The Name of Samuel and the Stem שאל.

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I.

THE ancient Hebrews along with their fellow Semites accepted the principle of *nomen et omen*. The name of an object constituted an essential element of that object. Existence was closely associated with name-giving. Hence the great importance attached to the names of persons in the Old Testament, an importance made manifest as much by the actual meanings of the names as by the interpretations, so often playful and fanciful, offered by the Old Testament writers. While the Hebrews probably at an early period gave names that were suggested by personal traits, these were regarded rather as sobriquets. The formal name, or perhaps it would be better to say the formal names, since the Hebrews shared with many other nations the custom of changing names at important or critical epochs of life, had always some religious significance, were omens of the fate to which the individual was expected to look forward, prayers that embodied the pious wish of parents, or sacred mottoes serving as talismans against mishaps.

Such motives naturally grew weaker in the course of time. Custom and tradition entered as determining factors in the choice of a name. It became usual for the grandson to bear the name of his grandfather.[1] Certain names were adopted in certain families as favorite designations. Moreover names were subject to abbreviation, and the fact that in this process the element which gave a name its religious import was often dropped, reveals a tendency toward what may be denominated the secularization of names. At the same time the interpretations of which certain of the Old Testament writers are particularly fond show conclusively that the Hebrews did not outgrow

[1] So, *e.g.*, among the rulers of Sam'al in northern Syria. (See Sachau in *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli*, p. 65.) The custom prevailed also in ancient Babylonia. See Radau, *Early Babylonian History*, p. 15.

the idea that the name as such was of importance to its bearer and had a momentous, even if no longer a sacred, significance.

From this point of view we must regard the Biblical explanations of names. They are not etymologies in any proper sense of the word; and while often the writer hits upon the correct etymology, the principle of assonance which he follows frequently leads him astray. The important point for him is that the name should have a peculiar adaptation to the person who bears it, and the task imposed on us in the study of such interpretations is to grasp the writer's point of view. So, *e.g.*, the name Isaac, which is explained as 'the laugher,' is adapted to the individual in question through the frequent reference to laughing and laughter in the course of the narrative of Isaac's career. Sarah laughs (Gen. 18^{12}) when she hears that she is to have a son. God through Abraham chides her for laughing (v.^{13}), and she denies that she has laughed (v.^{15}). When Isaac is born, Sarah says that every one who will hear of the birth of her son will laugh (Gen. 21^{6}). Sarah cannot bear to see Hagar's son 'laughing' (21^{9}). Isaac is discovered by Abimelech 'laughing' with Rebecca his wife (Gen. 26^{8}).

II.

Generally the writer contents himself with a single reference to the interpretation of a person's name given in the account of his birth, but in the case of Samuel, as in that of Isaac, he dwells upon the interpretation with an emphasis which is unmistakable and which is clearly intentional.[2] It is not surprising, in view of the difficulties involved in the first chapter of Samuel where the birth of Samuel is narrated and the reasons for his name are given, that this name has been the subject of considerable discussion.

The older explanations rested on the assumption that the etymology proposed in the Book of Samuel formed a reliable starting-point. According to this etymology Samuel was so called because he had been 'asked for' from Yahweh. So Kamḥi suggests that שְׁמוּאֵל is a contraction of שָׁאוּל מֵאֵל, which became by syncope שָׁאוּמֵאֵל and then שְׁמוּאֵל. Ewald (*Heb. Gram.*, p. 275, note 3) is inclined to accept this view, but Thenius[3] properly objects to its artificiality.

The late A. Bernstein in one of his ingenious and suggestive

[2] 1 Sam. $1^{17.\,20.\,27.\,28}$ 2^{20}.

[3] Commentary on 1 Samuel in *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch*, p. 7, and 3d ed., p. 9.

Biblical essays[4] proposes a more radical solution of the difficulty. He suggests that the story narrated in the first chapter of Samuel was originally told of Saul, whose name signifies 'the one asked for'; and that, through an error or with intent, the story was transferred to Samuel. The theory is ingeniously worked out by Bernstein, but this is all that can be said in its favor. It is quite common for stories told of one person to be transferred to another, but a story that is directly associated with a person's name does not fall within this category. No writer would so stultify himself as to spoil a story by telling it of a person to whom it did not apply. Moreover the proof brought by Bernstein will not stand the test of criticism.

Others interpret the Biblical etymology as though the writer had in mind the stem שמע 'hear,' which would make the name of Samuel a contraction of שְׁמוּעֵ אֵל 'heard by God.'[5] Again, it has been proposed to take the name as compounded of שְׁמוּ 'name' and אֵל 'God,'[6] but against this it has been urged that 'name of God' does not appear to be either an appropriate or a reasonable appellative for a person. Winckler[7] indeed proposes to interpret *Šemu* as the name of a deity, but the evidence for this supposition is defective. It rests upon a theory that the two sons of Noah, Shem and Ham, are in reality deities, but then we should expect the same to hold good of Noah and Japhet, and, indeed, also of Canaan. Hommel's view that *shemu* is contracted from *shum-hu*, *i.e.* 'his name,' is even less plausible (see note 83). Still, taking the name as it stands, the division of Samuel into the two elements שְׁמוּ and אֵל is certainly the simplest procedure. It will be my endeavor in the course of this article to show that such a division is correct, but that שְׁמוּ is not to be taken in the sense of 'name,' nor as the name of a deity.

[4] Bernstein's merits as an investigator of Biblical themes have not been properly recognized. He was exceedingly eccentric in some of his views, but his papers are replete with suggestions that deserve to be further considered and investigated.

[5] So Reuss in his great translation and commentary on the Bible, *La Bible*, vol. I. p. 235. Cook, *Glossary of the Aramaic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1898), p. 115, still follows this opinion.

[6] This explanation is traced back to St. Gregory (H. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, in International Critical Commentary, New York, 1899, p. 13).

[7] *Altoriental. Forschungen*, II. p. 85.

III.

The document in the first chapter of the Book of Samuel belongs, according to Budde's analysis,[8] to E, representing a later stratum of the Ephraimitic narrative. In the mind of this writer the name of Samuel was closely associated with the stem שאל, the general sense of which is 'to ask.' Hannah, on the occasion of a yearly pilgrimage to Shiloh, was observed by Eli, the guardian of the sanctuary, to be engaged in prayer without audible utterance of her petition. The unusual phenomenon of a worshipper addressing the deity directly, attracted Eli's attention, as well it might. No wonder he regarded her as befogged through drink, for only one bereft of reason could expect to obtain an oracle without the aid of a priest. Hannah was "asking" (v.[26]) for a son, *i.e.* she was seeking to know through an oracle whether she might expect to have a child. Eli intervenes and reassures her, saying, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel will grant thy asking which thou hast asked of him," וְאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן אֶת־שֵׁלְתֵךְ אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַלְתְּ מֵעִמּוֹ (v.[17]). Samuel is born, and Hannah calls her son's name "Samuel, for from Yahweh I asked him" שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מֵיהוָה שְׁאִלְתִּיו (v.[20]). So far everything is clear, except indeed the connection between שאל (upon which there is a constant play) and Samuel.

