TOWARD A POETICS OF THE BIBLCAL MIND:
LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND COGNITION
(COGNITIVE APPROACH TO BIBLICAL LITERATURE)*

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Introduction

My objective, as a Hauser Global Fellow/Gruss Scholar at NYU, is to develop a new exegetical approach for investigating the relationship among language, culture, and cognition in antiquity. To do so, I employ recent studies in cognitive linguistics in order to examine the distinctive worldview and self-understanding of ancient Israel as reflected in biblical metaphorical language. My overall goal is thereby to offer a methodological model for a systematic and empirical analysis of this subject, thus contributing not only to biblical or Judaic studies but also to cultural and anthropological studies as a whole.

In what follows, I shall first explain the cognitive linguistic account of metaphor. I shall next illustrate how this discipline can be applied to the study of the relationship among language, culture, and cognition. I shall then exemplify how this cognitive approach can enhance our understanding of this relationship in biblical literature.

Cognition and Language: What is Cognitive Linguistics?

Cognitive linguistics endeavors to explain the interaction between language and human cognition. This discipline gradually developed as an interdisciplinary study in the 1970s and 80s through the integration of research undertaken in a variety of fields including anthropology, biology, computer science, neuroscience, philosophy, physics, and psychology.[1]

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* **To the attendants of the Hauser Global Forum**: the footnotes below are provided only to further illustrate what is discussed in the body of this paper, and/or to provide a further informed perspective thereof. Reading them is by no means obligatory.

The format of the references given in the footnotes below follows that of *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al; Peabody, Mass.:

Cognitive scholars view the phenomenon of metaphor as a key to understanding the cognitive activities of the language user. In their view, metaphor is primarily a cognitive process, a conceptual (rather than linguistic) phenomenon.[2] Consider, for example, the following expressions which English speakers use in the context of argument:

> "Your claims are *indefensible*." "He *attacked every weak point* in my argument." "His criticisms were *right on target*." "You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!" "If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*."[3]

At first sight, these expressions may not seem metaphorical at all, but a closer examination reveals that beneath them are systematic correspondences between two conceptual domains, whereby the language user understands and experiences argument in terms of war. We can present the basic correspondences of the two conceptual domains as follows:

Hendrickson, 1999) and *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols; ed. David Noel Freedman et al; New York: Doubleday, 1992). The abbreviations used in this article are as follows: *ABD = Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D. N. Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992); *AfO = Archiv für Orientforschung*; *AOAT = Alter Orient und Altes Testament*; *BASOR = Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*; *CANE = Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; 4 vols.; New York: Scribner, 1995); *CBET = Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology*; *CBR = Canadian Bar Review*; *CHANE = Culture and History of the Ancient Near East*; *EncJud = Encyclopedia Judaica* (ed. Cecil Roth; 1st ed; Jerusalem: Macmillan); *ER = Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. Mircea Eliade; 1st ed; New York: Macmillan, 1995); *HSM = Harvard Semitic Museum Monograph Series*; *ILRev = Israel Law Review*; *JAOSSup = Journal of the American Oriental Society, Supplement*; *JAAC =* Journal *of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*; *JANES = Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*; *JCS = Journal of Cuneiform Studies*; *JJS = Journal of Jewish Studies*; *JPS = Jewish Publication Society*; *JQRSup = Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement*; *JSOTSup = Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series*; *NJPS = New Jewish Publication Society TANAKH translation* (1999); *SAA = State Archives of Assyria*; *SBL = Society of Biblical Literature*; *SSN = Studia Semitica Neerlandica*; *StBL = Studies in Biblical Literature*; *TDOT = Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; tr. John T. Willis et al; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977-); *VT = Vetus Testamentum*; *VTSup = Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*.

[1] For a general introduction to cognitive linguistics, see William Croft and D. Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (2d ed.; Harlow, England: Pearson, 2006). For the cognitive approach to metaphor in particular, see Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[2] In the cognitive linguistic view, the essence of metaphor can be defined as follows: "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

[3] Examples are all from Lakoff, *Metaphor We Live By*, 4.

Source: WAR		Target: ARGUMENT
the fighter	→	the presenter
the enemy	→	the opponent/critic
battle field	→	stage, forum, media, etc.
weapon for attack	→	criticism of counterarguments
weapon for defense	→	supporting arguments and data
strategy	→	the order and arrangement of the argument

As the chart shows, metaphorical communication involves the juxtaposition not merely of two individual concepts (e.g., between "the fighter" and "the speaker/presenter") but of two conceptual domains (e.g., between WAR and ARGUMENT), and an understanding of metaphor involves a set of systematic correspondences between these two domains.

Or, consider the following metaphorical expressions whereby English speakers often describe their life experience:

"I am *at a crossroads.*" "You are *going the right way.*" "I've *lost my way.*" "It's *a dead end.*" "His advice will *lead you to where you want to go.*" "*Where* am I?"

Again, a closer investigation of these expressions shows that beneath them are systematic correspondences between two conceptual domains, whereby the language user perceives and experiences life in terms of a journey. The basic correspondences of the two conceptual domains can be characterized as follows:

Source: JOURNEY		Target: HUMAN LIFE
the traveler	→	the person
the journey	→	life
the distance covered	→	the progress in maturity
the obstacles encountered	→	hardships in life
decisions about the direction	→	decisions about what to do in life
the destinations	→	wishes and plans to achieve in life

In this case as well, metaphorical communication involves the juxtaposition of two conceptual domains (e.g., between JOURNEY and LIFE), and an understanding of metaphor involves a set of systematic correspondences between these domains.

Here, some remarks on the basic terms and conventions in cognitive linguistics are in order: as the examples above show, when one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another, we have a conceptually juxtaposed configuration, which is called a **metaphorical**

concept.[4] It is this concept that is manifested in metaphorical verbal expressions. The conceptual domain by which we understand another domain is called the **source domain**, and the conceptual domain that is thereby understood is called the **target domain**. When we understand a target domain in terms of a source domain, we have a set of systematic correspondences between them. That is, we can see that the constituent conceptual elements of the source domain correspond to the constituent elements of the target domain – these correspondences are called **mappings**.[5] Small capital letters are used when referring to such domains as well as to metaphorical concepts. So in the first example above, the source domain is the conceptual domain of WAR, the target domain is the domain of ARGUMENT, and the metaphorical concept can be referred to as ARGUMENT IS WAR (and, in the second example, LIFE IS A JOURNEY).[6]

Cognitive scholars have observed many other examples of this sort in the everyday use of language. Below are but a few of the examples:

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[4] Or "conceptual metaphor"; on this, see footnote 6 below.

