kinship. Although the patriarchal system was now the standard form of the family, the practices and feelings bred under

⁹ The student who compares this practice with Deut. 27:22, where the union of a man with his sister by either parent is cursed, will be perplexed; but it needs to be emphasized that the document containing this law comes from a late period of the history, when patriarchy had a much firmer hold upon society than in the earlier period.

the earlier matriarchal standard were persistent. Although fatherhood was now recognized at the head of the kinship system, the controlling currents of social life still ran through the channels cut by motherhood kinship. Brother and sister by the same mother might not marry because *they* were real kinsfolk. But fatherhood had not yet impressed itself upon social institutions with sufficient authority to put the marriage of paternal brother and sister outside the domain of good morals.

Another archaism was the social position of the woman who bore children outside of wedlock. What we should call harlotry, or prostitution, in modern society, met with little or no reprobation in the earlier centuries following the settlement of Israel in Canaan. One of the Hebrew designations of such a woman was *zonah*, זֹנָה, commonly rendered harlot. We are told that Jephtha, one of the judges, was the son of a *zonah*, and was brought up in his father's house with the other children. In Gen. 38:15 the same word occurs, but in vss. 21 and 22 is equated by implication with another term of great importance, i. e., *kedeshah*, קְדֵשָׁה. In the King James translation both *zonah* and *kedeshah* are rendered "harlot." This usage is also followed by the English revised version of 1882; but the latter indicates that the term in vss. 21 and 22 is not the same as that in vs. 15 by printing the transliteration *kedeshah* in the margin. This also is improved upon by the American revision. Here, as in the earlier translations, the word *zonah*, in vs. 15, is rendered "harlot;" but *kedeshah*, besides being transliterated in the margin, is translated "prostitute" in the text itself. In both revisions, the margin explains that the *kedeshah* is "a woman dedicated to impure heathen worship." The revisers are to be honored for trying to give the public a Bible that is more faithful to the Hebrew original than is the misleading, and in many cases ignorant, version prepared in the time of King James. Here, as in many other places, the revisers labor under great embarrassment. For it is manifestly impossible to introduce exhaustive marginal treatises on all points in question; and it may be doubted whether the general reader will get much light from the marginal explanation just quoted. The *kedeshah* was a recognized public

institution of Israelite society until a late period. As the revisers point out, she was in some way dedicated to religion. She was, in fact, a sacred prostitute, living near a shrine, and connected with the earlier system of Israel's religious life. As the prophet Hosea says, "They sacrifice with the *kedeshoth*" (Hos. 4:14.)¹⁰ A Hebrew term for sanctuary, or place of worship, is *kedesh*, קֹדֶשׁ. This appears transliterated in the English text of Num. 13:26; Judg. 4:10; II Kings 15:29, and elsewhere. The designation of the sacred prostitute is thus merely the word for sanctuary with the feminine affix, *ah*. The root of the term, appearing in all its variations, is the consonants *kdsh*. The fundamental meaning is that of being set apart in the physical sense. It indicates the old Semitic idea of *holiness*, or physical separation. It occurs (although in a higher moral sense) in the song of the flying seraph in Isaiah's vision of the temple: "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh* [i. e., holy, holy, holy] is Yahweh" (Isa. 6:3). Thus we see that the same fundamental term is applied to the god of Israel, to the sanctuary, and to the sacred prostitute.

It is impossible to explain this public religious character of harlotry in ancient Israel as a mere exhibition of bad morals. In the form of an established institution, it is to be found all through ancient Semitic society.¹¹ At the same time there is an immense mass of evidence (partly cited above) indicating that kinship was fixed by motherhood before patriarchy became a social standard. Coterminous with these important facts goes proof that the most popular and widespread religious worship throughout the Semitic area was not that of a male deity, but that of the goddess *Ishtar*.¹² This female divinity represents the earlier Semitic mother-goddess worshiped under the matriarchal system. She appears in Israel associated with male divinities that were known as the *Baals*, or *Baalim*. Thus, in Judg. 2:13,

¹⁰ This word is merely the plural form of *kedeshah*. The syllable *oth* is the plural ending of words that are in the feminine gender in Hebrew. In the masculine gender the plural termination is *im*; for example, cherubim.

¹¹ Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi* (Chicago, 1904), secs. 110, 127, 178, 182; W. R. Smith, *Early Religion of the Semites* (London, 1894), p. 455; Jastrow, *Religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians* (Boston, 1898), p. 485.