This play upon the stem שאל is continued. After the child is weaned, Hannah brings Samuel to Eli and tells the priest (v.[27]), אֶל־הַנַּעַר הַזֶּה הִתְפַּלָּלְתִּי וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לִי אֶת־שְׁאֵלָתִי אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַלְתִּי מֵעִמּוֹ, "For this lad I prayed, and Yahweh granted me my asking which I asked of him." Hannah proceeds (v.[28]), וְגַם אָנֹכִי הִשְׁאִלְתִּיהוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה הוּא שָׁאוּל לַיהוָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ שָׁם לַיהוָה. As the text stands it is ordinarily translated, "Therefore I also have lent[9] him to Yahweh; as long as he liveth he shall be lent[10] to Yahweh. And he (*sic!*) worshipped Yahweh there."[11] Once more the stem שאל is introduced in connection with Samuel. On the occasion of another visit paid by Hannah and her husband to the

[8] *SBOT.* (ed. Haupt), Part 8.

[9] R. V. "granted," which is by no means an improvement upon the older version.

[10] R. V. "he is granted."

[11] These words, if correct, are out of place. They are lacking in the Septuagint. In no case can they refer to Samuel but only to Elkanah; unless, indeed, we read the feminine instead of the masculine, and make the verb refer to Hannah.

sanctuary, Eli blesses the pair (2^{20}), ישם יהוה לך זרע מן־האשה הזאת תחת השאלה אשר שאל ליהוה. The text as it stands is ordinarily translated, "Yahweh give thee seed of this woman for the asking[12] which was[13] lent to Yahweh."

These two last passages, however, contain a number of difficulties. Taking up 1^{28} we observe, in the first place, the use of the *Hiphil* of the verb שאל, which is unusual. The only other passage in the Old Testament in which it occurs is Ex. 12^{36}, where, speaking of the gold and silver objects and of the garments which the Israelites prior to their departure asked from the Egyptians, the narrator says, "Yahweh gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, וַיַּשְׁאִלוּם." Dillman in his commentary[14] properly remarks that the rendering of the Septuagint and Vulgate, 'and they loaned them,' is not correct. The *Hiphil* of שאל can only mean 'they caused them to ask,' *i.e.* 'encouraged them to ask for more' (so Rashi takes it), or 'they acquiesced in their petition,' *i.e.* 'granted them their request.' Dillman prefers the latter, which has the merit of being simpler than Rashi's explanation and is borne out by the introduction of the phrase immediately following, "and they stripped Egypt."[15] In the parallel passage (Ex. 3^{22}) the same expression is used, the difference between the two versions being that, according to the one, the Israelites asked and then took as booty, while, according to the other, they asked and received as tribute or indemnity.

Referring to the passage in 1 Sam. 1^{28}, Dillman also points out that the rendering 'I have lent him to Yahweh'[16] is inadmissible, and he suggests 'I have granted him to Yahweh.'[17] The objection, however, to this interpretation is obvious: it is not Yahweh who has made a petition but Hannah, and Hannah cannot, therefore, say that she has granted Yahweh's petition. Again, what can the phrase שאול ליהוה mean in this connection? The context implies 'granted to Yahweh,' but if the active *Kal* of the stem signifies 'ask,' the passive participle can only mean 'asked for,' not 'granted.' Here we are confronted with a new difficulty: the verb שאל with the preposition ל signifies elsewhere either 'ask on behalf of a person'; as, *e.g.* וְשַׁאֲלִי־לוֹ

[12] Authorized and Revised Versions, "loan."

[13] Authorized Version, "is."

[14] *Kurzgefasstes exeg. Handbuch, Exodus*, p. 118.

[15] *I.e.* "plundered the country."

[16] So the Septuagint and Vulgate.

[17] So also the latest commentator, H. P. Smith, *Samuel*, p. 13 *sq.* Kautzsch, *Die Heilige Schrift*, p. 282, retains the old rendering 'lent.'

(1 Ki. 2[22]), וַתִּשְׁאַל־לְךָ (2 Chr. 1[11]); or 'ask regarding a person or thing,' *e.g.* תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמִי (Gen. 32[30]), שָׁאַל־הָאִישׁ לָנוּ (Gen. 43[7]), שְׁאַל־נָא לְיָמִים רִאשֹׁנִים (Deut. 4[32]); but never 'to ask of' or 'from a person,' for which either the direct object is employed with את, *e.g.* Gen. 44[19], or the object with the preposition מ, *e.g.* Jud. 8[24], or מאת, *e.g.* Ps. 27[4].

The question involved is not affected by the decision regarding the correctness of the Massoretic text, for whether we read כָּל הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר חַי with Wellhausen (*Text d. Bücher Samuelis*, p. 42) and Smith (*Samuel*, p. 14), or retain הָיָה as Budde does (*SBOT.*, Part 8), the problem remains the same. In the second passage (1 Sam. 2[20]) the difficulty involved in the phrase שָׁאַל לַיהוָה has already been touched upon. Wellhausen's proposition[18] to read שָׁאוּל לַיהוָה in the sense of 'asked of Yahweh'[19] does not help us, for the reasons just set forth; while Budde's conjecture[20] of הַשְּׁאֵלָה, on the basis of the Septuagint text (adopted by the Vulgate and Peshiṭto), rests upon an erroneous interpretation of the passage in Exodus.[21] Klosterman[22] suggests אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַל יְהוָה, 'which Yahweh has asked,' *i.e.* 'borrowed'; but this introduces a thought which is manifestly not in the mind of the Old Testament writer: Yahweh has not asked for anything. Moreover, Hannah has not loaned her son to Yahweh, but has given him in accordance with her promise (1 Sam. 1[11]), וּנְתַתִּיו לַיהוָה כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּיו, "And I shall give him to Yahweh during his whole life."