[5] "Analogy" is one of the key components in establishing conceptual mappings; cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459a5-9; *Rhetoric* 1411a 1f. On analogy in cognition, consider Holyoak and Thagard, *Mental Leaps: Analogy in Creative Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

[6] For more on this, see Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 3-13, and also a very useful glossary on pages 247-53. The reader of this study may notice that I consistently use the phrase "metaphorical concept," and not "conceptual metaphor," which is more commonly used in the writings of cognitive scholars, though both terms appear interchangeably. Their preference of the term "conceptual metaphor" seems to me part of this school's tendency to (over)emphasize the significance of metaphor, and I would like to avoid this tendency. For instance, Lakoff and Johnson state: "our ordinary conceptual system... is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (*Metaphors We Live By*, 3); elsewhere Johnson also remarks: "human beings are metaphorical animals whose experience, thought, and symbolic communication are the product of deep metaphorical processes" ("Metaphor: An Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* [ed. Michael Kelly; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 212). I agree that metaphor is fundamental to our conceptual system but not everything is fundamentally metaphorical. Consider Josef Stern's following view, to which I subscribe: "to be fundamentally metaphorical is presumably for the conceptual system to be metaphorical without 'depending' on some more fundamental 'literal understanding' ... But if metaphor is a matter of understanding one thing in terms of another, then on pain of infinite regress there must be some concepts in terms of which others are understood which are not themselves metaphorical. Hence, it would seem, contrary to their [Lakoff's and Johonson's] original claim, that any conceptual system is not 'fundamentally metaphorical'" (Josef Stern, "Review of Contemporary Perspectives on Metaphor, ed. by M. Johnson," *JAAC* 40 (1982): 234; italicized in original). This criticism holds true also for Stephen Pepper's discussion of "root metaphors"; Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley: University of California press, 1942). See Max Black's comment on Pepper's theory, in *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), 239-41. Consider also Stern's fuller assessment of Lakoff's cognitive approach in his *Metaphor in Context* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2000), 176-87.

TIME IS MONEY[7]
"You're *wasting* my time." "This gadget will *save* you hours." "How do you *spend* your time these days?" "I don't have enough time to *spare* for that." "I've *invested* a lot of time in her."

THEORIES (AND ARGUMENTS) ARE BUILDINGS[8]
"Is that the *foundation* for your theory?" "We need to *construct* a *strong* argument for that." "The argument is *shaky*." "We need to *buttress* the theory with *solid* arguments." "They *exploded* his latest theory."

IDEAS ARE PLANTS[9]
"His ideas have finally come to *fruition*." "That idea *died on the vine*." "That's a *budding* theory." "The *seeds* of his great ideas were *planted* in his youth." "She has a *fertile* imagination."

ANGER IS HEAT[10]
"You make my blood *boil*." "Let her *stew*." "She got all *steamed up*." "He's just *blowing off steam*." "He *erupted*."

Cognitive scholars have identified the following features of the phenomenon of metaphor: (1) conceptuality – metaphorical linguistic utterances are manifestations of the metaphorical concepts and the conceptual world of the language user; (2) systemicity – elements of one conceptual domain are systematically mapped onto the elements of another domain[11]; (3) ubiquity – metaphor is ubiquitous in everyday discourse, not limited to a specific aesthetic realm such as literature; (4) subconsciousness – metaphor, in many cases, operates subconsciously and remains unnoticed by the language user, and yet it is fundamental to the cognitive activity of human beings and ultimately to the conceptualization of reality.[12]

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[7] Lakoff, *Metaphor We Live By*, 7-8.

[8] Lakoff, *Metaphor We Live By*, 46.

[9] Lakoff, *Metaphor We Live By*, 47.

[10] http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/lakoff/metaphors/Anger_Is_Heat.html. For more examples, see the following database: "Conceptual Metaphor Home Page"(last revised 3/2/1994). Online: http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/lakoff/MetaphorHome.html.

[11] As Stern points out, credit for this second feature should be given to Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* (2d ed.; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976); "Original credit for the fundamental insight that it is always a whole schema or family of expressions that is interpreted (or transferred) metaphorically, never an individual expression, should... be given to Goodman (1976)" (Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 323, note 26).

[12] The summation into these four features is mine. Other critics may list the essential features of metaphor identified by cognitive linguists in a different way. For example, Kövecses mentions five features of metaphor as identified by Lakoff and Johnson: "Lakoff and Johnson challenged the deeply

Delving into the phenomenon of metaphor thus reveals the mindset of the language user, and cognitive linguistics offers both firm theoretical foundations and effective analytical tools for examining this subject. Indeed, the cognitive examination of language use leads us to a deeper understanding of the conceptual world of the language user; on the other hand, the cognitive investigation of the conceptual world of the language user guides us to a better comprehending of his/her language use. This circularity inheres to the analytical process of this study.

As for the investigation of a metaphorical utterance, we can suggest, based on the observations made thus far, the following three exegetical premises:

(1) Since the phenomenon of metaphor is first and foremost conceptual, the exegete should clarify the interrelations of metaphorical verbal expressions, first and foremost, on the conceptual level.

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entrenched view of metaphor by claiming that (1) metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words; (2) the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or esthetic purpose; (3) metaphor is often not based on similarity; (4) metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, not just by special talented people; and (5) metaphor, far from being a superfluous thought pleasing linguistic ornament, is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning" (*Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, viii).

Some remarks on the functional differences between conventional and poetic metaphors are here worth giving. Conventional metaphors are part of the figurative language that we use in our daily discourse – their function is *explicative*, making the less-known known. Because of this function, we see a general tendency in conventional metaphor that the source domains are more concrete, more physical, and more tangible than target domains. This tendency is called **unidirectionality** in cognitive linguistics: "the metaphorical process typically goes from the more concrete to the more abstract but not the other way around"(Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 6). This is part of the fundamental principle of epistemology and conceptualization; that is, we as humans understand more complex and abstract domains in terms of less complex and less abstract domains. This point should be taken into account in order to understand the fundamental functional difference between conventional and poetic metaphors. That is, the major difference between these two types of metaphors lies in their *function*, *not* in their *operation*. Just as conventional metaphors operate on the conceptual level and involve the juxtaposition of two conceptual domains, so do poetic metaphors. Though metaphor in poetic discourse can function explicatively, its distinct function is something else, i.e., *orientational*. Further, metaphor in poetic discourse frequently functions to make the known less-known and, more challenging, present thereby a new orientation to which it refers. In Shelly's words: "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar" ("A Defence of Poetry," in *A Defence of Poetry and A Letter to Lord Ellenborough* [London: Porcupine, 1948], 21). The principle of unidirectionality, in short, is ruled out in the case of poetic metaphor. For more on this, see my *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Metaphor in Biblical Prophecy* (HSM; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming), ch. 2.

(2) Since the phenomenon of metaphor involves systematic correspondences between two conceptual domains, the exegete should approach metaphor holistically and not atomistically. For example, even if the exegete happens to explore only one correspondence in a given metaphorical concept (e.g., between "speaker" and "fighter" in the above example of ARGUMENT IS WAR), he or she should explore it in light of the whole of the given metaphorical concept because each part. Each correspondence – is organically related to the other parts as well as to the whole.

(3) Since the conceptual information upon which metaphorical communication is established is already known to the language users and therefore usually not spelled out in the given discourse, the exegete needs to identify this information. In other words, the language user does not usually transmit new conceptual information in metaphorical communication, but manipulates the conceptual system known beforehand by his audience.[13] Therefore, the exegete needs to clarify the conceptual information in case it is not fully articulated.[14]

Cognitive Linguistics and Cultural Studies

While the main concern of cognitive linguistics has been the *general* relationship of language and cognition, it can also account for the *specific* variation of that relationship, whether on the

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[13] The manipulation of this kind is in fact not unique to metaphorical communication, but replete in everyday communication, as discussed by Harshav; see Harshav, "An Outline of Integrational Semantics: An Understander's Theory of Meaning in Context," in *Explorations in Poetics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 76-112; repr. from *Poetics Today* 3 (1982); cf. "Speakers do not usually convey new information in their utterances, but rather manipulate information known beforehand" (87).

