

Ringgren, Helmer, Israelite Religion trans. by D. R. Green(Fortress Press:Phila.)1966
A trans. of Israelitische Religion pub. by Verlag, Stuttgart, 1963

p. 39 (cont'd) P gives a detailed description of it as a portable sanctuary, similar in all essentials to the later temple in Jerusalem. This tent has therefore usually been assumed to represent nothing more than a retrojection of later conditions into the early desert period. But even though this detailed description is found in the latest strata of the Pentateuch, it should be noted that the earlier traditions also mention a tent, though without providing an exact description. In addition, there is evidence for portable sanctuaries in the form of tents both among the pre-Islamic Arabs and also among the modern Bedouins. Among the former, the qubbah was a small tent of red leather in which the stone images of the tribal gods were carried with the tribe when traveling. During religious ceremonies and military marches it was transported on the back of a camel; in camp, it was set up beside the sheikh's tent and served as an oracle sanctuary.⁴⁵ The modern Bedouins have a similar tent sanctuary that they call 'utfah or markab; when they travel, this tent is transported by camel.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Diodorus(XX.65.1) reports that the ancient Carthaginians had in their camp a small sacred tent beside the tent of their chief. A picture from Palmyra portrays a religious procession with a camel carrying a small tent; there is even evidence for the word qubbah in Palmyrene inscriptions.⁴⁷ We must conclude, therefore, that there is nothing improbable in the Israelite traditions of a tent sanctuary if we disregard the late description, which obviously represents only an idealized picture patterned after the Temple. That the tent of meeting was an oracle sanctuary is indicated by its very name. In addition, Exodus 33.7 states expressly that people went to the tent to seek Yahweh, i.e., to obtain an oracle. There Yahweh spoke to Moses "face to face"(Exod. 33.11); Moses therefore functions here as the mediator of divine decrees.

45 H. Lammens, "Le culte des betyles," Bulletin de L'institut francais d' archeologie orientale, XVII(1919), 39ff.(also: L'arabie occidentale avant l'hegire((Beyrouth: Imprimerie catholique,1928)),pp.101 ff.)

46 De Vaux, Ancient Israel (1961) p. 296

47 Ibid, p. 297