There is still a third proposition favored by Driver,[23] namely, to read אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלָה לַיהוָה 'which she asked of Yahweh,'[24] but here again the objection holds good, that no proof can be furnished for the supposition that שאל with the preposition ל can mean 'ask of a person.' Besides, such a phrase as "in place of the asking which she has asked of Yahweh" strikes one, to say the least, as redundant and awkward. Again, it must be urged that the application of הַשְּׁאֵלָה 'the asking' to Samuel after he is born seems curious, if we accept the ordinary meaning of the term. Samuel does not represent the petition but the result of the petition, and the narrative is

[18] *Text der Bücher Samuelis*, p. 46.

[19] So also Kautzsch, *Heilige Schrift*, notes, p. 8.

[20] *SBOT.*, Part 8. See note, p. 54, adopted by Smith, p. 19.

[21] See above, p. 86.

[22] *Bücher Samuelis und Könige*, p. 7.

[23] *Notes on the Books of Samuel*, p. 25.

[24] *Cf.* also 1[28] וַתִּנְתֵּהוּ, as the Septuagint reads at the beginning of 2[11] in place of the Massoretic וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ, which also is adopted by Driver, Budde, and Smith.

too prosaic to admit of a usage which would be in place in poetic diction only.

The difficulties are not removed if we follow the reading of the Septuagint, יְשַׁלֵּם, 'he will requite,' in the verse, instead of יָשֵׁם. Though adopted by Wellhausen, Driver, Budde, Kautzsch, and Smith, I am unable to see the advantage of the Greek reading over the Massoretic text.

IV.

Evidently some other method than textual emendation must be followed in this case, if we are to reach a solution of the problem; and the question is therefore in order, whether in the two passages under consideration the writer may not have used the stem שאל in a sense somewhat different from the one hitherto taken for granted by scholars.

The verb שאל occurs very frequently in the Old Testament, but one is struck in examining these passages by the large number of instances in which it is used in the sense of a ceremonial 'asking,' an 'inquiry of God,' an 'oracle.' I find no less than twenty-eight certain instances of this kind. Let us take up first the passages which are perfectly clear.

In Num. 27[21], when Joshua is formally installed as the successor of Moses, directions are given to him to stand before Eleazar the priest, וְשָׁאַל לוֹ בְּמִשְׁפַּט הָאוּרִים, *i.e.* "seek an oracle through the medium of the *Urim*." By that oracle,[25] we are told, the actions of the Israelites were to be regulated. The expression מִשְׁפַּט הָאוּרִים is somewhat redundant, but the term מִשְׁפָּט 'decision' seems to have been introduced with the intention of removing any taint of that heathenish or early Semitic practice out of which, of course, the *Urim* originally sprang.[26] Hence in Ezekiel 21[26], where there is a direct reference to Babylonian magic, we find the simpler phrase שָׁאַל בַּתְּרָפִים 'seeking an oracle through the *teraphim*,' which is placed in parallelism to לִקְסָם־קֶסֶם 'to recite a magic formula,' and קִלְקֵל בַּחִצִּים 'to throw arrows.' In place of *Urim* and *teraphim* the Hebrew writers of a more advanced age introduced 'Yahweh,' and the expression שאל ביהוה became a standing phrase for 'seeking an oracle' by whatever means. So of Saul it is said on three occasions that he "inquired of Yahweh" or "of Elohim." In 1 Sam. 14[37] we read, וַיִּשְׁאַל שָׁאוּל

[25] עַל פִּי can only refer to the oracle.

[26] Benzinger, *Hebr. Archeologie*, pp. 407–408.

בֵּאלֹהִים, in order to find out whether or not to pursue the Philistines. In 1 Sam. 28[6], וַיִּשְׁאַל שָׁאוּל בַּיהוָה, he fails to receive an answer, either through dreams, or through the *Urim*, or through the prophets. In 1 Chron. 10[13] Saul's sin in seeking an oracle by means of the witch of Endor is emphasized by the addition, וְגַם לִשְׁאוֹל בָּאוֹב, "he also inquired of the necromancer."[27]

In the narrative of David's career the expression "asking of Yahweh" in the sense of asking an oracle is used no less than eight times. In 1 Sam. 22[10], וַיִּשְׁאַל לוֹ בַּיהוָה, Ahimelech the priest seeks an oracle on behalf of David. In 1 Sam. 22[13] Saul reproaches Ahimelech for doing so, לָמָּה קְשַׁרְתֶּם עָלַי . . . וְשָׁאוֹל לוֹ בֵּאלֹהִים, "Why do ye conspire against me . . . in asking of Elohim in his behalf?" Ahimelech replies (v.[15]), הַיּוֹם הַחִלּוֹתִי לִשְׁאָל־לוֹ בֵּאלֹהִים, "Have I to-day begun to seek an oracle of Elohim for him?" 1 Sam. 23[2] reads, וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה וגו׳, "And David sought an oracle of Yahweh, asking, Shall I go to smite these Philistines?" 1 Sam. 23[4] states, וַיּוֹסֶף עוֹד דָּוִד לִשְׁאוֹל בַּיהוָה, "And David again sought an oracle of Yahweh." He receives the answer, "Arise, descend to Këïlah." In 1 Sam. 30[8], וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה, the oracle is obtained by means of the *ephod*. In 2 Sam. 2[1], וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה, two questions are put by the king: (1) Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah? (2) To what place shall I go up? The answer to the first question is, "Go up"; the answer to the second question is, "Hebron." In a subsequent engagement with the Philistines David twice seeks an oracle (2 Sam. 5[19. 23]) וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה.[28]

Of the Israelites as a body seeking an oracle the same expression "ask" is used. Five passages occur: Jud. 1[1], וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיהוָה; Jud. 20[23], וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ בַיהוָה; Jud. 20[18], וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ בֵאלֹהִים; Jud. 20[27], וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיהוָה; and 1 Sam. 10[22], וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ־עוֹד בַּיהוָה.

The Danites, coming to the house of Micha and recognizing the Levite who had accepted an engagement as priest to Micha, ask the latter to seek an oracle through the Levite, שְׁאַל־נָא בֵאלֹהִים, "Ask, prithee, of Elohim that we may know whether we shall succeed in the undertaking in which we are engaged" (Jud. 18[5]).

While the phrase in question embodied a practice that evidently antedated the worship of Yahweh and must have been common to the inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, the verb שאל continued to

[27] לִדְרוֹשׁ at the end of the verse is a gloss explanatory of לִשְׁאוֹל. The Septuagint adds, "and when Samuel the prophet answered him."

[28] Parallel passage, 1 Chron. 14[10. 14].

be used down to late days both for the legitimate inquiry through Yahweh and for the illegitimate inquiry through other deities or through witches. When Saul fails to receive an answer through Yahweh, he seeks out the witch of Endor; and when she brings up the shade of Samuel,[29] the latter says to Saul, וְלָמָּה תִשְׁאָלֵנִי, "Why do you seek an oracle through me?" (1 Sam. 28[16]).