[14] Cf. Simkins' following remarks: "The Bible was produced by a high context society for high context readers. It assumes a rich culture that the biblical writers felt no need to describe. It is not surprising, then, that the Bible lacks any explicit articulation of the Israelites' worldview and values toward the natural world. Their worldview and values were simply assumed by all members of the society; they formed the presupposition of the biblical writers rather than the subject of their discourse. Consequently, we cannot expect to discover their worldview and values from a low context reading of the biblical texts. If we hope to glean their unexpressed worldview and values from the biblical texts, then we must become acquainted with the ancient Israelite culture that is assumed by the texts. In other words, we must read the Bible from the high context perspective in which it was written. Fortunately for our purposes, the biblical texts themselves contain clues in the form of metaphor and myth that help to reveal the relevant aspects of ancient Israel's culture"(Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator & Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994], 42).

inter- or intra-cultural level.[15] That is, cognitive linguistics can serve as an effective tool for investigating how people of a specific social group describe and experience their reality.[16]

The linguist Deborah Tannen has conducted, for example, a comprehensive research of the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR that is seen in the various aspects of American culture (politics, election, sports, news, litigation, gender issues, etc.).[17] According to Tannen, American culture is essentially an "argument culture" or "aggression culture," wherein the people perceive and describe the events in their society in terms of battle or game.[18] To list but a few examples of the characteristic utterances in the argument culture:[19]

> "Who *won*?"(presidential campaign)
> "*Join the battle* as opinion leaders *fire off* their views about today's hot issues on two of the most dynamic shows on the air"(media advertisement)
> "It's not how you play the game but whether you *win or lose*"(sports)
> "*Knockdown* pitch"(sports)
> "When I get out there, I'm going to *attack* you. But don't take it personally. That's why they invite me on, so that what I'm going to do"(a fellow guest of a television show)
> "The *Battle* of the Sexes"(a title of a gender-issue forum)
> "attorneys… routinely twist the discovery rules into some of the most powerful *weapons* in the arsenal of those who abuse the adversary system"(litigation)[20]

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[15] Cf., *inter alia*, Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Kövecses, *Language, Mind, and Culture: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[16] This is a major concern of both sociolinguistics and sociology of language. The former discipline focuses more on the effect of the society on the language, whereas the latter on the effect of the language on the society. Cf. Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* (4th ed.; London: Penguin Books, 2000).

[17] Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue* (New York: Random House, 1998). I thank Prof. Frank Horowitz of Teachers College for drawing my attention to this book.

[18] Tannen describes the argument culture as follows: "The argument culture urges us to approach the world--and the people in it -- in an adversarial frame of mind. It rests on the assumption that opposition is the best way to get anything done: the best way to discuss an idea is to set up a debate; the best way to cover news is to find spokespeople who express the most extreme, polarized views and present them as 'both sides'; the best way to settle disputes is litigation that puts one party against the other; the best way to begin an essay is to attack someone; and the best way to show you're really thinking is to criticize"(Tannen, *The Argument Culture*, 3-4).

[19] The examples are all from Tannen's *The Argument Culture*.

[20] Tannen, *The Argument Culture*, 151. "Discovery rules" here refers to "the procedure by which lawyers representing one side can ask the other side to provide relevant information and allow them to question ("depose") potential witnesses before a case goes to trial"(151).

Tannen discusses the U.S. litigation system as one of the distinctive manifestations of the confrontational inclination of this culture. In that system, she points out, the whole conceptualization of prosecution and defense is conceived in terms of war (i.e., LITIGATION IS WAR) and, therefore, the ultimate objective which is supposed to be "finding the truth" seems to be subordinate to "winning and losing."[21] In other words, the metaphorical model of LITIGATION IS WAR determines *apriori* the mindset of the people in court, and sets the plaintiff and the defendant as adversaries.

As Tannen fully demonstrates, the metaphorical concept ARGUMENT IS WAR is so deeply ingrained in the mindset of the people of this culture that it is hard for them to think of anything other than WAR in relation to ARGUMENT. If, however, as cognitive linguist George Lakoff suggests, we instead structure ARGUMENT in terms of DANCE, we may focus more on the aspect of *collaboration*.[22]

In any event, as shown thus far, cognitive linguistics can be an effective tool for investigating the basic cultural modes of communication and conceptualization.

Cognitive Linguistics as a Philological Method

My goal is to bring the cognitive approach to a new level of application by demonstrating its explanatory power to the study of *ancient* writings, particularly, the analysis of cultural or religious mindset as reflected in the texts. Since cultural assumptions, expectations, and values are not always explicitly articulated in cultural discourse (let alone in metaphorical communication), to identify and fully explicate this unexpressed information is, in my view, a substantive task of the philologist that can be productively advanced through cognitive

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[21] Tannen, *The Argument Culture*, ch. 5.

[22] "Try to imagine a culture where arguments are not viewed in terms of war, where no one wins or loses, where there is no sense of attacking or defending, gaining or losing ground. Imagine a culture where an argument is viewed as a dance, the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way. In such a culture, people would view arguments differently, experience them differently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently"(Lakoff, *Metaphor We Live By*, 4-5). Cf. Tannen's discussion in the seventh chapter of *The Argument Culture*, entitled "What Other Ways Are There?: Listening to Other Cultures," wherein she, for example, suggests "Asian philosophy and culture… [as] alternatives to the polarization that typifies Western culture: accommodating more than one religion, avoiding rigid dualisms, and subscribing to an ethic of victor without vanquished rather than winner take all"(221).

linguistics. In this respect, cognitive linguistics has a great potential to be an effective analytical tool for philological investigation.[23]

For example, contrary to a simplistic stereotypical notion of Islam as a religion of nomads or Bedouins in the desert, a cognitive investigation of figurative language in the Qur'ān unveils an entirely different outlook: beneath this text is the mindset of a merchant who conceives of the relationship between God and humans in terms of trade and business interactions.[24] To give but a few examples:

"Who will *grant* God a *generous loan*? He will *increase* it many times over. For God *withholds* and *enlarges*, and to Him you will *return*"(2:245).

"They [= the wicked] have *purchased* error *at the price of* guidance, but their *trade* is *profitless,* and they are not guided"(2:16).

"How shall it be when We [= God] gather them together on a Day that is certain to come, when every soul will *be paid in full* for what it *had earned*, and there shall be *no unfairness*?"(3:25).