¹² Cf. Barton, *Semitic Origins*, p. 83.

and many other passages, the Baal-*im* and Ashtar-*oth* are the male and female deities worshiped by the Israelites from the settlement in Canaan onwards for hundreds of years. Ashtar is merely a phonetic variation of Ishtar. Now the religious conceptions and institutions of any society reflect the prevailing social constitution. *Stated in terms of kinship, the well-known division of Israel's religious allegiance between male and female objects of worship is correlated with persistence of matriarchal institutions in a society blindly struggling to establish patriarchy as the rule of kinship. From this point of view, the significance of Israel for mankind lies in the triumph of a male deity over all divine rivals of both sexes—a triumph so complete as to involve utter extermination of all other cults, both male and female.* This proposition may be misunderstood at the moment, for we are now dealing in a partial way with only a fraction of the problem. The entire content of our thesis cannot be disclosed until the general situation has been examined.

Although we seem to have digressed from our immediate subject, the explanation of the *kedeshah* is, we believe, contained in the foregoing statements. We have pointed out that the older documents of the Pentateuch (J and E), as well as the most ancient material in the other books, exhibit clear traces of matriarchy. Now, the final triumph of the distinctive Old Testament system is connected with the rise of the priesthood to an authority it never had before. In the priestly documents of the Old Testament, fatherhood stands in a position of absolute supremacy at the head of kinship institutions, and all remnants of the earlier matriarchy are put under the ban. Our conclusion is, that the *kedeshah* was connected with the worship of the mother-goddess Ishtar, whose place in the pantheon was fixed under the ancient matriarchy; and that the *kedeshah* represented survival of sexual relations and birth standards that were not counted wrong at earlier points in the social process. Undoubtedly, such an institution, when surviving in the presence of patriarchal standards, would be subject to abuses, and would become the center of much depravity. This, however, does not obscure the fact that in a patriarchal society harlotry connected

with religion was able to maintain the character of an established public institution for many centuries.

So much for the persistence of earlier standards in the kinship system of ancient Israel. Although our survey now turns from these interesting facts, we shall recur to them later. In due time it will become evident that the survivals of matriarchy played a humble but important part in the mighty social process that gave us the Bible and its distinctive religion. It would be both interesting and instructive to go into the conditions underlying the rise of patriarchy in the face of the earlier matriarchal standards; but such an excursus is impossible in this connection.

Under ancient Israelite patriarchy the husband and father was the *proprietor* of his wife and family. He owned his wife (or wives), children, houses, lands, and cattle. In this proprietary character he was known by the term *baal*, בַּעַל. As thus used, the word is not familiar to those who read the Bible only through modern translations. It is, however, well known through transliteration as a common appellation of deities, for instance, the Baalim already noted; and it is less known as an element in theophoric proper names, for instance, Jerrubbaal (Judg. 7:1), Eshbaal (1 Chron. 8:33). But whenever it occurs in the Hebrew text as a common designation of men (i. e., aside from use as an element in proper nouns) it is rendered by some other word, such as husband, or owner. Study of this term is highly instructive regarding the constitution of the patriarchal family and clan. The position of the head of the family is concretely shown by certain Old Testament laws in the book of Exodus where the term *baal* is twice used. It is concealed in the translation; but in the Hebrew text the situation comes out clearly. In Exodus 21:2 we read: "If thou buy a Hebrew slave, six years shall he serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. *If he be the baal of a wife*, then his wife shall go out with him." The phrase we emphasize is translated in all the English versions, "If he be married." The term *baal*, as here employed, might signify no more than husband if we had only this instance of its use. But later in the same chapter it occurs in a connection which, taken with other cases, proves that the fundamental sense

of the word refers to pure and simple ownership, as already explained. In Exod. 21:28 we read: "If an ox gore a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned . . . but the *baal of the ox shall be quit.*" In this case the versions agree in translating the term *baal* by the word "owner." Thus we see that the same Hebrew term designates the possession of a woman and the ownership of an ox. The head of the family was *baal* of his wife and of his cattle.

The Israelite wife, then, was the property of her husband. In ultimate analysis, she was in a chattel relation to him. This fact is illustrated from another standpoint by the institution corresponding to our marriage ceremony. A man obtained his wife by outright purchase, either in money or in goods, from her father or her male guardian. In Hebrew this price is called the *mohar*, מֹהָר. After payment the woman passed into the ownership of her purchaser. No marriage ceremony in our sense was considered necessary. Payment of the *mohar* was at once the ceremony and legalization of marriage. It is from this point of view that the Deuteronomic law regulates the seduction of a virgin. The offender shall pay the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and take her as his wife (Deut. 22:28, 29). A slightly different version of this law is given in Exod. 22:17, thus: "If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the *mohar* of virgins." On this view, the outrage takes the character of a damage to the rights of private property.

