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THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND THE DIALECTIC OF REVELATION

In some tales of the Hebrew Bible, the hero is addressed simultaneously by the super-human messenger of *Jhwh* (that is to say, the angel) and by his divine sovereign (Gen 16 7, 21 17, 22 11, 31 11, Exod 3 2, Judg 2 1, 6 11-19)[1] The co-occurrence of two speakers with one message seems paradoxical and even contradictory if the angel is there, why should the deity be present, and if God is speaking, what is the need for the messenger[9] Biblical scholarship has proposed two answers according to the diachronic approach, the tensions caused by this particular intermingling of identities are related to the evolution of Israelite faith and the growth of the Hebrew Bible[2], whereas the theological approach favors seeing this configuration as a particular kind of theophany[3]. In the words

1 This listing follows G. von Rad, '**ἄγγελος** B מלאך im AT', *TWNT* I, 75-79 75, apart from the important pericope in Judg 6 11 18

2 For recent overviews of scholarly opinion, see D N Freedman — BE Willoughby ' מלאך', *TWAT* IV(l984),pp 887—904 Carola Newsom 'Angels, OT' *ABD* I, pp. 248—253 According to one approach, the angel is the inheritor of a polytheistic deity or numen eg TH Gaster Angel', *IDB* I, pp 128-130,.W Baumgartner, 'Zum Problem des "Jahwe Engels", *Zum Allen Testament und seiner Umwelt,* Leiden 1959, pp 240—246, esp pp 245—246 A Rofe *The Apparition of Angels in the Bible,* diss Hebrew University Jerusalem 1969 Other scholars see him as the substitute for a *Jhwh* theophany, e g , M J Lagrange, L'Ange de Iahve' *RB* 12 (1903), pp 212 225, Baumgartner, op cit, p 245 Gunkel envisages a three-stage development, in which a polytheistic tale about an ancient numen turns into a naive *(unbefangen)* account of a *Jhwh* revelation, which is later (i e before the middle of the eighth century, Hos 12 4 5) transformed into the narrative about an angel, see H Gunkel, *Genesis (HKAT* I, 1), Gottingen 1902[2] pp 164—165 id 1910[3], p 187

3 See A B Davidson Angel', *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible* I, Edinburgh 1898, p 94 In Von Rad's opinion the Jhwh messenger is symbol of divine succour G. von Rad, op. cit. pp.

of the Midrash בכל מקום שהמלאך נראה, השכינה נראית ('Everywhere where the Angel appears, the Shekhina appears', *Shemoth Rabbah* 32 8)[4]. The present paper argues in favor of the latter approach. From a narrative point of view, the apparent paradox is strictly functional the symbiosis between the invisible divine presence and the physical appearance of the messenger increases the concrete power of the revelation, whilst preserving the divine authority of the message

The fundamental problem is related to the character of the theophany as such, which, as Licht put it, momentarily limits the distance separating the human from the divine transcendence so that *Jhwh* may announce his will[5]. As such, a theophany is necessarily problematic, for it obliges the narrator to represent at once the transcendent and the human If the theophany is thought of as mediating between the divine transcendence and the human world, the angel is the concrete embodiment of this mediation[6] The symbiosis of the visible apparition of the angel and the audible divine speech is a particular expression of this general dialectic concrete, physical presence is ascribed to the angel, whereas the divine speech remains transcendent

In a system of this kind, one is dealing with concrete representation and abstract authority Even though the perceivable messenger is the angel, the authority of the message is divine, even though it is attributed to *Jhwh,* he is represented by the angel. This duality is not a matter of blurred identities, but of

75-76 id *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols), Edinburgh-London 1962, pp I 286-287 Eichrodt describes the 'quasi human form of the messenger' as a temporary incarnation of *Jhwh* 'in order to assure his own that he is indeed immediately at hand' see W. Eichrodt *Theology of the Old Testament* (2 vols), London 1967,2, p 27, M Takahashi, An Oriental's Approach to the Problem of Angelology', *ZAW* 78 (1966), pp 343—350 (highlighting the similarity between angelic apparition and polytheistic theophany) Eichrodt's view has been brought out more forcefully by H Junker, Genesis *(EB* I), Wurzburg 1955 p 77, V Hirth *Gottes Boten im Alten Testament* (Theologische Arbeiten 32), Berlin 1975 pp 111-115 and though in a different way, by Newsom, Angels' p 250 On the view that the problematic situation can always be explained by the fact that the messenger is his master's voice (e g J Licht, Mal'akh', *Entzyqlopedia Miqraith* 4, Jerusalem 1962, cols 975—990, esp col 981—982) see note 19, below

4 Similarly *Bereshith Rabbah 11* 16 (p 1246 in ed Theodor Albeck)

5 J. Licht, 'The Sinai Theophany', in Y. Avishur — J. Blau (ed), *Studies in Bible and the*
Ant lent Near East Presented to Samuel E Loewenstamm (2 vols) Jerusalem 1978, I, pp 251-267, esp pp 255-256. (Engl summary 2, pp 201-202) See also Eichrodt op cit. p 27

6 The thesis that an angel is a mediator tout court is rightly rejected by Licht (Mal'akh' col 977), since the angel is never represented as an intercessor But this meaning of the term mediator' differs from the sense in which it is used in the present discussion

a ‘double representation’, in which the physical power of the angel exemplifies the divine vigour.