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[23] The word "philology" is here used to designate, not a "study of (ancient) language" per se, but a "study of a(n ancient) text in light of the conceptual world of the culture in which the text was composed and produced." Philology as so defined thus involves elucidation of the total framework and *Weltanschauung* of the civilization to which the text belongs. Consider J. J. Finkelstein's following statement: "It is a commonplace of modern anthropology that descriptions of exotic societies and analyses of their institutions cannot be properly undertaken if, at the outset, the observer does not have an adequate comprehension of the world view, or of the categorical framework of the society under investigation, since it is just this framework which gives definition to the single institutions constituting the whole, while each of these, in turn, functions in such a manner as to reinforce the total structure. It is this interaction between framework — specifically the intellectual and categorical — and the constituent institutional elements that reinforces the total structure and helps to maintain the integrity of the society-at-large. Of equal, if not of greater, importance, the investigator must be constantly alert to his *own* inherited categorical system through which the date being observed must inevitably be filtered and   assimilated, a process which is indeed necessary if the data are to be comprehended by the investigator himself, and especially if they are to be made comprehensible to the audience to whom he would communicate his findings"(Finkelstein, "The West, the Bible and the Ancient East: Apperceptions and Categorisations," *Man* 9 [1974]: 591). Consider also Moshe Greenberg's following definition of biblical criticism: "Biblical criticism, correctly understood, is the discipline that enables us to judge our readings of the Bible, to judge whether they are fitted to the realities of ancient texts and times, freed as far as possible from our time-bound and culture-bound preconceptions" Greenberg, "A Faith-ful Jewish Critical Interpretation of the Bible," in *Judaism and Modernity: The Religious Philosophy of David Hartman* (ed. Jonathan W. Malino; Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 213.

[24] What follows is based on Toshihiko Izutsu's observation; Izutsu, *Islamic Culture: The Collected Works of Izutsu Toshihiko vol. 2* (Japanese; Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993).

> "Leave to themselves those who take their religion for a mere game and distraction and whom the life of the world deceives. Remind them hereby lest any soul is be damned by what it *earns*. It will none to help it, or intercede for it, other than God; and whatever *compensation* it may *offer* will not *be accepted*. Such are those who are damned by their own acts; they will have boiling water to drink and a painful punishment because they had disbelieved"(6:70).

Indeed, Muhammad was never a nomad but a merchant, and the ethos reflected in Qur'ān is that of a trader who highly esteems such virtues as credibility, fairness, and faithfulness; hence, we read:

> "Who is more *faithful to* His *promise* than God? Rejoice then in the *bargain* you have made with Him"(9:111).

In all events, our cognitive examination of these metaphorical expressions in Qur'ān reveals the conceptual world of a merchant beneath the text, which consists of the following metaphorical mappings:

Source: TRADE		Target: HUMAN LIFE
the trader	→	human being
the trader	→	God
investment	→	acts and intentions
payment	→	reward
gain	→	blessing/fortune
loss	→	curse/misfortune
settlement day	→	eschatological day

In like manner, figurative language in the Bible is a window to the conceptual world of biblical religion. To illustrate the explanatory power of the cognitive approach to the analysis of biblical metaphors, I shall discuss the biblical metaphors of PLANT WORLD, of HUMAN POLITY, and of FAMILY (PARENT-CHILD) RELATIONSHIP.[25]

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[25] The discussion below explores the conceptual world of the people of Israel as reflected (in the use of figurative language) in biblical literature. For the previous attempts on this topic, consider the following works and the literature cited therein: Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator & Creation*; Meir Malul, *Knowledge, Control, and Sex: Studies in Biblical Thought, Culture, and Worldview* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center, 2002); John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006).

Biblical Metaphor (1): PLANT WORLD

Consider the following metaphorical expressions, all of which are related to plant imagery:

> זרע אברהם "the descendants (lit. seed) of Abraham"(Isa 41:8); פרי בטן "baby/child (lit. fruit of the womb)"(Gen 30:2); פרי מעלליו "consequence (lit. fruit) of his deeds"(Jer 17:10); פרי מחשבותם "the consequence (lit. fruit) of their thoughts"(Jer 6:19); נכרת מעמיו "excommunicated (lit. cut off) from his kin"(Exod 30:33); עקרה "barren (lit. uprooted)"(Gen 11:30)

A close examination of these expressions reveals that beneath them are the conceptual mappings between the domain of HUMAN LIFE and that of HORTICULTURE. The correspondences of some of the basic elements can be laid out as follows:

Source: PLANT		Target: HUMAN LIFE
tree	→	person
fruit	→	child, or the result of one's deed
seed	→	descendants
uprooted tree	→	the one who lacks productive potency
soil	→	world (cf. Ps 52:7), Land of Promise (cf. Exod 15:17), or temple (cf. Ps 92:14)
being cut off	→	death, annihilation
water	→	divine word or instruction (cf. Ps 1:2-3)
fountain	→	God (cf. Jer 2:13)

In terms of cognitive linguistics, these examples reveal how the language user experiences and understands human life in terms of horticulture (of course, unconsciously in most cases). This underlying concept was widely shared in the ancient Near East, as the same metaphorical mappings can be found also in other Semitic languages; e.g., in Akkadian, the word *ze ru* "seed" (cf. זרע in Heb) is also used for "descendants," and *inbu* "fruit" for "children, offspring" (cf. ענב in Heb).[26]

It is in light of this conception that we should consider the biblical imagery of the righteous as splendid trees:

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[26] For plant imagery in the Bible, consider Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Planting of Man; a Study in Biblical Imagery," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East; Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987), 129-36; T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (CBET 25; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 87-90. The metaphorical concept of PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is widely attested throughout the world, both in the poetic and the non-poetic discourse. Lakoff and Turner discuss the poetic use of this metaphorical conception; see the index of their *More Than Cool Reason* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1989), under "PEOPLE ARE PLANTS."

> He [= the righteous person] is like a tree planted by streams of water,
> > which brings forth its fruit in its season;
> > whose foliage never fades,
> > and whatever it produces thrives.
> > > Ps 1:3

> The righteous person will flourish like the palm tree;
> > he grows like a cedar in the Lebanon.
> > > Ps 92:13

In biblical literature, this metaphorical concept is applied also on the collective level whereby Israel's redemptive history (especially the Exodus and Settlement) is conceived of as God's plantation project: transplanting His beloved plant (= the people of Israel) onto His divine manor (= the Land of Promise). Hence, we read:

> You [= God] will bring them and *plant them* (ותטעמו)
> > in the mountain of Your possession
> > > Exod 15:17

Also in Psalm 80, we have:

> You [=God] *plucked up* (תסיע) a *vine* (גפן) from Egypt;
> You expelled nations and *planted it* (ותטעה).
> > > Ps 80:9

As often noted, the land of Israel in these passages is understood metaphorically as God's cosmic garden (i.e., the Garden of Eden),[27] and Israel's settlement therefore signifies the completion of creation. To wit, on this collective level, this divine garden imagery operates as a cognitive mode to reflect the cosmic significance of Israel's redemptive history.

Biblical Metaphor (2): HUMAN POLITY

We shall next consider the biblical metaphor of God as king. The biblical authors portray God with such terms and images as אדיר "majestic"(Ps 93:4), גיבור "mighty"(Ps 24:8), הוד והדר

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[27] See Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4; Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1972). On the tree imagery in the Bible, see Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Planting of Man; a Study in Biblical Imagery," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East; Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope.* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987), 129-36; repr. in *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 19-34; Kirsten Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

"dignity and majesty"(Ps 96:6), כבוד "glory"(Ps 24:8), עז ותפארת "strength and splendor"(Ps 96:6), כסא "throne"(Ps 93:2), שבט "scepter"(Isa 10:5), and שפט "judging"(Ps 96:13), all of which convey royal overtones.[28] Now, whoever considers such terms merely as an emotive or rhetorical device designed to evoke an overwhelming sense of divine majesty, overlooks their cognitive value, because beneath them lies a fundamental metaphorical concept of biblical cosmology. That is, the people of Israel conceptualize the complex operation of the cosmos in terms of a human polity and their deity as the supreme authority. In cognitive linguistic terms, we would say that we have here a conceptual domain of human POLITY (source domain) being systematically mapped onto the domain of THE COSMOS (target domain). The underlying metaphorical concept can be coined as THE COSMOS IS A STATE.

