

Aleksy KLAWEK

THE NAME JAHVEH IN THE LIGHT OF MOST RECENT DISCUSSIONS

The name that the Bible gives to God of the people of Israel is Jahveh, later distorted into Jehovah, a word of uncertain etymology. There have been several hypotheses put forward to explain the name, but none of them is regarded by Semitologists as sufficiently justified. The problem has again been raised recently, and several new opinions have been expressed; they are novel in that each proposes a new etymological root for the name, but their value is highly questionable. B. Hrozný (1942) derives the name Jahveh from Hittite jajaš "treading, moon"; Walker (1948) traces it back to Egyptian Jah-we "God of the sun"; Goitein (1956) to Semitic hāwā "to be jealous, ardent". A. Murtonen in his large study of the names of God in the Old Testament (*Studia Orientalia* XVIII, 1, Helsinki 1952) attempts to show that the name Jahveh contains the root hwy, preserved in Ugaritic and meaning "proclaim, enjoin". Still, the most plausible solution seems to be the one most frequently adopted so far, viz. that the name Jahveh is derived from the root hājā "to be".

Even though we prefer the root hājā, the traditional explanation that Jahveh denotes the one who exists (who is) must be modified. The notion of existence, first created by the Greek philosophers only, was too abstract and quite alien to the Semitic spirit. Ratschow (1942) demonstrates in his monograph on the word hājā that the verb expresses "existence united with action" (*Werden und Wirken*). The conclusion is that the name of Jahveh contains an idea closely corresponding to the Biblical texts: the idea that God is ever present among his people, ever active and acting for their good.

The grammatical structure of the name is still disputed. Is the word a noun (L. Koehler), or a participle (H. Bauer-P. Leander, H. Torczyner)? A causative verbal form (hifil), or an ordinary gal form? E. Dhorme continues to defend the hifil interpretation, but two arguments speak against it: first, hājā does not occur as a causative in Hebrew; secondly, the idea of God the giver of existence, God the creator, was to develop in Israel only later. Consequently, Jahveh ought to be regarded as the imperfect of hājā based on the ordinary gal form.

It remains unclear what the relationship was between Jahveh and the apparently identical names Jāhū, Jāh, Jehō, Jō. Of course, one cannot accept a lengthening of an original Jāhū to Jahveh. It would be much easier to understand the shortening of Jahveh to Jāhū, but that is not fully justified, either. This gives very good linguistic and historical and religious grounds to R. Mayer's (1958) hypothesis that there originally had been two distinct nomina divina, an older Jāhū and a newer Jahveh, and that they later came to be regarded as identical. The form jāhū could have originated from the same root hājā/hāwā or from its allomorph jāhaw. The existence of which can be postulated on the basis of such pairs as jašā'-šū', or jāgar-gūr. On the other hand, the etymology proposed by G. R. Driver, who splits Jāhū into Jāh and hu' and suggests that the former, an exclamation in praise of God, was attached to the latter, a demonstrative pronoun, is highly artificial. The separation of the forms Jahveh and Jāhū gives us a new perspective on the occurrences of the name in other Semitic texts and makes it easier to understand its use outside Israel.

Finally, it has to be noted that the generally accepted translation of the passage containing the etymology of Jahveh in Exodus 3,14 as "I am who I am" is inexact. Hebrew language often employs first person in relative clauses where European languages use third person. In other words, the correct translation is "I am he who is". The text was already understood in this way by the Greek translators of the Septuagint, who rendered it as $\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\iota\mu\ \acute{o}\ \acute{o}\nu$.

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Jean CARMIGNAC

THÉOLOGIE DU MAGNIFICAT

Inspiration biblique

Le Magnificat est essentiellement un poème biblique, qui s'inspire de tout l'Ancien Testament et qui en condense la richesse.

Il ressemble surtout au Cantique d'Anne (1 Samuel 2, 1-10), dont il reprend les idées essentielles, mais sans parler des "ennemis", de "l'arc des guerriers", de la "femme stérile", de la "perte des méchants", ni même du "roi messianique". D'ailleurs cette similitude dans la pensée s'allie à une grande indépendance dans l'expression: aucune formule précise n'est empruntée à ce poème (sauf peut-être "abaissant l'élevé" de 1 Sam. 2, 7, s'il a inspiré par contraste "élevant les miséreux" de notre stique 11), alors qu'est manifestement citée la Prière d'Anne: "si tu regardes la misère de ta servante" (1 Sam. 1, 11).

Le Magnificat, comme le Cantique d'Anne, chante la miséricorde de Dieu en faveur de ses serviteurs et sa puissance pour retourner les situations. Mais le Magnificat est plus dense et il est purifié de tout désir de vengeance; il rayonne de sérénité.

Ce poème anthologique nous renseigne sur les livres de la Bible spécialement médités par l'auteur¹. Les citations à peu près certaines renvoient à 1 Sam. 1, 11; Isaïe 41, 8 associé à 42, 1; Habacuc 3, 18 et les Psaumes 8, 2 et 10; 18, 51; 89, 11; 98, 3; 103, 17; 107, 9; 118, 15-16. Beaucoup d'autres citations restent plus ou moins douteuses, en particulier parce que la même formule du Magnificat peut être empruntée à plusieurs sources. Avec ces réserves, on relève 3 allusions à la Genèse (17, 7; 30, 13; 31, 42), 2 au Deutéronome (10, 21; 15, 3), 2 au premier livre de Samuel (2, 7; 6, 3), 3 à Isaïe (10, 33; 57, 15; 61, 10), 1 à Ezéchiel (26, 16), 1 à Mi-