An elementary illustration of the dialectic of representation and authority is encountered in the well-known pericope on the angel, on whom Jhwh bestowed His authority, 'for my name is in his innermost', (כי שמי בקרבו, Exod 23 21). Hence the appearance of this messenger is no more than a natural channel for the delivery of the message, his command is not his own, but God's. The tension between these poles comes to the fore in the proclamation of the angel's status that if you will indeed listen to *his* voice and do all that *I* speak' (כי אם שמוע תשמע בקלו ועשית כל אשר אדבר, v 22), in which the divine self-reference (אדבר) clashes with the reference to the messenger (בקלו)[7] . However, despite this complicated game, the narrator carefully distinguishes between the voices the speaker is the messenger (בקלו, בקרבו), but the authority (אדבר, שמי) is divine. In narrative, this dialectic leads to unexpected complications which cannot be completely explained by diachronic analysis.

The tale of Hagar, for example, has an angel appear to her in order to utter a promise of many offspring Although this promise is formulated in the first person singular, it does not refer to the messenger, but to his divine sender הרבה ארבה את זרעך (‘I shall for sure give you much offspring’, Gen 16 10). On the other hand, the angel also points to *Jhwh* in the third person (v. 11). This is the way the messenger may refer to his sender The complication is that Hagar addresses her prayer to ‘*Jhwh* who had spoken to her’ (v. 13, שם ה׳ הדבר אליה), and declares that ‘you are the god who looks after me' (אל ראי), which is later used to explain the name Lahay Ro’i. Is this messenger no more than a substitute for another deity, viz a local numen?[8] Though plausible in this particular case, this explanation does not exhaust all possibilities We must, for instance, take into account the problems posed by the point of view Although the narrator explicitly speaks of an angel, Hagar can ascribe the theophany to *Jhwh,* because she recognizes the divine person who spoke to her as *Jhwh's* messenger. Her prayer acknowledges the authority of his divine sovereign Furthermore, in her situation a small time *jinni* would not be of avail would the numen of the well

7 With the adaptation in the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch (hence SamP) כי אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי. A second interchange of persons occurs in the verb. LXX and SamP have the plural תשמעו, even though the singular prevails in the entire unit apart from v 25 ועבדתם (LXX singular) The complete picture favors the MT reading

8 This is the view of Lagrange op cit. p. 219.

help Hagar in her conflicts with Sarai" And even if one considers the present theophany as the apperance of a protecting spirit[9], the protector could never be less powerful that the God of Abraham In the given narrative, then, Hagar's view makes sense

Similar problems present themselves in the tale of the divine attack on Moses in the episode of the 'Hatan damim' (Exod 4 24-26) In fact, the LXX ascribes the demonic attack on Moses to the angel (LXX Exod 4 24), whereas the Midrash speaks of the anger and the exasperation' (האף והחמה)[10]. In this case textual transmission (and exegesis) seems to justify the assumption that the angel is no more than a later replacement for a pure *Jhwh* epiphany[11] Nevertheless, the case itself is more complicated In the nocturnal darkness, none of the characters can be certain of the identity of the attacker Seen from Moses' angle, the assumption that it was *Jhwh* himself was only logical within the given narrative, a mere local spirit would not have dared to attack the servant of God Hence the identification of the attacker as *Jhwh* could reflect Moses' point of view

Point of view, however, does not suffice to explain the case of Jacob's dream account, in which the *mal’ak's* proclamation of identity is quoted as אנכי האל בית אל (I am the deity of Bethel, Gen 31 11), referring to the dream theophany in which Jacob saw *Jhwh* appearing amidst the angels on the stairway (28 13)[12] The point is that by introducing himself as a divine being[13], the angel underpins his own authority[14] and encourages Jacob to undertake the dangerous step of

9 E.g, a *lamassu,* see E M Curtis, Images in Mesopotamia and the Bible' in W. W. Hallo, B W. Jones, G. L. Mattingly (eds.), *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature (Scripture* in Context III), Lewiston 1990, pp 31-56, esp pp 34-35

10 b Ned 32a, on the basis of Deut 9:19 כי יגרתי מפני האף והחמה אשר קצף ה׳ עליכם. According to R. Shim‘on Ben Gamli'el the attacker was an angel, see y Ned 3,9, Bereshith Rabbah 76,5 לא בקש נמלאך להרוג למשה אלא לתינוק

11 So W. Baumgartner, op cit, p 245, who also refers to LXX Judg 6 14 In Exod 23 21 the problem is similar

12 On the other hand, Hosea mentions an angel meeting Jacob at Bethel (Hos 12 5), but he also calls him אלהים (v 4) This is exactly the opposite of the self reference in our tale the prophet turns the deity into an angel, whereas this tale represents the angel as a deity. Hence the tradition implied by the prophet's reference could never explain the dream account of Gen 31.

13 The divine name hardly is identical with that of the Phoenician deity Bethel, for in that case the expression אנכי האל would be quite anomalous. Hence it is a case of apposition, indicating the attribute.

11 Of course, the self reference אנכי האל בית אל involves an ambiguity not present in the unequivocal language of 28 13

fleeing. In short, all examples of the presumed blurring of the distinction between *Jhwh* and his messenger are to be analysed in terms of representation and authority, none of the other approaches offers an exhaustive explanation of the problems involved

The advantages of the functional approach are particularly obvious in the tale of the apparition which Gideon saw (Judg 6), for here we actually hear two voices, the one belonging to the angel presenting himself before the young hero, and the other to *Jhwh,* interfering in their dialogue in order to impress upon the youngster the importance of his calling Does the narrator distinguish between these voices? Modern scholarship maintains that such distinction could only be secondary in the original narrative Gideon is presumed to have been addressed by the deity only[15]

Two other tales shed light on this question The account of Isaiah's commission speaks of divine speech and angelic action the Seraph touches the prophet's lips with a רצפה from the altar, after which he is able to speak to God and hear his command (Isa 6 6-8)[16] In the Samson tale, on the other hand, only the angel acts and speaks, whereas *Jhwh's* role is confined to answering Manoah's prayer to send the man of God a second time.