In this respect, both Mesopotamian polytheism and biblical monotheism share the same mode of, and model for, conceptualization: they both perceive the cosmos as a state, operating according to the decisions made in the divine assembly, or heavenly pantheon.

This notion of divine assembly is attested throughout the ancient Near East.[29] As Thorkild Jacobsen puts it, it is viewed as "the highest authority in the universe." Jacobsen continues: "Here the momentous decisions regarding the course of all things and fates of all being were made and were confirmed by the members of the assembly."[30]

The preservation of cosmic harmony is the main concern of this assembly. For that reason, when the disruption of this harmony is repeated and reaches intolerable intensity, the assembly begins to operate as a "judicial organ" in order to consider, or counter, such

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[28] For the biblical metaphor of God as king, see Marc Zvi Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989);

[29] E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., "Divine Assembly," *ABD* 2: 214-17; see also Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite & Early Hebrew Literature* (HSM 24; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980).

[30] Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Henri Frankfort, et al; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 136. This motif of divine assembly is well attested in the Bible. It is called by such designations as סוד קדשים "the council of holy beings"(Ps 89:8), סוד אלוה "the council of God"(Job 15:8), "the assembly of holy beings"(Ps 89:6) or בעדת אל "the divine assembly"(Ps 82:1). The explicit description of this assembly can be found in 1 Kings 22, where the prophet Micaiah envisions, "the Lord seating upon His throne, with all the heavenly host standing in attendance to the right and the left of Him"(v. 19), discussing how to bring an end to the impious king of Israel (probably Ahab). It should also be noted that the extraordinary use of the first person plural for divine discourse, such as "Let *us* make human in *our* image, after *our* likeness"(Gen 1:26), is now generally agreed in scholarship to view as the discourse addressed in divine assembly; on this, see, most recently, W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (CHANE 15; Leiden: Brill, 2003).

disruption. The basic litigation procedure is as follows: the case is brought before the members of the assembly and, if the members, after a thorough consideration of the case, reach the conclusion that the wrongdoer(s) is (are) guilty, they dispatch a destructive agent who annihilates him (them) and all who live in his (their) habitation.

Both the emissary and intercessory roles of the biblical prophet are best understood in light of this lawsuit model. First and foremost, the biblical prophet is a messenger of the divine council to the "wrongdoers" (usually, the biblical Israel), declaring the latter's case discussed, or sentence issued, in the heavenly court.[31] At the same time, however, the prophet is also an advocator for the accused party, and adviser to God, in the heavenly court.[32] In this respect, when Abraham discusses with God on behalf of Sodom (Gen 18), or Moses on behalf of the people of Israel (Exod 32-33), or Amos on behalf of the Kingdom of Israel (Amos 7), and Habakkuk on behalf of the Kingdom of Judah (Hab 1), they all play the same intercessory role in the heavenly council.[33] Indeed, the Hebrew word תפילה "prayer" is derived from פלל "to assess (a legal case)"(cf. משפט פלילי "criminal law" in modern Hebrew);

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[31] The biblical prophet is indeed a "forthteller," not a "foreteller," as Shalom Paul puts in the following remarks: "The Hebrew term for a prophet, *navi'*, [is] cognate of the Akkadian verb *nabû*, 'to call,' i.e.,' 'one who has been called.' … The term *navi'*, translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word προφητησ, *prophētēs* ('prophet'), which means 'one who speaks on behalf of' or 'to speak for' (rather than 'before'), is a 'forthteller' and spokesman more than a 'foreteller' and prognosticator"(Shalom Paul, "Prophets and Prophecy," *EncJud* 13: 1152-53.

[32] As we read in Amos: "Indeed, my Lord God does nothing without having revealed His purpose to His servants the prophets"(Amos 3:7). The intercessory role of biblical prophets is exemplified in the well-known motif of legal disputation, or *rîb*, between a prophet and God. On prophetic legal disputation (*rîb*) in the Bible, see Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "The Covenantal Lawsuit of the Prophet Amos: III 1-IV 13," *VT* 21 (1971): 338-62, Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer prophetique contre Israel apres la Rupture de l'Alliance* (Bruges, Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1967); Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 79 (1959): 285-95; James Limburg, "The Root ריב and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL* 88 (1969): 291-304; Kirsten Nielsen, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge: An Investigation of the Prophetic Lawsuit (Rîb-Pattern)* (JSOTSup 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1978). On *rîb* in the Bible in general, see B. Gemser, "The *RÎB-** or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East: Presented to Harold Henry Rowley by the Society for Old Testament Study in Association with the Editorial Board of Vetus Testamentum, in Celebration of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday, 24 March 1955* (ed. Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas; VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 120-37, and Seeligmann, *Studies in Biblical Literature*, 245-68. For the Mesopotamian aspect of legal disputation in the divine assembly, see Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer prophetique*, 119-43.

[33] See Muffs, *Love & Joy*, ch. 1; Uffenheimer, *Classical Prophecy*, part 2. Cf. also Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Abraham and the Righteous of Sodom," *JJS* 33 (1982): 119-32; Walter Brueggemann, "Amos' Intercessory Formula," *VT* 19 (1969): 385-99; Benjamin Uffenheimer, "Habakkuk Challenging God: Considerations of Hab 1-2" (in Hebrew), in *Studies in Bible: Dedicated to the Memory of U. Cassuto on the 100th Anniversary of His Birth* (ed. Haim Beinart and Samuel E. Loewenstamm; Magnes: Jerusalem, 1987), 69-92.

hence, prophetic prayer is a "forensic plea" at the heavenly courtroom.[34] In Mesopotamia, on the other hand, this intercessory role is usually played by the patron deity of the accused group or place [35]

The difference between Mesopotamian polytheism and biblical monotheism thus lies in the specific political model through which they perceive the operation of the universe, i.e., an oligarchic vs. an autocratic model. The polytheistic mind perceives behind the operation of the universe a plurality of divine wills, whereas the monotheistic mind intuits behind it the supreme and ultimate will of a single deity. In short, the biblical metaphor of God as king is part of a figurative mode to reveal the metaphysical truth underlying the events that unfold in the universe.

Biblical Metaphor (3): FAMILY (PARENT-CHILD) RELATIONSHIP

Our last example is the biblical metaphor of familial relationship for describing the relationship of God and the people of Israel. It is crucial to recognize that this metaphor is part of the language of election, as in the ancient Near East the family metaphor is usually employed to portray the relationship of royal figures to their patron deities. The key to comprehending this metaphor is the cosmological conception of DIVINE ESTATE.[36]

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[34] Cf. Pietro Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice: Legal Terms, Concepts and Procedures in the Hebrew Bible* (tr. Mcihael J. Smith; JSOTSup 105; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994). Cf. Old Assyrian *palālum* "to sit in judgment."

[35] On this in detail, see my *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered*, ch. 4.

