

WERE PROPHETS ASSOCIATED WITH THE KING IN SOME OFFICIAL CAPACITY, OR DID THEY COME OUT OF THE PEOPLE AND OFTEN OPPOSE THE KING?

Of paramount importance in the history of Israel was the freedom and independence enjoyed by the prophets, their ability to upraid the kings and princes for their sins. From the beginning of the monarchy, the king was at any moment in peril of rebuke, even of rejection, by the prophets, who reminded him that the king's sovereignty was not unlimited, that over the king's mishpat stood the mishpat of the Lord - an idea that frequently clashed with the exigencies of government. (Heschel, pp. 478-9) . . .

Though such centralization ((i.e. where the prophets in Greece, the diviners in Babylonia, the Canaanite nebiim stood in close association with the cult, and belonged in a sense to the staff of the sanctuary)) never fully materialized in Jerusalem, the priests seem at times to have succeeded in establishing an alliance with the nebiim, with both groups abandoning the position of independence in relation to the court.<sup>24</sup>

24 In complete reversal of the older view that the literary prophets stood in sharp opposition to priest and cult, Scandinavian scholars have advanced the theory that the literary prophets, not only the nebiim, were attached to the sanctuaries in the capacity of diviners, and are to be regarded as members of cultic prophetic associations. Prophet and priest, far from being exponents of opposite types of religion, were both officials of the cult. This theory, first advanced by S. Mowinckle, Psalmenstudien, III (Kristiana, 1923), was further developed by A. Haldar, Assocications of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala, 1945), who interpreted Hebrew prophecy in terms of the Babylonian barū and mahhu guilds. A. R. Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 29, maintains that "the part played by the prophet in the drama of Israelite religion was primarily that of a cultic specialist." There is, however, no evidence to justify such a sweeping allegation. (Heschel, p.481)

Nathan is called by Sandmel a "court prophet" of David. Gad was another. (Sandmel, p. 51)

When a king consulted one or more prophets about the best time to wage war, the prophet was involved in political affairs. (Sandmel, p. 54)

. . . the anti-monarchic attitude which we find in the 8th-cent. propnets, and the king-making and revolutionary activities which are characteristic of the propnets of the 9th cent., are both found in the traditions gathered round the figure of Samuel. It is noteworthy that although in the early traditions about Samuel he is connected with the sanctuary at Shiloh, and is seen performing priestly functions at Ramah, yet he is never represented as having any connection with the priesthood during Saul's reign. (Hook in Peake's, 146)

The next development resulting from the introduction of kingship was the new relationship established between the king and the propnetic order. We find propnets attached to the court in an official character: Gad is described as the king's seer (S. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, iii, 10). Under the monarchy the court-propnets would seem to have fulfilled similar functions to those exercised by the barū in Assyria on behalf of the king. The Assyrian king never went to war or performed any public act of importance without consulting his staff of barū-priests. . . . Modern study on the Psalter has led to the view now generally accepted that many psalms exhibit a pattern of prophetic oracular responses given in answer to inquiry by the king or by individuals. (Hooke in Peake's, 147)