Hosea, reproaching the people for their illegitimate religious practices, says (Hos. 4[12]), עַמִּי בְּעֵצוֹ יִשְׁאָל, "My people seeks an oracle through a piece of wood."[30] Jeremiah, it is fair to presume, did not make use of magical rites in order to ascertain the will of Yahweh; but for all that, the same ancient phrase, "to inquire of Yahweh," is employed in his case. Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah and asks him to secure an oracle, שֹׁאֵל אֲנִי אֹתְךָ דָּבָר, "I ask thee something" (Jer. 38[14]). Upon the prophet's receiving an assurance that no harm will befall him whatever he may say, he announces Yahweh's answer, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (v.[17 f.]). Again in v.[27] we are told that "all the princes came unto Jeremiah," וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אֹתוֹ, "and asked him." It is an oracle that is sought.

Deut. 18[16] is another passage where שאל is used of the oracle obtained from Yahweh, and the passage is interesting also as illustrating the manner in which שאל ביהוה becomes a standing phrase for seeking or receiving an oracle in general. The Israelites are warned not to follow the customs of the surrounding nations who hearken to sorcerers and magicians, but to obey the prophet who will arise in their midst, כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁאַלְתָּ מֵעִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֹרֵב, which can only mean, "According to all that thou didst receive as an oracle from Yahweh, thy God, on Horeb."

Again, when Joshua's share in the conquered territory of Palestine is spoken of, we are told (Jos. 19[50]) עַל פִּי יְהוָה נָתְנוּ לוֹ אֶת־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר שָׁאָל. The reference is to the city Timnath-Serah, which is given to Joshua "by lot" (v.[51]). The verb שאל must, therefore, have reference to a religious inquiry and not to a personal request made by Joshua. We must, accordingly, translate, "By the decree of Yahweh they gave him the city, regarding which one had sought an oracle." The lot was one way, and indeed the most common way, of ascertaining what was the "decree of Yahweh." With this passage may be compared Jos. 9[14], where the success of the strategy of the Gibeonites is attributed to the fact that the Israelites וְאֶת־פִּי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁאָלוּ, "did not seek an oracular decision of Yahweh."

[29] *Cf.* Is. 8[19].

[30] A reference to a species of *teraphim* cult.

The place to which people went to obtain an oracle was naturally the sanctuary, and a passage in 2 Sam. 20[18] shows the fame that some of these ancient sanctuaries had acquired. When Joab is about to lay siege to the town Abel, a "wise woman," *i.e.* probably a priestess or sorceress connected with the sanctuary, appeals to David's general to spare a place that once enjoyed the reputation of being a "mother in Israel," a metropolis, as we should say. To emphasize the fame and position once occupied by Abel, the woman recalls the time when people were wont to say, שָׁאוֹל יִשְׁאֲלוּ בְּאָבֵל, "Let an oracle be sought in Abel." That is to say, in former times, when people were in doubt what to do in an emergency, they would say, "Let us go to Abel and obtain an oracle." The woman adds, וְכֵן הֵתַמּוּ, "And so they settled the matter." The oracle obtained at Abel put an end to further doubt or dispute.[31] Interpreted in this way, the passage, which has occasioned commentators no little difficulty, becomes perfectly clear. The woman could not more effectively point out the significance of Abel and its sanctity than by holding it up as the place to which people went with supreme confidence in the reliability of the oracle there obtained. Such a place ought not to be destroyed.[32]

Besides these twenty-eight passages in which שאל is used directly of an oracle, there are a number of others in which the verb, while

[31] Professor Haupt proposes to regard הֵתַמּוּ as a denominative of תֻּמִּים.

[32] For discussions of the passage see Wellhausen, *Text der Bücher Samuelis*, pp. 207, 208, and Budde, *SBOT.*, p. 96. Driver misses the point in supposing that the reference is to the wisdom of the inhabitants of Abel. The sanctuary is clearly meant. The reading of the Septuagint וּבְדָן, instead of וְדָן, although adopted by most of the modern critics, is no improvement of the Massoretic text, which can be retained if my explanation be accepted. Dan was in no way connected with Abel, and there is no reason why an Abelite woman should introduce a reference to another place. A formidable difficulty confronts us in אָנֹכִי שְׁלֻמֵי אֱמוּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (v.[19]), which gives no satisfactory sense. The text is hopelessly corrupt; but without going any further into the question, which would lead us too far from our subject, I cannot resist the temptation to quote Böttcher's translation of the part of the passage above considered, as a capital instance of the absurdities which even great scholars sometimes put into the mouth of an Old Testament writer. Böttcher renders:

"*Und sie sprache als spräche sie: Reden reden sollte man doch zuerst noch, als spräche sie: Fragen anfragen sollte man in Abel; und so wurde man gewiss fertig,*" — to which Wellhausen, *Text der Bücher Samuelis*, p. 208, caustically adds, "*Hoffentlich — aber es sieht nicht so aus.*"

Smith, in his *Commentary on Samuel*, p. 372, does not advance the interpretation of the passage, and contents himself with adopting Ewald's emendation, which is far from satisfactory.

used purely in the sense of 'asking,' is, nevertheless, associated with divine requests. This extended application is derived, I believe, from the more specific use of the verb in designating an oracle. When Ahaz is told on behalf of Yahweh to "ask for a sign from Yahweh," to make a "request" (שְׁאֵלָה) of whatsoever nature he pleases, he refuses, saying, לֹא־אֶשְׁאַל וְלֹא־אֲנַסֶּה אֶת־יְהוָה, "I will not ask, for I do not wish to try Yahweh" (Is. 7[12]). In thus using שאל and שאלה (v.[11]) there may not have been in the prophet's mind any direct thought of an oracle, but these terms would not have been employed had they not acquired religious associations of a distinctive character.

A further and rather interesting application of the term based on its original use for 'oracle' is found in Hag. 2[11], שְׁאַל־נָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים תּוֹרָה. Inasmuch as the word *torah* was itself originally applied to a decision or an instruction furnished by means of an oracle, the phrase might even be taken to mean, "Ask the priests for an oracle"; but at so late a period as the days of Haggai *torah* had acquired the technical sense of 'religious instruction,' and, corresponding with this meaning, שאל no longer designated the function of the priest in procuring an oracle, but was employed in the general sense of 'asking,' though still primarily an 'asking' of a religious import. So in Ps. 27[4], אַחַת שָׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת־יְהוָה, "One thing I ask of Yahweh"; and, again, Ps. 2[8], שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶתְּנָה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתֶךָ, "Ask of me and I will give nations as thy inheritance"; and Ps. 78[18], וַיְנַסּוּ־אֵל בִּלְבָבָם לִשְׁאָל־אֹכֶל לְנַפְשָׁם, "And they tried God in their heart to ask food for their soul," the verb is employed in the general sense of 'asking,' and yet with a religious flavor about it as a survival of the former application of the word to asking for an oracle.