[36] The biblical authors employ the family metaphor to describe the relationship of God and Israel not only by the use of the parent-child model but also by the husband-wife model. Here, I focus only on the former model. On God and Israel as husband and wife in the Bible, see, *inter alia*, Elaine June Adler, "The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage in the Hebrew Bible"(Ph.D. diss., The University of California at Berkeley, 1990); R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10; Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3)* (SSN 40; Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1999), 214-52; Isaac Boaz Gottlieb, "Law, Love, and Redemption; Legal Connotations in the Language of Exodus 6:6-8," *JANES* 26 (1999): 47-57. On God and Israel as father and son, see Joseph Fleishman, *Parent and Child in Ancient Near East and the Bible* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), 80-97; also Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), ch. 5. For the biblical kinsman metaphor in the Bible, see Frank M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), ch. 1.

According to ancient cosmology, territorial boundaries among nations are divinely determined.[37] Each nation is allotted its own territory according to the decision made in divine assembly, and each nation is allotted to each member of the assembly to serve that deity as its patron deity. In this respect, each land is its patron deity's patrimonial estate, and each nation becomes a kinsfolk of its patron deity.

This idea is attested in the Hebrew Bible as well. For example, the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, which recounts the history of God's relationship to Israel, describes the establishment of this relationship in antiquity as follows:

> When the Most High allotted the nations,
> When He divided humankind,
> He fixed the boundaries of the peoples
> Equal to the number of the children of Israel
> For the Lord's own portion is His people
> Jacob His allotment.
>
> Deut 32:8-9

The sense of the passage is this: when God, the Most High, divided humankind and allotted each nation its territory, He took the people of Israel as His own allotment. The forth line is difficult: Why does God have to divide the nations according to the number of the children of Israel? The traditional interpretation understands this number to be seventy as is the number of the children of Jacob (cf. Exodus 1:5). This problem is dissolved if we adopt the reading of the Greek text and of the Hebrew text discovered in Qumran, both of which read "equal to the number of *divine beings*"(בני אלוהים) instead of "children of Israel"(בני ישראל).[38] In this reading, God divides and allocates the nations to the lesser celestial beings (or, angels, if you wish), while taking Israel for His own allotment.[39]

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[37] Cf. Moshe Greenberg, *On the Bible and Judaism* (ed. Avraham Shapira; in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1984), 110-24.

[38] For the Qumran text, see Eugene Ulrich et al, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert 14* (Oxford: Clarendon 1995), 90. It is generally assumed that the LXX and Qumran version is original, and that the letters ישר were added to, and והים- were omitted from, the phrase בני אלוהים, and thus the latter phrase was transformed to בני ישראל(והים), in order to avoid a possible polytheistic interpretation of the verse. Cf., also, Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 302-3, 513-15. Cf. also Sumerian Deluge Story, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. James B. Pritchard; 3d ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 43, where five antediluvian cities are given to five major deities of divine assembly as their cult centers.

[39] The territorial boundaries are thus part of the divinely established cosmic order, and their distortion or invasion, unless permitted by the divine assembly, is a crime against the assembly. For this very

In the ancient Near East, each state is thus viewed as the patrimonial estate of its patron deity.[40] The deity elects the king as an administrator of the divine estate who is responsible for the economic and social wellbeing of the land and its citizens. The establishment of such an ideal society is called in Akkadian *kittam u mēšaram šakānum* "to set truth and justice" (in Hebrew לעשות משפט וצדקה "to execute justice and righteousness").[41] To this end, the king is expected to administer his territory according to the will of the deity, which includes perpetuating the religious order and establishing social justice.[42] The state's patron deity enters into an exclusive relationship with the king by becoming his personal god,

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reason, it seems, the people of Israel, when entering the Land of Promise, were commanded to respect the neighbors' territories: "The Lord said to me [= Moses]: Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war. For I will not give you any of their land as a possession; I have assigned Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot"(Deut 2:9).

[40] Cf. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 81-84; also Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," 185-201, esp. 186-91. Cf. also Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, ch. 12.

[41] As Paul puts it, "*Kittum* (pl. *kīnātu* [Sum. (= Sumerian) níg.gi.na]) means 'truth and right' and implies that which is firm and established. 'The sum of cosmic and immutable truths was called kittum'[Speiser, "Authority and Law," *JAOSSup* 17 (1954): 12]. *Mēšarum* [Sum. níg.si.sá], on the other hand, implies equity and justice. 'It is the process whereby law is made to function equitably. This is one of the ruler's principal duties. It invovles supervision, adjustment, amendments…. The ruler who has fulfilled these obligations, or claims to have done so, is described as a *šar mēšarim* "the just king." Together these two independent yet complementary terms mean impersonal and immutable order tempered with equity and fairness'[Speiser, "Early Law and Civilization," *CBR* 31 (1953): 874]" (Shalom M. Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in the Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law* [VTSup 18; Leiden: Brill, 1970], 5; for more on this, see pages 3-26). For an exhaustive treatment of the Hebrew expression משפט וצדקה and related terms, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995).

[42] Cf. "The [Mesopotamian] kings are described in the royal hymns as the ideal type of rulers, who uphold social and religious order in their land, who protect the borders of Mesopotamia from the attacks of foreign people and make the multitudes of their people dwell in peace, harmony and prosperity" (Jacob Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns: Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur* [Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981], 32). See also Albrektson, *History and the Gods*, ch. 3. As Parpola has pointed out, a caution is in order concerning the popular notion of Assyrian kings: "In the popular imagination Assyrian kings have long been portrayed as despots of the worst possible kind, spending their time—when not engaging in war or other cruelties—in their harems, immersed in bodily pleasures and revelries. Consider Eugène Delacroix's famous painting *The Death of Sardanapalus*: Here, an atmosphere of depraved luxury is suggested in the disgusting portrait of this last great Assyrian king (late seventh century B.C.) as described in ancient Greek histories. The picture of Assyrian kingship that emerges from a study of the documents left by the Assyrians themselves, however, is far different. To the Assyrians, a king immersed in revelries and cruelties would have been an abomination; their kingship was a sacred institution rooted in heaven, and their king was a model of human perfection seen as a prerequisite for man's personal salvation" (Parpola, "Sons of God – the Ideology of Assyrian Kingship," *Archaeology Odyssey* 2.5 [1999]: 18).

promising him prosperity and the perpetuation of his dynasty insofar as the king fulfills his duties in respect to the divine will.