Both cases are extremely instructive The case of Isaiah's call is important because we are hardly allowed to eliminate either *Jhwh* or the angel from the prophetic account The angel in this case is only *Jhwh's* servant, insofar as he is to purify the prophet's mouth He also explains to the prophet the meaning of his action (6 7), but immediately afterwards the prophet hears the divine call, and Isaiah's response to this call elicits the divine command, to be followed by Isaiah's fearful question 'until when my Lord?', and the divine answer. Hence the angel's action actually prepares the prophet for the divine commission, the double representation is a necessary element of the tale One also notes that in the account of Jeremiah's call, the prophet is touched by a divine hand (Jer 1 9),

The original narrative probably read *Jhwh* throughout C F Burney *The Book of Judges* London 1918 p 189 The angelic apparition is a *Jhwh* theophany G. F. Moore *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Judges (ICC)* Edinburgh 1895 pp 183- 185 The LXX according to which Gideon is addressed by the angel in vv 14 -16 too reflects a version of the narrative in which consistency is restored Josephus adheres to the double representation, but his formulation could also fit the LXX version (Ant V 214) This comparison is all the more significant as both the Isaianic vision and the Gideon tale are commission narratives the Samson tale could also be reckoned in this category since Samson is destined to be a *nazir* and a saviour

an action which is followed by the declaration that *Jhwh* thus has put His word in Jeremiah's mouth This example shows that the double representation is not necessarily a matter of secondary intervention Although later, the Jeremiah tale does mention the divine hand, which does not gain admission to the earlier Isaianic account[17] Moreover, in the later narrative the apparition of the hand is not preparatory, but fulfills a task in a dialogue which had already begun (v 4 8) This contrast highlights the significance of the Seraph's appearance in the Isaiah narrative It shows that the cooperation of angel and deity is not *eo ipso* illogical In the same way as one may visualize the prophet's account, one could imagine the symbiosis of the angelic apparition and the divine speech in the Gideon tale The hero could, for instance, hear an unidentified voice out of nowhere

The main point, however, is that in the Gideon tale the angelic apparition is preparatory for the divine call in the same way the Seraph's intervention is in the Isaianic account The angel's physical appearance and his address to Gideon that *'Jhwh* be with you, valiant hero', draw the hero's attention and induce him to express his doubts concerning the divine salvation But *Jhwh* interferes and proclaims his command to the hero 'Go with this your might and rescue Israel from the hands of Madian, lo, I am sending you' (Judg 6 12, 14)

At this point it becomes difficult to distinguish between speakers But distinguish we must, for the divine command is introduced by the clause ויפן אליו ה׳ , 'and the Lord turned to him' (v 14) The verb פנה is frequently used for 'turning away from something'[18]. In other cases, somebody turns his attention to something he was not concerned with before (Num 12 10, Judg 20 4, 2 Sam 1 7,2 20,2 Kings 2 14,23 16) Therefore the verb ויפן introduces a new speaker, distinct from the angel *Jhwh* himself is addressing the future hero What, then, is the role left for the messenger? The conclusion imposes itself that the appearance of the angel is preparatory for the divine address'[9]

17 In Amos visions no angelic cooperation is needed since these pericopes do not allude to physical contact between man and deity apart from speaking

18 פנה - turn away from Gen 18 22 24 49 Exod 7 23 10 6 32 15 Judg 18 26 1 Kgs 10 13 2 Kgs 5 12 see also Num 14 25 1 Kgs 17 3 Jer 2 27

19 See already Mid. *Sekhel Tov* on Gen 31:12 כבר דרשנו שכך דרך המלך כשרוצה לדבר עם עבדיו מקדים אחד ממשרתיו ומדבר כדי להסותם אל המלך see *Midrasch Sechel Tob* I (ed S Buber) Berlin 1900 p 158 These data do not fit the view that the co-occurrence of angelic apparition and divine voice is to be explained on the basis of the idea that the messenger is his master's voice for which see note 3 above

One could ask, however, why the narrator is in need of such preparation Wouldn't it be easier to have Gideon addressed by one speaker only, whether by *Jhwh* or by an angel? This possibility may be examined by means of Samson's birth narrative, which speaks consistently of an angel Manoah's wife is addressed by a messenger *of Jhwh* who promises her that she will bear a son who will 'start' delivering the Israelites from the Philistines (Judg 13 2-5) But nowhere does the angel reveal his identity explicitly. There are only some implicit signs, e. g., the messenger's knowledge of the misfortune of the woman who had borne no son (v 2) This is an indication of his state, since the awareness of circumstances which are hidden from the eye is a divine prerogative (cf Gen 18 9) Another indication is the fact that the messenger announces that the lad will be a *nazir* of *Jhwh* (Judg 13 5). In view of these signals, the woman has an inkling of the identity, and therefore the authority, of the messenger who uttered this promise, but cannot be quite certain of it. When informing Manoah she speaks of 'a man of God', i. e., either prophet or angel, it she also describes his appearance as being 'like a messenger of God, very frightening' (v 6). Still, she has not abandoned the notion that he is human, for she adds that she did not ask him where he came from and who he was. The question as to his provenance is far more suitable for mortals than for a deity. In order to solve the problem Manoah prays to *Jhwh* and begs Him to send the 'man of God' once again (v 8). Hence his question is concerned not only with the divine order regarding the status of the lad to be born, but also with the authority of the messenger[20]. In view of the problems related to the authentication of prophecy in Man texts, there seems to be some justification for the assumption that Manoah is trying to verify the message[21] When the angel returns, Manoah's wife calls for her husband, who accompanies her to the