A more direct reference to an oracle may be recognized in Ps. 35[11], אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יִשְׁאָלוּנִי, "Those whom I do not know inquire of me."

V.

Turning now to the substantives derived from the root שאל, שְׁאֵלָה and מִשְׁאָלוֹת, it will be found that out of the sixteen passages in question (שְׁאֵלָה occurring fourteen times and מִשְׁאָלוֹת twice in the Old Testament) in six שְׁאֵלָה is directly or remotely associated with Yahweh. Of the ten remaining passages in which the word is used in the simple sense of 'asking,' four are in so late a composition

as the Book of Esther; so that, outside of this book, the two applications of the word, the religious and the secular, are evenly balanced. The conclusion which we are permitted to draw is, that שְׁאֵלָה arose in connection with the religious use of the verb שאל and that it was particularly applicable to something asked for and obtained by means of an oracle. There are three instances in the Psalms where מִשְׁאָלָה and שְׁאֵלָה refer to something obtained from God: Ps. 20[6], יִמַּלֵּא יְהוָה כָּל־מִשְׁאָלוֹתֶיךָ, "Yahweh grant thee all thy askings"; Ps. 37[4], וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ מִשְׁאֲלוֹת לִבֶּךָ, "He will grant thee the askings of thy heart"; Ps. 106[15], וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם שְׁאֵלָתָם, "And he granted them their asking." The other three occurrences of שְׁאֵלָה are in connection with Samuel, as instanced at the beginning of this article, namely, 1 Sam. 1[17. 27] 2[20].

Proceeding to the post-Biblical literature, it is interesting to note what seems clearly a late survival of the original sense of שאל as the request for an oracular decision. In an article by S. Mendelssohn,[33] devoted to a discussion of שאל, שאילתא, and שאילתות in Talmudical usage, it is satisfactorily shown that the verb שאל is frequently used in the sense of 'assert.' Such a meaning cannot possibly be derived from the ordinary sense of 'ask.' Mendelssohn further points out that this same verb is used as a synonym of דרש, the technical term for pronouncing a legal decision. Corresponding to the momentous change represented by the substitution of rabbinical authority for priestly prerogative, the oracular response would naturally develop into the authoritative assertion of a scholar versed in Judaic lore. By thus joining the Talmudical usage to the Biblical application of the verb, the various steps involved in the transition from the earliest to the latest meaning become clear. The substantive שְׁאֵילְתָּא in Talmudical parlance again corresponds to the Biblical noun שְׁאֵלָה in the passages above instanced. Instead of the 'oracles' of priests we have the 'decisions' of Rabbis, and, accordingly, Mendelssohn renders the substantive in question by 'assertion,' 'proposition,' and the verb by 'to affirm,' 'to announce an opinion.'

In connection with שְׁאִילְתוֹת, which appears as a title of a famous Rabbinical work,[34] S. Mendelssohn quotes a significant remark of Weiss, from which it appears that this author likewise recognized the connection between the Talmudical usage and the ancient Semitic method of obtaining a decision through an oracular 'asking,' although he did not carry his investigation of the term to its proper issue.

[33] *Revue des Études Juives*, XXXII. pp. 56–62. [34] שאילתות רבי אחאי.

From the sense of 'decisions' a further *nuance* was developed, and in the title of the Rabbinical work in question the term שאילתות has about the same force as "opinions."[35] Lastly, we may note that the theological term in the Judaism of the middle ages for a 'ritualistic inquiry' is again שאלה, which, though far removed from the notion of an 'oracle,' would not have been carried over into the new order of religious ideas and methods, had not the word been intimately associated with the religious life of the ancient Hebrews.

VI.

We are now prepared to take up two passages in the Old Testament in which a peculiar use of the active participle of שאל may be recognized, and if the explanation about to be proposed be correct, we shall have taken a long step toward the solution of the difficulties in the two passages from the Book of Samuel which led to this investigation of the use of the stem שאל. If שאל means 'to seek an oracle,' it would be natural to apply the participle שֹׁאֵל to the 'one who obtains the oracle,' that is, the sorcerer, soothsayer, guardian of a sanctuary, or priest, as the case may be; for it must be borne in mind that, since according to Semitic ideas, the worshipper approaches the deity only through the mediation of some one who stands close to a superior power, it is the mediator and not the worshipper who in reality does the 'asking' of the deity.

In Deut. 18[11] and Mic. 7[3] שֹׁאֵל, as I shall endeavor to show, is used in this way of the one who obtains the oracle. The former passage is in the famous section embodying the prohibition of resorting to magic or to incantations of any kind. In order to make the prohibition explicit, the various classes of sorcerers and magicians are enumerated: "There shall not be found in thy midst . . . the reciter of charms, the inspector of clouds, the snake-charmer, nor the sorcerer." The text then proceeds, וְחֹבֵר חָבֶר וְשֹׁאֵל אוֹב וִידִּעֹנִי וְדֹרֵשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים. To enter upon a detailed discussion of the passage would carry us too far. Suffice it to say that the חֹבֵר חָבֶר is the 'tier of knots,' a common type of magician;[36] the אוֹב and the יִדְּעֹנִי, who occur very frequently side by side,[37] are classes of priests whose particular function is the conjuring of the spirits of

[35] Hardly 'discussions,' as Mendelssohn proposes as an alternative to 'observations.'

[36] See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 268.

[37] *Eg.* 2 Ki. 23[24] Lev. 19[31] 20[6] 20[27] 1 Sam. 28[8].

the dead; while דֹּרֵשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים is either a gloss explanatory of אוֹב and יִדְּעֹנִי or is another name for a class of magicians who 'seek' or 'inquire of the dead.' In the same way שֹׁאֵל refers to a class of priests. To connect שֹׁאֵל with אוֹב, as is commonly done in rendering this passage, and translate 'who consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit'[38] is totally unwarranted. The context shows that the aim of the statute is to drive out of the land the various classes of men who make use of magic in healing diseases, or those who seek oracles from any other source than from Yahweh. The law is not aimed against those who consult the sorcerers and magicians but directly and solely against the sorcerers. I hold, therefore, that v.[11] enumerates five classes of functionaries attached to the old Semitic sanctuaries of Palestine and Syria; and that the שֹׁאֵל is as distinct a profession as the אוֹב,[39] the חבר חָבָר, the יִדְּעֹנִי, or any of the four classes enumerated in the preceding verse, viz. the קֹסֵם קְסָמִים, the מְעוֹנֵן, the מְנַחֵשׁ, and the מְכַשֵּׁף.