Israel's election, as often noted, is typologically equivalent to the divine election of the Mesopotamian king.[43] According to the biblical tradition, YHWH has His own "estate" (נחלה), but at the outset does not have His own nation with which to populate it. YHWH elects Abraham "that he may instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of YHWH, which is 'to execute righteousness and justice'(לעשות צדקה ומשפט)" (Gen 18:19).[44] From Abraham, God promises to raise a nation, which will become His constituency and settle His land.[45] YHWH entrusts them with the task of establishing a social and religious order in the land of His heritage according to His divine will. To this end, YHWH establishes a covenantal relationship with Israel, becoming their personal deity, and entrusting them with the covenantal law.[46] The covenant assures them of prosperity and longevity in the land as long as they fulfill its obligations.[47] In all these respects, it is evident that Israel's election is

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[43] Cf. Yochanan Muffs, "The Gods and the Law" (Mimeographed; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965); repr. in *The Personhood of God : Biblical Theology, Human Faith and the Divine Image* (Woodstock, Vt.: Jewish Lights, 2005), 35-44; Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant*, 27-42; Paul, "Adoption Formulae: A Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Legal Clauses," *Maarav* 2 (1979-80): 173-85; repr. in *Divrei Shalom: Collected Studies of Shalom M. Paul on the Bible and the Ancient Near East 1967-2005* (CHANE 23; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 109-19. On the establishment of social justice in particular, consider Barry L. Eichler's following remarks: "Mesopotamian and biblical concepts of social justice both seem to stem from the divine desire to have justice and equity established in the world. However, in Mesopotamian thought, this goal is the sole task of the divinely chosen king with whom the gods enter into a covenant whereby the royal dynasty will be maintained as long as the king functioned as the faithful and righteous shepherd of his people. Thus the king issued his own royal proclamations of liberation for the purpose of implementing equity in his realm. In biblical thought, God is directly involved in establishing equity and justice in the world and thus issues divine proclamations of liberation. Since his covenant is not only with the Israelite king but more fundamentally with the people of Israel, it is they who, both collectively and individually, are responsible for the implementation of social justice by observing the relevant divine commandments" (Eichler, "Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East,*" *JQR* 89 [1998]: 188).

[44] On this in detail, see Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel*.

[45] On the relationship of the land and the people of Israel in the biblical worldview, see Greenberg, *On the Bible and Judaism*, 110-24; Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[46] For the biblical conception of covenant, see Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land*, 222-64.

[47] For the conditionality of the covenantal relationship and the right to possess the land, see Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land*, esp. 183-221. "What is unique about Israel's relationship to the land is neither the divine promise nor the permanence of the patrimony, but rather the religious and moral ramifications of the promise: the belief that, in order to dwell safely in the land, it was necessary to fulfill the will of the God who gave the land. The land was thus transformed into a kind of mirror,

typologically equivalent to that of the Mesopotamian king: just as the Mesopotamian king is divinely chosen to fulfill a deity's will within the latter's estate, so too, the entire people of Israel, as a single royal family, are divinely elected to carry out the same mission

As noted above, the family metaphor is part of the language of election. The Mesopotamian king who is divinely elected by his patron deity enters with the latter into a "parent-child" relationship. Indeed, numerous cuneiform texts describe the relationship of the Mesopotamian king to his personal god or goddess as that of "child" to his "parent."[48] The familial metaphor thus underscore the king's elected status in the universe.

So too, in the Bible, the family metaphor is used as one of the basic figurative modes with which to portray Israel's election and the consequent acquisition of the Promised Land. In the Bible, the imagery of adoption is dominantly employed. That is, YHWH "adopts" Israel as a child, and thus invites this "child" into His patrimonial "household."[49] In this

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reflecting the religious and ethical behavior of the people; if the people were in possession of the land, it was a sign that they were fulfilling God's will and observing his commandments; if they lost the land, it was an indication that they had violated God's covenant and neglected his commandments. All of biblical historiography is based upon this criterion: the right to possess the land"(*The Promise of the Land*, 184).

[48] See Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), xxxvi-xliv; Parpola, "Sons of God"; Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 299-301. Cf. also Frankfort's following remarks: "In Mesopotamia, as elsewhere, the terms of parentage are used in connection with the deity to express both intimacy and dependence. Hence it is possible for Hammurabi, in the preamble to his code, to call himself 'son of Sin' (II, 13-14), 'son of Dagan' (Iv, 27-28), and 'brother of the god Zamama' (a 'son of Enlil' [II, 56]), while in yet another text he is the son of Marduk" (*Kingship and the Gods*, 300). It is still debated whether the divine sonship of the Mesopotamian king is intended to mean only in the functional or also in the ontological sense (as in Egypt); cf. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, xxxvi-xliv; cf. Martti Nissinen, "Die Relevanz der neuassyrischen Prophetie für die alttestamentliche Forschung," in *Mesopotamica – Ugaritica – Biblica: Festschrift für Kurt Bergerhof zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres am 7. Mai 1992* (ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz; AOAT 232; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1993), 217-58, esp. 234 and 246. We here have no need to delve into this discussion because our concern is solely the functional aspect of the Mesopotamian king.

[49] Consider also Paul's discussion of the adoption formula in his, "Adoption Formulae," esp. 178, in which he writes: "Just as on the personal [royal] level, the terms 'son,' 'first-born' (Ps 89:28) and 'father' (Ps 89:27) (applied to David, the Davidic king and God) hark back to the descriptive phraseology of adoption terminology, so too, on the national level, these metaphors are employed to express the bond which exists between God and Israel. The nation, 'adopted' by God, is called, 'Israel, my first-born son' in Exod 4:22; and in Jer 31:8 God declares, 'I have become a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first-born.' Moreover, as a father bequeaths his inheritance to his son (as… eternal dynasty and gift of nations to the Davidic king), so God allots and validates his gift of the land of Israel to his "sons," the children of Israel ([cf.] Jer 3:19)." For the use of the words "father" and "son" in the context of treaty and covenant, see F. Charles Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology

regard, the covenant that God establishes with Israel is conceived of as an "adoptive contract" which enlists the set of norms and conditions that must be kept in order to maintain the established relationship. As has been noted, the two-sided clause that God employs in establishing the covenantal relationship with Israel – "I will be your God and you will be My people"(e.g., Exod 6:7; Lev 26:12; cf. also Exod 29:45; Deut 26:18-19) – is based on the legal formula employed at the ceremony of adoption (or wedding).[50] That is, the use of this legal formula reinforces the legitimacy of the hereditary status of Israel.

In Biblical Hebrew, as has been noted, the technical terms for settlement as well as exile are related to legal terms for inheritance and family law: for instance, the verb ירש "to possess (the land)"[51] means "to inherit" in family law (Gen 15:3); נחל "to possess (the land)"[52] also means "to inherit"(Judg 11:2); גרש "to drive out (from the land)"[53] means "to evict"(Lev 21:7, 14; 22:13; Judg 11:2); and שלח "to cast out (from the land)"[54] also means "to expel (from the household)"(Deut 24:1, 3). [55] It is evident that beneath these expressions is the metaphorical concept of THE PROMISED LAND IS YHWH'S ESTATE.[56]

In the ancient Near East, the relationship of the adoptive parent and child is conditional. The adoptive parent is obligated to provide the basic daily necessities (e.g., food and clothing) as well as to grant the hereditary right of his property to the adoptee, while the

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for Treaty and Covenant," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (ed. Hans Goedicke; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971), 121-35.

[50] "The two-sided clause 'I am your God and you are My people/kinsmen' seems to be an adaptation of certain clauses used in ancient Near Eastern family law. The two main categories of family law are adoption and marriage. In both transactions, a foreign branch is artificially (read: legally) grafted onto the main stock of the family (for this reason, the Romans could consider marriage as the adoption of sister)." Yochanan Muffs, "Studies in Biblical Law IV: Antiquity of P" (Mimeographed; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965), 4-5. On this formula, see Paul, "Adoption Formulae."

[51] Cf. "YHWH your God brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess (לרשתה)"(Deut 7:1).