20 Zakovitch maintains that the text is replete with sexual innuendo, as he finds the sexual code in such clauses as ויבא מלאך האלהים עוד אל האשה...בשדה ומנוח אישה אין עמה (v 9) See Y. Zakovitch, *The Life of Samson (Judges* 13-16), *A Critical Literary Analysis* (Hebr), Jerusalem 1982, pp 74 78 In the original version of the narrative the numen who came to the woman impregnated her, and thus was Samson's real father But he admits (p 36-37) that in the present version בוא signifies the divine revelation, e.g. 1 Sam 3 10, Gen 20 3, 31 24 Moreover, the first account of the angel's apparition uses וירא (v 3, cf v 10 הנה נראה אלי האיש אשר בא ביום אלי). Hence the 'original' version detected by Zakovitch does not form a predecessor of the present tale in the literary tradition, but at most a mythic prototype See S.B. Parker, 'Official Attitudes toward Prophecy at Mari and in Israel' *VT* 43 (1993), pp 50-68

messenger, who is still called 'the man' (v. 11, ויבא אל האיש) This appellation obviously reflects the point of view of Manoah, who even addresses him as follows האתה האיש אשר דברת אל האשה (v 11, 'are you the man who has spoken to the woman?')[22] As the angel only confirms the bare fact itself, his identity remains unknown, but the divine source is now clear, thanks to Manoah's prayer The angel also confirms the status of their future son (v 13-14) Manoah, however, still treats the messenger as human He invites him (נעצרה-נא אותך, v. 15)[23] in order to treat him to a kid. The angel declines the invitation and declares that he will not eat from Manoah's food On the other hand he suggests an offering to God (v 16) Manoah responds by inquiring for his name[24], and suggests 'honoring' him if and when his words come true The term 'honoring' (וכבדנוך) is ambiguous. It could refer to worship (Isa 42 23, Ps 50 14-15, 23, 86:9), but it is also used for the payment Balak wished to offer Balaam (Num 22 17,24 11)[25] The latter case shows that Manoah's question is still compatible with the supposition that the future father takes the messenger for a human prophet, not unlike Samuel (1 Sam 9 6-7) The angel once more refrains from accepting the offer His answer that his name is a wondrous secret still conceals his real identity[26], but reveals that there is something numinous to him Thus enlightened, Manoah brings *Jhwh* an offering, a kid together with his cereal oblation, by which he indicates his recognition of the superhuman status of the

22 The fact that Manoah still has no idea of the true nature of the messenger is finally confirmed by the narrator's comment in v. 16b. Mostly one assumes that איש may mean 'angel', as suggested also by Gen 18 2 But in both passages it is a problem of point of view the same applies to Gen 19 10-11 only after the explanation for their sending, does Lot recognize his guests for what they are (v 14-15)

23 Cp 2 Kgs 10 20 as well as v. 19 (זבח גדול) The situation is similar to Judg 19:4 (ויחזק בו חתנו), 5 8 Hence the meaning of עצרת appears to be 'festive meal'.

24 The difficult phrase מי שמך (v 17) should not be emended. On the one hand the questions מה שמך, מה שמו etc are not that frequent in BHeb that the use of מי can be ruled out entirely. On the other hand one notes such idiomatic uses as מי יקום יעקב (Am 7:2 5), מי את בתי (Ruth 3 16), and see H. L. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret, A Canaanite Epic of the Bronze Age (BASOR Sup* 2—3), New Haven 1946, p 35

25 For the use of the root *kbd* for payment to the king in the Akkadian contracts in Ugarit see the sale of Niqmepa to Sawittenu (RS 16 251 1 10 12) *u sawittenu 1 meat hurasa sarra belsu uktabbid* and Sawittenu has honored the king, his lord with 100 sekel gold *{PRU* III pp. 108 109), similarly RS 16 256, 1 16-18 (ibid, p 159)

26 There is no possibility to decide between the qere פליא (wondrous so LXX^{AB}) and the kethib פלאי. In any case the meaning is clear

messenger[27] The oblation finally clarifies the messenger's status a flame arises from the altar in which the angel goes up to heaven The origin of the flame is not stated explicitly, but is most probably implied by the clause ומפליא לעשות ('and wondrously doing', v 19) This clause, containing no subject, is problematic and has elicited the suggestion that its rightful place would be in v 20ab, between בלהב המזבח and ומנוח ואשתו ראים [28] This suggestion, however, disregards the problem of the origin of the fire which, according to the analogue in the Gideon narrative (6 21), could well be miraculous[29] On the other hand, the fact that the subjects of this clause is not expressed is not as problematic as one might tend to think The two words. ומפליא לעשות do not merely form a circumstantial clause We are dealing with a clause of perception, indicating what Manoah and his wife witnessed[30] The present syntactic construction, than, is quite apt, conveying as it does the difficulty of perceiving what actually happened However, as the messenger goes up to heaven, Manoah and his wife prostrate before him[31], when he does not reappear, Manoah knows what he needs to now this was neither a prophet nor a miracle worker, but a messenger of God v 21)[32] Hence his fear of dying, 'for we have seen a god' (v 22) His wife calms urn down, for she interprets the acceptance of their oblation, the vision they saw and the message as good signs

This tale shows that an account of the apparition of a messenger of *Jhwh*

27 It is no good to discard the suggestion of an offering to God as a monotheistic adaptation of a semi- pagan tale (as suggested by Zakovitch, *Samson* pp 61-62), for the representation of the angel's game with Manoah's doubts is a bit too well done to allow for secondary revision of the narrative.