Taking up the passage in Micah, I venture to suggest that we have here another instance of the use of שֹׁאֵל as a religious functionary, introduced by the prophet as almost synonymous with כֹּהֵן, the common term for priest.

The passage (Mic. 7[3]) reads, עַל־הָרַע כַּפַּיִם לְהֵיטִיב הַשַּׂר שֹׁאֵל וְהַשֹּׁפֵט בַּשָּׁלוֹם וְהַגָּדוֹל דִּבֶּר הַוַּת נַפְשׁוֹ. On the various textual difficulties involved in this verse it is sufficient to refer to Wellhausen's remarks in *Die kleinen Propheten*, p. 146.[40] Thanks chiefly to the preceding verse, the sense is tolerably clear. The prophet laments the absence of private morality and of public righteousness. The second verse of the chapter is devoted to the former theme, the third verse to the latter. In the more simple state of society represented by the Pentateuchal legislation, two classes of the inhabitants are concerned in the execution of justice, the judges and the priests, but in the more elaborate organization of the kingdom there is added to these two classes a third functionary, the king. We are justified in looking for these three officials in the passage in question. To take שֹׁאֵל as an active participle and translate it 'asks,' and then to interpret it as meaning 'ask for a bribe,' is awkward and is not warranted by the manner in which it is introduced. Moreover, if שֹׁאֵל be construed as a participle, the parallelism leads us to expect

[38] So even in the latest commentary by Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. 225.

[39] For אוֹב as the name of a distinct class of necromancers see also 1 Chr. 10[13].

[40] *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, vol. V.

a participle after שֹׁפֵט. Instead, we have the very obscure term בשלום. The first part of the verse, עַל־הָרַע כַּפַּיִם לְהֵיטִיב, may be rendered 'to be intent upon wrong doing,'[41] but after this phrase one expects some verb in the perfect tense. This verb is to be looked for in the corrupt word בשלום,[42] to which the three officials שַׂר, שֹׁאֵל, and שֹׁפֵט are subjects. It is open to question whether at the time when the text of Micah was fixed the verse under discussion was any longer understood. The omission of the article from שֹׁאֵל[43] may be due to correction in order to obtain a better sense. At all events, whatever the emendations that may be needed in order to get the original form of the passage, I venture to think that in taking שֹׁאֵל or הַשֹּׁאֵל as a name for the priest purposely introduced by Micah, one element of obscurity is removed. The prophet uses the old word which is replete with heathenish associations instead of the more dignified and appropriate term כֹּהֵן, partly in order to cast a reproach upon the priests, whom he is fond of denouncing, partly, perhaps, in order to veil his meaning, just as he uses שַׂר instead of the more familiar מֶלֶךְ. He could in no more forcible manner denounce the priests of Israel and of Judah than by calling them "oracle-seekers." That Micah was familiar with the old religious terms, and that the old Semitic usages still prevailed in the regular worship, is sufficiently shown by the third chapter, where he denounces (v.[7]) the "seers" and "the workers of magic," and declares (v.[11]) that "the priests furnish oracles for pay" and that "the prophets practise magic for silver."

As a further justification for recognizing in שֹׁאֵל one of the old terms to express the priestly function, we may point to the Assyrian, where we have a perfect equivalent to the Hebrew term in *sha-i-lu* as a designation for 'priest.' In a syllabary (V. R. 13, rev. 48)[44] the term occurs preceded by *âshippu*, *bârû*, 'magic-worker,' 'a seer.' Both these words are of very common occurrence. In religious texts *bârû* and *shâilu* are found side by side; *e.g.* IV. R². 22, No. 2, 8–10; 60 B., obv., 6–7. Independently, the word occurs in V. R. 47, 36 *a*, and in a hymn published by Brünnow, *Zeitschr. f. Assyriologie*, IV., p. 26, line 38. Jensen in the *Zeitschr. f. Keilschriftforschung*, II., p. 423, already recognized that *shâilu* signifies 'the inquirer.' Zimmern

[41] Taking הָרַע כַּפַּיִם as a compound term.

[42] Renan, *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, II., p. 519.

[43] As against הַשֹּׁפֵט, חַשַּׂר הַגָּדוֹל.

[44] The great collection of *Cuneiform Texts of the British Museum* projected and at first edited by H. C. Rawlinson is designated by the letter R.

(*Babylonische Busspsalmen*, p. 14, note 4) not only accepts this opinion but (*ib.*, p. 99) suggests also that the Assyrian stem *shâlu* 'to decide,' from which we obtain *shilu* 'decider, guide,' *shitultu*[45] 'decision,' and *shalitu* 'royal power,' is identical with שאל 'ask.' To these words we may add another derivative, *mashaltu* 'ban.' A transition from the idea of 'asking' to the notion of 'deciding' is perfectly intelligible,[46] if we assume that the 'asking' was originally a species of oracle. I cannot, therefore, agree with a later view of Jensen,[47] who defines the *shâilu* as the priest who asks and secures atonement for sinners through his intercession with an angered god or goddess. The occurrence of the word in the el-Amarna tablets,[48] *Sha-i-li nashri ush-she-ra-an-ni*, "send me an eagle-inquirer,"[49] is sufficient to prove that the *shâilu* was distinctly a priest who sought an oracle. The connection between *shâlu* 'decide,' *shilu* 'decider,' and the like, and our word *shâilu* may be maintained, even if in opposition to Zimmern we follow Delitzsch,[50] who assumes two distinct stems, שול (or שיל) and שאל respectively. The presence of the two essential consonants של is sufficient to demonstrate the close bond existing between the two stems.

Delitzsch,[51] however, separates *shâilu* from שאל and divides the word into two parts *sha*[52] and *ilu*,[53] *i.e.* 'belonging to a god.' He advocates this view because of the word *sha-il-tu*, which appears in the syllabary V. R. 13, 49–51, in the lines following upon *shâilu*. Delitzsch urges that *shailtu* cannot be the feminine to *shâilu*. It is true that we should expect the feminine corresponding to *shâilu* to be *shâilatu*, and yet through syncope[54] *shâilatu* could become *shailtu*. Moreover, *shailtu* could be the feminine to an adjective *sha'lu*, as *kashittu* (for *kashid-tu*) is the feminine to *kashdu*, and it is by no

[45] Incidentally this suggestion throws further light upon the Talmudical usage above instanced, of שאל in the sense of 'affirm' and of שְׁאֵילְתָּא as 'decision, proposition.'