[52] Cf. "the land that YHWH your God is giving you to possess (ינחילך)"(Deut 19:3).

[53] Cf. "I will drive out (גרש) the Canaanites"(Exod 34:11)

[54] Cf. "the nations that I am casting out (משלח) before you"(Lev 18:24).

[55] For more examples, see Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land*, chs. 4 and 8.

[56] Frank Moore Cross has recently discussed the motif of Israel as YHWH's kinsfolk and related social metaphors, or "sociomorphisms," as he calls them; see his *From Epic to Canon*, ch. 1. Consider also Duane Andre Smith, "Kinship and Covenant: An Examination of Kinship Metaphor for Covenant in the Book of the Prophet Hosea" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1994). For an overview of sociomorphisms in Mesopotamia, see Jacobsen, "Mesopotamian Religions," *ER* 9:452-53.

latter must fulfill his filial obligations, most importantly to revere, and follow the instructions of the former.[57] For example, one of the Nuzi documents (2nd mill. BCE) notes that the legal obligation of an adopted child for receiving his inheritance is to "listen to" and "revere" his adoptive parent:[58]

> If Kinni [= the adoptee] fails to show respect [*lā ipallaḫšu*] for Paiteshub [= the adoptive parent], and does not obey him [*lā išimmu*; lit., does not listen to him], then just as one treats the son of a citizen of Arrapḫa, so shall Paiteshub treat Kinni: he shall put fetters on his feet, place the slave mark on (his) head, put him in the house of detention, [thereby disciplining] him.[59]

It is in light of this legal realia that the prophetic use of the familial metaphor in the condemnations against Israel for forsaking their covenantal obligations is best understood. That is, Israel, as "adopted child" of YHWH, has neglected his "filial" obligations to heed and revere his "Father," forcing YHWH to consider "disowning" His "child" and "abrogating" their familial relationship. In Jeremiah, for example, God repetitively complains that the people do not "revere"[60] and "listen to"[61] Him. In such cases, God is in fact making a

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[57] On this in detail, see Fleishman, *Parent and Child*. For the ancient Near Eastern background of adoption law, cf. Elizabeth C. Stone and David I. Owen, *Adoption in Old Babylonian Nippur and the Archive of Mannum-mešu-liṣṣur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 1-33 and the literature cited there.

[58] On *palāḫu* "the act of revering" as a legal obligation of the (adopted) child, see Fleishman, *Parent and Child*, 200-43. Cf. the (rabbinic) Hebrew word פלחו "ritual, sacred service."

[59] E. A. Speiser, "A Significant New Will from Nuzi," *JCS* 17 (1963): 65-71.

[60] With this legal background in mind, consider God's following remarks: "this people has a wayward and defiant heart (לב סורר ומורה – this phrase is reminiscent of בן סורר ומורה the "wayward and defiant son" in Deut 21:18-21)… they have not said to themselves, 'Let us revere (נירא נא) YHWH our God (= the duties of the adopted children), who gives the rain, the early and late rain in season, who keeps for our benefit the weeks appointed for harvest (= the obligations of the adoptive parent towards the adopted children) " (Jer 5:23-24). See David Marcus, "Juvenile Delinquency in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JANES* 13 (1981): 31-52, esp. 47-48. On the "wayward and defiant son" in Deut 21:18-21, see Joseph Fleishman, "Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy XXI 18-20," *VT* 53 (2003): 311-27. Consider also Jer 32:38-39 where the adoption formula appears together with the term "to revere": "They shall be My people and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart and one way to revere (ליראה) Me for all time." The sense of this verse is this: God will give them a new heart and new way so that they can fulfill their 'filial' obligations, thereby restoring His 'familial' relationship to the people.

[61] E.g., Jer 3:13; 5:21; 7:13, 23-24; 11:4, 7-8, 10; 13:10-11; 17:23; 25:3-4, 7-8; 26:3-5; 29:19; 35:13-17; 36:31; 40:3; 42:21; 44:5, 23. In light of this legal background, the following verse can be read as the people admitting their forsaking the familial obligation to their adoptive Father: "we have sinned against YHWH our God, we and our fathers from our youth to this day, and we have not *listened to* YHWH our God" (Jer 3:25). Note that God refers to the people as בנים שובבים "rebellious children" (3:22).

legal claim; i.e., the people are losing their hereditary right and will soon be put into the "house of detention," i.e., the exile.[62]

In sum, the biblical metaphor of God and Israel as parent and child is employed in order to consider – or reconsider – the legitimacy of Israel's hereditary status with respect to the Promised Land.

Summary

The cognitive investigation of biblical metaphors thus enables us to fathom the basic categories through which the people of Israel conceived of God, humans, and the world. We can therewith enhance our understanding of the categorical framework of biblical religion, and distinguish it from modern categorical systems, in light of which its literature tends to be investigated. In fact, a number of scholars have previously investigated this topic; however, none of them has attempted to reformulate an intuitive gestalt approach into a systematic replicable method.[63] As our discussion above has clearly shown, cognitive linguistics can be a decisive tool in developing a systematic approach to this topic, thereby yielding a substantial contribution to the study of worldview and value concepts in biblical and Judaic studies as well as in cultural scholarship as a whole.

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[62] In Mesopotamian family law, when the child fails to perform the filial obligation, the parent is expected to chastise the child. This "chastisement," or "discipline," is termed in Akkadian *ḫuddumumma epēšu* "to give discipline," whose Hebrew equivalent is יסר. With this legal notion in mind, consider Jer 31:17, in which God says about Ephraim, His "first born son" (31:8), as follows: "I can hear Ephraim lamenting: 'You have chastised me (יסרתני), and I am chastised (ואוסר) like a calf that has not been broken. Receive me back, let me return, for You O YHWH, are my God.'" The sense of this verse is that Ephraim is as if in the 'house of detention,' fully admitting his failure of fulfilling his 'filial' obligations toward his 'Father.' Note also that Ephraim's words "You O YHWH, are my God" is a legal statement ascertaining God's "fatherhood" (or godhood; cf. Hos 2:25); cf. Szubin and Porten, "The Status of a Repudiated Spouse," 60-66. As for the Akkadian *ḫuddumumma epēšu* and its Hebrew cognate, see Fleishman, *Parent and Child*, 251 note 51; on יסר "to discipline" as a legal term, see also Fleishman, "Legal Innovation," 312-13. The verb יכח/הוכיח "to rebuke, punish, reprove," which often appears with יסר in parallel (Jer 2:19; Ps 6:2; Prov 3:11), also has a legal nuance; see Seeligmann, *Studies in Biblical Literature* (ed. Emanuel Tov et al; in Hebrew; Rev. ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1996), 258-59; Fleishman, "Legal Innovation," 313, note 10.

[63] E.g., J. J. Finkelstein, "Bible and Babel," *Commentary* 26 (1958): 431-44; Finkelstein, "The West, the Bible and the Ancient East"; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972; Moshe Greenberg, *On the Bible and Judaism*; Greenberg, *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995); Y. Muffs, *The Personhood of God: Biblical Theology, Human Faith and the Divine Image* (Woodstock, Vt.: Jewish Lights, 2005); Frymer-Kensky, *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism*. Cf. the works cited in footnote 25 above are among the few studies in biblical scholarship which endeavor to develop a systematic method on the present topic.