28 This clause is not necessarily dittographic, in this dramatic highpoint of the narrative in a sense both climax and denouement, it is better regarded as a kind of epipher.

29 For theophanic fire see below, on Exod 3

30 For clauses of perception with no presentation particle, cp Judg 3 20, and see H Polak, Some Aspects of Literary Design in the Ancient Near Eastern Epic', in A F. Rainey-A. Kempinski (eds), *kinattutu sa darati, Raphael Kutscher Memorial Volume,* Tel Aviv Occasional Publications 1, Tel Aviv 1994, pp 135-146, esp pp 142 143, A Berlin, *Poetics and the Interpretation of Biblical Narrative,* Sheffield 1983, pp 62 64

31 The fall on the face(נפל על פניו) indicates the prostration before God or king, like Akkadian *ana pant maqatu,* and Ugaritic *ql* cf Jos 5 14 LXX, and see the present author's '*Wysthw* a Group Formulae in Biblical Prose and Poetry', in M Fishbane, W Fields, F Tov (eds), *Shaarei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* Winona Lake 1992, pp 81*—-91* (Hebr , English Summary), esp pp. 84-85

32 In v 21 the phrase ולא יסף עוד מלאך ה׳ להראה means that he had disappeared altogether and did not return after the fire had disappeared, lather than that he did not reappear at another occasion (against Moore Burney)

alone creates its own problems In a narrative of this kind, the angel must prove his mettle in order to persuade the addressee of his status and his authority These doubts enable the narrator to place Samson's calling in a particularly ironic framework, the solution of which highlights the divine source of his office Manoah is finally convinced by the miraculous way in which the angel disappears It is the visual proof, then, which dispels all doubts

What does this mean for the symbiosis of messenger and deity in the tale of Gideon's call? This question has two aspects On the one hand, the problem of visual proof remains the same In fact, unlike the Samson tale, in which this question does not explicitly arise since Manoah tries to adhere to the notion that he is speaking with a human messenger, Gideon raises the question *expressis verbis* 'show me a sign that it is you who is talking with me' (v 17) But he can ask for a sign because he has been addressed by the deity himself, in the first person His doubts concerning the divine providence for Israel are dispelled by God's affirmation 'Lo, I am sending you' (הלא שלחתיך)[33], whereas the divine assurance כי אהיה עמך ('for I will be with you', v 16) gives him confidence in his capability of performing his task His change of heart comes to the fore in his request show me a sign, that it is you who is speaking to me' (v 17) This request is as ambiguous as the dialogue was Formally, it is addressed to the angel, for he is the addressee of the second part, 'do not depart from here until I come to you' (v 18) On the other hand, if the angel were the only addressee, there would be no logic in the wish to know 'that it is you who is speaking to me', for his presence is a certainty And if the reader wishes to imagine that Gideon only wanted to make sure that he is witnessing the appearance of an angel, he should ask himself how the hero could possibly conceive of such a notion, if not because of the sudden divine speech That is to say, the first factor arousing Gideon's awareness is the divine speech itself, distinct from the speech of the angel, in that the latter speaks of God in the third person

But that is not all As Gideon asks for a visible sign by means of an offering (v 17-18a), the angel comes into action again, and promises him אנכי אשב עד שובך

33 Since it is impossible to detach the particle הלא from Ugaritic *hl* (EA *allu)* and as the question 'haven't I sent you? seems hardly appropriate in juxtaposition with the imperative לך בכחך זה it seems preferable to take it as an introductory presentation particle The periect שלחתיך does not indicate the past but the immediate present ('hereby', like the *iptaras* perfect in Akkadian) eg נתתי כסף השדה (Gen 23 13) see W Schneider *Grammatik des biblischen Hebräisch Ein Lehrbbuch* Munchen 1974 pp 204--205. P. Joüon- T Muraoka *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2 vols) Roma 1991 2 p 162 (s 112f)

'I will wait until you return', v 18b, the word-play is significant the similarity between the description of the angel's state, אשב, and Gideon's movement, שובך , evokes a connection between human and angelic being) The visible activity is to be performed by the angel, who kindles a fire with the end of his staff and disappears in the flames (vv 20-21) That sign finally dispels Gideon's doubts

This theophany, then, has three stages At first, the angel draws Gideon's attention and proclaims his task As the hero expresses his doubts about this calling, divine speech from heaven makes him understand that he is not being addressed by a mere human Angelic action proves to him that he was witness to a theophany Hence the hero's certainty of his commission derives from the combination of visual and audial experiences The visual apparition is in the angel's domain, but the authoritative voice still is divine

The particular authority of the divine voice also has a special function in the sequel of the narrative The encounter with the angel raises the problem of the danger of experiencing a theophany In the Samson tale, this question is raised by Manoah and answered by his wife, as there is no authority left God has sent the angel in answer to Manoah's prayer, but has not addressed them directly Therefore, in that narrative the question of the danger inherent in the theophany, cannot be answered directly In contrast, in the Gideon narrative, the hero has been addressed by God directly Thus, his anxious cry אהה אדני ה׳ כי על כן ראיתי מלאך ה׳ פנים אל פנים ('Alas, Lord God, for I have seen the messenger of *Jhwh* fact to fact', v 22), which, unlike Manoah's statement (13 21), does not even mention the danger explicitly, is answered by God directly (v 23) That is to say, the assertion that he has nothing to fear has divine authority