[46] The same transition occurs in the post-Biblical usage above instanced.

[47] *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 438.

[48] Bezold, *Tell-el-Amarna Tablets*, No. 5, obv. 26.

[49] *I.e.* a priest who secures an oracle by watching the flight of eagles, 'a falconer.' That the *shâilu* appears at times also as an 'interpreter of dreams' (Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Babylon. Religion*, II. p. 86) merely indicates that the word came to be applied in a more general way to priestly functions; and moreover, interpretation of dreams is a species of oracular functions.

[50] *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, 646 *b*, *Shitultu*, Delitzsch, 633.

[51] *Ib.* p. 634 *a*.

[52] Relative particle.

[53] 'God.'

[54] Delitzsch, *Assyr. Gram.* § 68.

means necessary to suppose that in the syllabary in question *shâiltu* must be the feminine to *shâilu* because occurring in proximity to the latter. As is so often the case in texts of this kind, the syllabary throws together words sounding alike but of different meaning and derived from different stems or arising from different forms and modes of the same stem. So *bârû* 'seer' and *barû* 'to be full' are thrown together. Correspondingly, *shâilu* 'priest' and *shâilu* 'a species of locusts'[55] are written with the same series of ideographs but are to be traced back to different stems. The tablet in question is unfortunately broken, but enough remains to indicate that the ideographic equivalents for *shâilu* and *shâiltu* are not alike. Hence there is a presumption in favor of separating *shâiltu* entirely from *shâilu*.

Again, it may be urged that a compound word meaning 'belonging to a god' is, to say the least, a very strange term to indicate a special class of priests. The case is different with *shangu* 'priest,' which Jensen explains as arising from *sha* and *naḳû* 'the one over the sacrifice'; for *shangu* is a general designation for 'priest,' and to describe the priest as the one who presides over the sacrifice is intelligible, though, it may be added, scholars are by no means agreed in accepting Jensen's explanation.[56] The priest, moreover, according to Babylonian ideas, does not belong to God but acts as a mediator between the deity and the worshipper. There is, therefore, no reason to question the correctness of Zimmern's view that *shâilu* designates a class of priests as 'the inquirers,' those who 'ask' a deity for an oracle on behalf of a worshipper who comes to seek guidance in some undertaking or explanation of some incident that has befallen him.

In further proof of this we may point not only to the passages in the incantation-texts where *shâilu* occurs[57] but also to the fact that the verb *shâlu* is used in Assyrian, precisely as in Hebrew, to indicate an inquiry by means of an oracle. In incantation-texts the verb *shâlu* is of frequent occurrence, though in the wider sense of 'inquire' in general. In IV. R. 51, Col. II., 48-59 *b*, and 52, Col. III., 1-13 *b*, there occurs a long list of occasions on which one should consult the will of the gods. We are told *sha-a-il sha-a-il ina irshi sha-a-il ina kussi sha-a-il*, etc., "One should seek an oracle on the couch or on

[55] II. R. 5, rev. 10 *c-d*.

[56] Delitzsch in his dictionary makes no mention of it. Muss-Arnolt and many others reject it. See *Am. Journal of Semitic Languages*, vol. XV., p. 31.

[57] See the passages quoted above.

the throne." One should seek an oracle, that is, in whatever position of life, whether one occupies an humble or an elevated rank. The text continues (Col. III., 6), "One should seek an oracle at the rising and at the setting of the sun, upon coming out of the city and upon entering it, upon leaving the gate and upon entering it, in the street, in the temple, and on the road . . . on a ship, whether one be at the helm or in the prow, upon encountering a wild beast, etc." Knudtzon[58] has published a long series of royal prayers addressed to the sun-god. In these the king endeavors to secure guidance for the conduct of an important military undertaking. After preparing the sacrifices in the proper manner, the priest is invariably introduced as addressing the god, "I ask thee Shamash, great god, etc."

Finally, to clinch the argument, in a passage in an Assyrian hymn published by Brünnow the sun-god is addressed as *musheme shâilê*,[59] "he who answers inquirers."[60] This shows that the Babylonians themselves regarded *shâilu* as a derivative of שאל 'to ask.' Hence Shamash, as well as other gods, is addressed as *mushtalum*,[61] *i.e.* 'he who gives the answer to an inquiry' and hence 'decides fates.' It is interesting to note in this connection that in a syllabary *shâilu* is entered as a synonym of *abu*, which is not the equivalent of the Hebrew אב, as Jensen (*Zeitschr. f. Keils.* II., p. 423) believes, but of *ab*, 'father.' It appears, therefore, that among the Babylonians, as among the early Hebrews,[62] 'father' was one of the terms for priest.

VII.

The investigation of the stem שאל will have justified, I trust, our seeking in connection with the assignment of a name to Samuel, some trace of the religious use to which this root is put. Samuel has been "asked for" of Yahweh, and so far we have an illustration of the wider use of the verb, though it still indicates a request made of a deity. Hannah goes to the sanctuary, but instead of placing the request before the priest, who as the mediator will bring it before Yahweh and ascertain whether it is to be granted, she prays for herself, brings her request directly before her God.[63] When Samuel is born, Hannah forms the resolve (1^{22}) to devote her son to the

[58] *Assyrische Gebete an den Sonnengott, etc.* (Leipzig, 1893).

[59] *Zeits. f. Assyr.*, IV., pp. 26–38, and see Zimmern, *ZA.*, V., p. 88 note.

[60] *I.e.* the priests.

[61] See the passages in Delitzsch's *Assyrisches Wörterbuch*, p. 633 *b*.

[62] See, *e.g.*, Jud. 17^{10}.