These facts make it clear that the Hebrew wife was practically a slave. Before the institution of marriage could assume the form here indicated the slavery of woman must have been established in social usage.¹³ The inferior position of Israelite women may be regarded as an aspect of the ancient slavery of both sexes. Not only were women held as chattels, but men also were held as property. In this respect Israel was no exception; for slavery underlay the structure of all ancient societies. We shall recur to this fact at later stages of our examination.

Under a social system in which the husband is owner of his wife, there is naturally no restriction upon the number of wives

¹³ Cf. W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

he may have except the very important limits imposed by his own economic resources and the number of women available. Polygamy, therefore, was an element in the domestic institutions of Israel. Accordingly, we find that many Israelites had two wives; some, three or four; while the rich had still higher numbers. Of course, it was only the wealthy who were able to maintain large establishments. The polygamy practiced by men like David and Solomon must have been exceptional; and in the latter case there may be some exaggeration in the biblical accounts. Plurality of wives was quite limited among the mass of the people. A good illustration is the case of Samuel's father: "Now there was a certain man of the hill country of Ephraim; and his name was Elkanah; and he had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninah" (1 Sam. 1:1, 2). Jacob also had the same number (Gen., chap. 29), and Lamech had two wives (Gen. 4:19). Polygamy, however, was gradually restricted in later times; and the ideal of monogamy was undoubtedly present in the minds of some of the biblical writers.

When the head of the family died, his property went to the eldest son. If there were no son, the estate descended to some other male relative, or, in default of this, to an adopted male heir. Thus the organized life of the kinship group was continued, and the family property was kept together. Wives and daughters could not inherit the family headship. Inheritance must by all means go down through the male line. This principle was absolute. An instructive example is found in Gen. 15:2, where Abraham declares: "I go childless; and he that shall be the possessor of my family is Eliezer of Damascus." By reference to the narrative, we find that Eliezer is the steward, or chief slave, of Abraham's family. If Abraham die without male issue, the steward is to be his heir. An example of the adoption of a trusted servant so that he could inherit is found in I Chron. 2:34: "Now Sheshan had no sons, but [he had] daughters. And Sheshan had a slave, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his slave to wife."¹⁴

These references to adoption show that while actual blood

¹⁴ It is hardly necessary to go into all details of the domestic system.

kinship was regarded as the fundamental bond of society, the principle did not work out consistently in practice. Israelites were frequently in contact with aliens, or foreigners with whom it became necessary to assume close relations of different kinds. If the original kinship theory were literally followed out, it would have excluded all foreign blood from Israel. As a matter of fact, the society called Israel was the product of an ethnic mixture equal to that which has occurred in the history of most nations. It was, in the first place, the result of union between the incoming desert clans and earlier Canaanite inhabitants; and subsequently other outsiders were grafted into the social body. Where these aliens were women they came in, of course, as the property of their husbands. Where they were of the male sex, they came either as chattels or as adopted freemen, according to the circumstances of the case. An outsider thus adopted was known as a *ger*, גֵּר.¹⁵ The Bible has much to say about the "stranger" and the "sojourner." It is usually the *gerim* (plural) that are thus designated. Free foreigners became a part of Israelite society by adoption into some native family, after which they were treated as blood-members of the kin. The inclusion of free foreigners involved a special agreement, or covenant, called *berith*, בְּרִית, and acceptance of the family cult by the incomer.¹⁶

Thus we see that the kinship theory of society, not only in Israel but throughout the ancient world, could not be consistently put into practice. Although the social structure of ancient Israel was largely determined by actual blood kinship, it was not this, in last analysis, that fixed the structure and function of institutions. The condition under which outsiders were adopted into Israelite society was *contact*. It was contact outside the limits of actual blood kinship which made it necessary to set up a fictitious kinship through adoption and covenant. And kinship itself may be viewed as a special form of contact. For, even within its limits, if an individual do not conform to the kinds of contact

¹⁵ Plural, *gerim*.

¹⁶ This brings before us again the religious phase of society. It is perhaps well to emphasize that from the standpoint of the present paper the subject of religion is incidental, and cannot be developed at this point.

prescribed by conventionality, he is thrust out from the midst of his blood relatives. He thus makes himself an alien to his own kin. We see, therefore, that even in early society kinship is not supreme. It is contact that rules kinship from the outset. The *form* of early social psychology is determined by kinship; but its *function* is determined by contact.