The particular dialectic of the Gideon narrative indicates the special function of double representation the main point is the authority of the divine voice This authority is enhanced and buttressed by the physical apparition of the angel, since he can perform the miracle which ultimately persuades Gideon The point is the symbiosis of the two elements If the angel appears alone, the human addressee remains guessing, even after witnessing proof of the superhuman origin of the message But if angelic apparition is accompanied by the divine voice, the divine command carries additional authority, even after the angel has gone Ultimately, then, the visible activity of the angel only serves to perceptibly confirm the authority of the divine voice Thus double representation is a phenomenon *sui generis,* the logic of which should not be glibly put aside

This logic is also valid in some other tales The scene of Moses' call, the structure of which is quite similar to that of Isa 6 and the tale of Gideon's call, is dominated by the visual perception of the burning bush and the audial experience of the divine call out of the bush (Exod 3 2-4) This case is instructive, because Moses does not actually see the physical appearance of a messenger What he sees is a fire, styled מלאך ה׳ בלבת האש מתוך הסנה ('a messenger of *Jhwh* in a flame of fire out of the bush', v 2)[34] Fire can be theophanic in itself, as shown by many passages, and in particular by the Deuteronomic description of the revelation at Sinai והר בער באש עד לב השמים ('and the mountain was burning until the very heart of heaven', Deut 4 11), וידבר ה׳ אליכם מתוך האש ('and *Jhwh* spoke to you out of the fire', v 12, so also v 33)[35]. The miraculous fire in which the angel disappears (Judg 6 21 22, 13 19-21) suggests a link between such fire and the apparition of the angel In the Moses tale the mysterious fire is associated with the 'messenger of *Jhwh',* since it forms the visible aspect of the theophany The audial aspect, on the other hand, is linked to the divine voice, associated with the name Elohim (v 4), whereas the divine act of perceiving is associated with the name *Jhwh* (v 4a) The difference between these names is usually viewed as an indication of the combinations of different sources The course of the narrative itself, however, is quite logical Moses' attention is drawn by the wondrous view of the burning bush, as he turns to go towards it, he is addressed by the divine voice and urged not to get near, hence he hides his face in order not to look into the divine fire There is nothing in this sequence which could in any way suggest the presence of different sources Therefore the use of different names should not be attributed to differences in the origin of the various clauses[36] On the other hand, some of the

34 The Vulgata introduces consistency by reading Dominus in v 2a in contrast according to Rashbam the Angel is called by the name of God

35 See also Ezek 1 13 27 8 2 Exod 20 18 Ps 18 10 13 (-2 Sam 22 10 13)

36 So much is admitted by E Blum *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch (BZAW* 189) Berlin NewYork 1990 pp 23 26 Greenberg and Childs accept source critical analysis even though they are aware of the integrating features of this tale see M Greenberg *Understanding Exodus* NewYork 1969 pp 101-104 as against pp 70 78 B S Childs *The Book of Exodus A Critical Theological Commentary* Philadelphia/London 1974 pp 52 53 An appraisal of source critical solutions eg W H Schmidt *Exodus* I *(BK* II) Neukirchen Vluyn 1977 pp 107 110 is offered by M Rose *Deuteronomist und Jahvist Untersuchungen zu den Berührungspunkten beider Literarwerke (ATANT* 67) Zurich 1981 pp 73- 77 Rose pp 72 78 returns to Wellhausen's thesis that the present pericope though not of one piece has been composed by the JE redaction *(Bearbeiter)*

appellations used seem to be associated with different actions. The name *Jhwh* is used for the divine perception of Moses' reaction (v. 3a), whilst the call to make him approach the bush is related to the Elohim name (v. 4b), which is also used for indicating Moses' fear of seeing the deity (v. 6). This variation appears to be motivated: Moses' nearing is related to his visual perception of a physical divine substance and invites the use of the term מלאך. On the other hand, those occasions on which the narrator uses the term Elohim are related to opposites of direct visual perception, that is, the audial call (v. 4b) and Moses' fear of seeing the deity (v. 6). The name *Jhwh* is used for the element which mediates between Moses' perception and that call, that is to say, the indication of how God perceives Moses' approach to the bush (v. 4a). This element embodies the transition from the pole of direct visual perception to the pole of distance. In short, the use of the various indications of the deity is not a matter of chance. It is systematic, as is the use of the term מלאך ה׳ for his direct visual perception[37].

Now it is remarkable that the function of this motif in our tale is similar to that of the angel in the Gideon narrative: it draws the attention of the human destinee of the call, and, according to Rashi also serves as a sign to confirm his destination, as this is the only element in the narrative to which the expression 'and this will be you a sign' (v. 11) could apply[38]. Hence the tale of the call of Moses is also based on the principle of 'double representation', although the messenger does not appear *in persona.*

These data warrant the conclusion that the symbiosis of divine speech and angelic apparition is not merely a matter of historical development. This is a

37 For the view that this verse merely serves as a motto, see B S Childs, 'Anticipatory Titles in Hebrew Narrative[1], A Rofe — Y Zakovitch (ed), *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume* (3 vois), Jerusalem 1983, 3, pp 57-65 This explanation fits the opening of Gen 18, which anticipates the development of the chapter itself in Exod 3, however, this verse initiates the mam action, for it is the divine fire which draws Moses' attention

