

ISRAEL'S PROPHETS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN OTHER LANDS, BUT NOT PRECISELY IDENTICAL

re Mohammed It may be added that the preaching of an imminent judgement and the exhortation to repentance were also characteristic of the Arabian Prophet as well as of the prophets of Ephraim and Judah notwithstanding the fact that, in the content of their preaching, the difference between Mohammed and the Israelite prophets was much greater than the resemblance. (Lindblom, p. 13)

The Finnish trance-preachers are said to reveal "many traits common to all representatives of the ecstatic-prophetic type." (Lindblom, p. 18)

re prophets in Greece. Philo's description of what a true prophet is . . . might very well be taken as a characterization of the prophetic type in the world of religion as a whole. (Lindblom, p. 29).

As has been demonstrated in the first chapter of this book, ecstasy and ecstatic prophecy are not restricted to specific peoples; they appear everywhere in the world, irrespective of race and culture. It can never be proved that prophetic ecstasy was not indigenous in Israel as well as in other peoples throughout the world. But might not a genuine Hebrew movement have borrowed forms and customs from the pagan world? This possibility must be admitted; but it is scarcely likely that the Yahweh prophets in Israel, zealous as they were for the genuine Yahwistic faith and cult, adopted from a foreign religion features so markedly pagan as the bull skins of the Baal priests. In the opinion of the present writer another explanation is more plausible, namely that the skin and the hairy mantle derive their origin from a nomadic usage, well known among the inhabitants of the desert. (Lindblom, p. 66)

The resemblance between the prophetic associations in ancient Israel and the dervish associations in the Islamic world has often been noted . . . The analogy of the dervish associations supports the essential correctness of the Old Testament traditions concerning the manner of life of the early Hebrew prophets and helps us to a better understanding of the available records. (Lindblom, p. 70)

In numerous publications I have compared the prophets in ancient Israel with the medieval and other mystics. In doing so my interest has always been to use the visionary experiences of the mystics to throw light upon the revelatory experiences of the prophets. In addition I was convinced that a study of medieval revelation literature would help towards a better understanding of the character of the prophetic books in the Old Testament, their origin, growth, and composition. I was never of the opinion that the personal religion of the prophets was of the same nature as that of the mystics and that prophetic religion should be designated as religious mysticism. Since I have sometimes been misunderstood on this point, it would be useful here to discuss briefly the religion of the Old Testament prophets in its relation to mysticism. (Lindblom, p. 300)

Prophetic inspiration was not uniquely Israelite . . . Witness Balaam . . . eighteenth-century Mari and eleventh-century Byblos . . . While the greatest achievements of Hebrew prophecy far exceed the Amorite institution at Mari, the formal parallels are striking. . . . A number of Egyptian models of prophecy have been proposed, but they are less apparent parallels than the Syrian and Babylonian examples just examined. We know of no prophets in Egypt. . . Every evidence at our disposal suggests that one of the borrowings of Israel from her Canaanite environment was the institution of prophecy, which had been ultimately derived from Babylonia. (Gottwald, 256)

The real difference between the Yahweh prophets and the Canaanite prophets was that the former were active primarily in the political sphere. They were not soothsayers or clairvoyants, but spokesmen of Yahweh in the arena of history. (Anderson, 187) <sup>S.W.</sup> ①