38 See Rashi (followed by Rashbam, Luzzatto) and *Midrasch Sechel-Tob* II (ed S Buber), Berlin 1901, pp 22-23 on Exod 3 11 (see also Ibn Ezra, whose formulation is less unequivocal) Of course, Rashi's view is considerably strengthened by the use of the angelic fire to identify the *mal'ak* in the tales of Gideon and Samson For the proposal that original J version of the narrative included the sign of the 'messenger of *Jhwh,* in fire and a pillar of cloud' (cp Exod 13 21,14 19) see: H Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit ein Kommentar zu den Mose-sagen (FRLANT* 18), Gottingen 1913, p 21, n 1 This suggestion is not unlike Rashi's interpretation, but is destitute of us logic a future occurrence, due to take place after the exodus, could never be a sign for Moses' present actions According to Greenberg *(Understanding,* p 75) this verse probably serves to telescope a variety of ideas

system in its own right, with its own aims. Divine speech in itself, so it seems, does not lay the same claim to human attention as does physically observable, palpable appearance. In ancient Near Eastern and Hellenic myth and epic, this need is fulfilled by concrete, visual theophany. Generally speaking, this literature does not see any problem in the direct intercourse between deity and man[39]. Still, when a deity wants to make man obey, he may exert his divine powers. For example, when Apollo wishes to convict his Cretensian prisoners, whom he had intercepted at high sea and forcefully conveyed to Delphi to serve him there as his priests, he did so by appearing to them in might and glory, in order to forestall any possible opposition (Hymn to Apollo 1,1.440-512)[40]. And Demeter, who long served the family of Celeus as nurse to their son, suddenly appeared to them in all her might, as she had to defend herself for holding the lad in the fire in an effort to make him immortable (Hymn to Demeter, 1. 275-280)[41]. Another interesting example is offered by the narrative of Appu, written in Hittite, but of Hurrian descent[42]. In answer to the prayer of Appu, who had remained childless, the Sungod turns himself into a young man (GURUŠ), approaches him and addresses him in order to promise him a son[43]. By means of the apparition as a 'young man', the Sungod mitigated his might and greatness and made communication possible. On the other hand, the very fact of his nearness makes the argument more compelling.

In the present author's opinion, the latter case is especially valuable for a

39 In Mesopotamian literature the situation is more complicated In general, this literature does not envisage any direct intercourse between man and the higher deities, unless by dream (so for instance, in the Gilgamesh Epic and in Atram-hasis, though both Enkidu and Gilgamesh speak with Shamash and Ishtar whilst these deities are in heaven) On the other hand, there is direct contact between the King-shepherd, Dumuzi, and Inanna, one also notes the ritual marriage between King and Goddess This ritual, however, is set apart from daily life by its confinement to the highest room in the Ziggurat It is a notable fact that in Greek literature, Sophocles had misgivings about the free representation of this intercourse in the Aiax (11 14 17), Odysseus notes Athena's presence by her voice, whilst the goddess herself remains invisible

40 Homere, *Hymnes,* Texte établi et traduit par J. Humbert, Paris 1951, pp 97-99

41 ibid , p 50

42 On this tale see H A Hoffner, 'Some Contributions of Hittitology to OT Study', *TynBul* 20 (1969), pp 27-55, esp pp 52-55, on the analogies with the tale of Hannah (l Sam l) see F.H. Polak, *The Main Strand in the First Book of Samuel 1-15* (unpubl. diss , Hebr , Engl summary), Jerusalem 1984, pp 26, 81, n 7

43 Jana Siegelowa, *Appu-Märchen und Hedammu-Mythus (SBo* 14), Wiesbaden 1971, pp 6-7 (11 38—45)

better appreciation of the function of the symbiosis of angelic apparition and divine voice. The Sungod uses an appearance different from his own in order to communicate with a human. A similar effect is obtained by the episodes from the hymns to Apollo and Demeter: the very fact that these deities addressed the people they wanted to persuade, by word of mouth, shows that they refrained from using their true divine stature (Apollo appeared as a blazing star before addressing his victims, 11. 440-447). The physical theophany invests the divine utterance with an irresistible coercive power, which immediately crushes all opposition.

From a functional point of view, a theophany of this type parallels the angelic apparition. In both cases the physical appearance lends power and authority to a divine command or promise[44].

We conclude, then, that the principle of double representation constitutes the ancient Israelite counterpart of and response to the physical appearance of the deity in other religions (which apparently was not unacceptable in many circles in Israel, whether as a syncretistic belief or representing residues of the ancient belief)[45]. The physical, and especially the visual, aspect of the theophany was transferred to the angel, whereas the main command was uttered by the divine voice[46]. This procedure enabled the ancient narrator to maintain the physical power of the theophany without offending the sensitivity to visual *Jhwh* representations[47].

44 In fact, the principle of double representation is also in evidence in the tale of the Covenant between the Pieces, as Abraham witnesses the concrete, divine symbols of the smoking furnace and the flaming torch passing between the pieces (Gen 15 17), and on the other hand receives the spoken divine promise (v 38)

45 The problematic status of ancient Israelite beliefs which originated in polytheistic religion, but were not always necessarily incompatible with monotheism, has also been acknowledged by J H Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Goghs. Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions (HSS* 31), Atlanta 1986, pp 38 — 39 See in particular Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alien Testament (OBO* 74),
Freiburg/Gottingen 1987

46 In this sense, one could accept the diachronic approach the angelic apparition could actually be an Israelite substitute for the physical theophany, and could represent revision of alternative narratives, in which the deity was said to have appeared visually and palpably Such reconstructions, however, should not be turned into preconditions for the comprehension and interpretation of the biblical theophany theme

47 Apart from the tales of Gideon, Manoah and the burning bush note, from the divine point of view, Exod 33 2-23, and from the human angle Deut 4 12 However, there are exceptions, eg Exod 24 11, Num 12 6-7, but in these cases the exceptional character of the occurrence is emphasized by the narrator

This principle, however, is less obvious if the angel's apparition is not visual. In the Abraham cycle one notes two instances of an audial apparition which, nevertheless, also involve divine activity[48]. After having told how Hagar hid Ishmael in the bushes, the narrator relates how God heard the boy weeping: וישמע אלהים את קול הנער ('God heard the voice of the lad', Gen 21:17a). The continuation, however, deals with the angel, ויקרא מלאך אלהים אל הגר מן-השמים ('so the messenger of God called unto Hagar out of heaven', v. 17b). The angel announces to her that God has heard the boy, exhorting her not to abandon him because he is destined to be the father of a great nation[49]. At this point the narrator returns to Hagar and recounts how God opened her eyes and enabled her to see a well from which she could draw water (v. 19). In this sequence the call from heaven could be considered problematic, for after relating that God heard the boy, the narrative could go straight on with the discovery of the well. Hence this call might form a secondary elaboration of the original narrative[50]. On the other hand, the call from heaven does have a function: it encourages the expelled mother and motivates her to take care of the child[51]. Hence it would be quite wrong to remove this element from the narrative.

Why did the narrator prefer the call from heaven over a visible apparition? According to the diachronic approach, such call is less palpable than an apparition, and hence it is but another instance of E opting for a less concrete representation of divine revelation than J (Gen 16:7)[52]. But the audial theophany has a parallel in Akkadian literature. As Enkidu turns to Shamash in order to curse the hunter and the harlot who had introduced him to human

48 The tale of Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre (Gen 18 1-33) poses other problems, as the narrator opts for a visual and audial *Jhwh* appearance, the perplexities of which are being discussed by Josefa Rachaman's contribution to the present volume (see pp 185-197 of the Hebrew section) as well as her discussion of some medieval commentaries on this pericope 'The Sodom-Gomorrah Tale in the Light of Jewish Medieval Interpretation', in. Sarah Japhet (ed), *The Bible in the Light of its Interpreters, Sarah Kamin Memorial Volume,* Jerusalem 1994, pp 463-484 (Hebr., Eng. Summary) In the present author's opinion these problems are related to Abraham's point of view (see note 17 above) But this is a matter for another study

49 It is important to note that this promise is related to the context of the tale, since it entails that the boy is not destined to die

50 So, for example, C Westermann, *Genesis 12 36 (BK* I, 2), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1977, p 418 According to Gunkel, instead of the promise of v I7-18a, the original Ishmael tradition contained a promise parallelling that of v. 18b See H Gunkel, *Genesis*[3], p 214

51 Of course, the age of Ishmael in this tale is not obliged to fit the date of the chronological framework (Gen 17 25, and cp 2 1 5)

52 Gunkel, *ibid, p* 230

society, the god answers him, calling from heaven[53] Thus, the divine call from heaven is not to be considered an Israelite theologizing innovation[54] Moreover, the two tales of Hagar have a different logic From the point of view of plot development, the abandonment of Ishmael in the bush is not comparable to Hagar's rest near the well In the latter case, the narrator has use for a visual apparition, for he needs an element which is convincing enough to persuade Hagar to return to her mistress, moreover, he has the time (16 8) In the tale of Ishmael's expulsion, on the other hand, the crisis is far more urgent, for the boy in danger of abandonment and death Hagar *must* be warned on the spot that is why the narrator needs the cry from heaven, which is compelling by its very power. This task is carried out by a messenger, since a divine shout would be far too overwhelming for the human ear[55]

In the tale of the offering of Isaac, the situation is similar. As Abraham is sacrificing his son, the boy is in acute danger, and the father must be stopped immediately, that is, by the cry from heaven (Gen 22 11) The second call, concerning Abraham's immortal merit (v 15-17), could be motivated by the parallel with the first cry, but is not necessarily secondary[56]. The call from heaven, then, is an extraordinary happening. Unlike the divine utterance, which is perceivable to the inner consciousness and therefore in certain respects similar to subjective thinking, it has immense physical power and is therefore far more convincing than mere speaking Moreover, unlike divine speech, it is localized as being 'from heaven', and thereby identifiable as rooted in divine authority

In this respect, the angel's call from heaven fulfills the same task as the double presentation in the tales of Gideon, Moses and Hagar Emphasizing the physical aspect of the theophany, it enables the narrator to make the divine command or promise more convincing and more compelling to his heroes and thus, indirectly, more persuasive to his audience

53 C. J. Gadd, Some Contributions to the Gilgamesh Epic, *Iraq* 28 (1966), pp. 105-121 esp. pp. 11-112 *(UET* VI 394 rev II 40-41, matching VII in 33-35 of the Nineveh version).

54 The archaic chancier of dream and vision in the passages commonly attributed to E has been established by M Lichtenstein, 'Dream Theophany and the E Document', *JANES* 2 (1969), pp. 45-54 in comparison with the conventions of ancient Near Eastern literature

55 Cp Exod 20:14 -15 (18-19) and note the contrast between Ps 29 5-9 and 1 Kings 19:12

56 The use of שנית in 22 :15 has a parallel in the function of *šanītam* in old Babylonian epistolography introducing as it does in addition il point in the message