[63] See above, p. 85.

service of Yahweh. She carries out her resolve; and since her words, וְגַם אָנֹכִי הִשְׁאִלְתִּיהוּ לַיהוָה, are clearly intended to convey the formal dedication of Samuel to the service of Yahweh, I have no hesitation in regarding the *Hiphil* of שאל as a denominative of שָׁאֵל in the sense of 'priest' and in rendering, "Therefore I devote him to Yahweh." The *Hiphil* is the usual form used in Hebrew for denominative verbs.[64] Just as from שֶׁלֶג 'snow' the *Hiphil* is used for 'making snow,' so from שָׁאֵל the *Hiphil* would signify 'to make one a priest.' To make a person a priest is to devote him to the service of Yahweh. In this way the phrase used by Hannah becomes clear; and the double play involved in the use of שאל,—Samuel having been "asked for," and therefore made a divine "asker" or "inquirer,"—adds an element to the name of the child which fits in admirably with the career of Samuel, who so often appears in the rôle of an "inquirer" and who stands in close relations to Yahweh.[65]

As for the second part of the verse (1[28]), כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה הוּא שָׁאוּל לַיהוָה, the possibility that שָׁאוּל may be an error for שָׁאֵל is to be taken into consideration. Certainly, if we read שָׁאֵל, we would have an appropriate rendering at hand, "As long as he lives[66] he is to be a *shōēl*, *i.e.* a priest to Yahweh." But even this emendation, though slight, is not necessary. There are several instances of the passive participle of the *Kal* being used to replace the participles of other modes of the verb.[67] So we have בָּרוּךְ used in the sense of 'blessed,' whereas it is the *Piel* and not the *Kal* of the root which means 'to bless.' We find דָּבָר (Prov. 25[11]) as the passive participle to the *Piel* דִּבֵּר 'speak.' Moreover, this same passive participle of the *Kal* is used as a denominative; and שָׁאוּל may, therefore, be taken in the sense of 'regarded as a שָׁאֵל' as well as 'made a שָׁאֵל.' In either case the phrase in question may be rendered freely, "As long as he lives he is to be devoted to Yahweh," *i.e.* either "regarded as Yahweh's priest," or "constituted a priest to Yahweh."

Coming to the second passage, 1 Sam. 2[20b], תַּחַת הַשְּׁאֵלָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַל לַיהוָה, I do not see how, in view of the difficulties above pointed out, the reading שָׁאַל לַיהוָה can be maintained. Accepting Wellhausen's emendation שָׁאוּל as the least violent, involving only a

[64] *Cf.* הִמְטִיר from מָטָר, הִזְרִיעַ from זֶרַע, etc. See Stade, *Heb. Gram.*, p. 160 *b*.

[65] *Cf.* 1 Sam. 3[19-21] 7[8]. *Cf.* also the interesting allusion, Ps. 99[6].

[66] הִיה can be used in this way as well as הָיה.

[67] Olshausen, *Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Sprache*, § 245 note.

slight departure from the Massoretic text and putting the verse in better accord with 1 Sam. 1[28b], I would again propose to take שָׁאוּל in the sense of 'regarded as a שׂאֵל' or 'made a שׂאֵל' and translate, "In place of what has been asked for, which is devoted to Yahweh." In all three cases, then, we have the same double play upon שאל.

In the light of this interpretation of the passages, I should like to inquire before passing on whether the obscure passage 2 Ki. 6[5], אֲהָהּ אֲדֹנִי וְהוּא שָׁאוּל, may not mean, "Alas, my lord, and it is a devoted object!" The incident there related is exceedingly strange, and I confess that I do not understand its import. While it may only have been introduced to illustrate Elisha's power, one is inclined to suspect that the prophet's disciples are engaged in some religious observance. The word מָקוֹם, as is well known, is frequently used for 'a sanctuary,'[68] and this may be the meaning of the words, "Let us make for ourselves there a מָקוֹם for a dwelling." To suppose that the disciple who drops his axe is worried because "it is borrowed," gives to the incident a ludicrous turn. An instrument used in building a sacred edifice is in a sense "devoted." On such a supposition the cry of the disciple is at least intelligible.

In the name of Saul (שָׁאוּל) we have another illustration of this same use of the passive participle of the *Kal* in the sense of 'devoted to Yahweh.'

VIII.

Still another question confronts us in connection with the name of Samuel, namely, what led the Biblical writer to choose the stem שאל as a play upon such a name as Samuel? It is hard to believe that he should have regarded שְׁמוּאֵל as due to contraction from שָׁאוּל מֵאֵל, and we have seen that other explanations offered[69] are not more satisfactory.

Bearing in mind that the plays upon proper names in the Old Testament depend, as Driver puts it, "upon assonance and not upon etymology," we need not necessarily expect a perfect accord between the name and the play upon it. A few examples will suffice. Leah calls her first-born רְאוּבֵן, saying, רָאָה יְהוָה בְּעָנְיִי.[70] The second element in Reuben is associated with *b'onyi*. The assonance between this word and *ben* is remote, and yet is regarded as sufficient by the Biblical writer to serve as an interpretation for the name in

[68] In Arabic *makâm* is a 'chapel.' [69] See above, p. 83.
[70] "Yahweh has seen my affliction" (Gen. 29[32]).

question. Again, when Zilpah bears a son to Jacob, Leah says "*bagad*"[71] (whatever that may mean), and therefore calls his name Gad. Here assonance suffices without even an approach to perfect accord. According to 1 Chr. $4^{9\,b/a}$ Ya'beṣ receives his name because his mother bore him 'in pain' *bᵉ'ôṣeb*. This play between יַעְבֵּץ and בְּעֹצֶב is particularly instructive, and so is the play upon בִּנְיָמִין and בֶּן־אוֹנִי,[72] where once more there is a most imperfect accord between the sound of the name and the play upon it. Still, *Shᵉmûēl* and *shā'al* are perhaps too far apart to satisfy even the most modest demands for some kind of assonance.

The chief obstacle in the way of an accord between the name and the root שאל is, of course, the *m* in *Shᵉmûēl;* but, as is well known, *mem* is a letter in the Semitic alphabet the pronunciation of which is most vague. Assyrian affords the best illustration, where *mem* frequently has the sound of the Hebrew *waw*[73] and is often so represented in the reproduction of Assyrian words that have gone over into other languages. The transition of *m* to *w* is seen also in the case of the conjunction in the Semitic languages, *wa* in Hebrew and Arabic being represented by *ma* in Assyrian. Bearing this in mind, we can see how *Shᵉmûēl* would approach in sound a name like *Shᵉwûēl;* or, just as among Jews *Shᵉmûēl* becomes by a slurred pronunciation *Shmûl*, so *Shwû-ēl* would sound like *Sh'wûl.* In this way a closer assonance, warranting a play upon some form of the stem *shā'al* (or *Sha'ûl*) would be brought about. We may safely regard שְׁבוּאֵל (1 Chr. 23^{16} 26^{24} 25^{4}) as a variant to שְׁמוּאֵל with the *m*-sound weakened. Another rather interesting indication that the *m* in *Shᵉmû-ēl* had a tendency to disappear almost entirely or, at all events, to become closely akin to *w* is furnished by the form *Sanwel* or *Zanwill*, under which the name appears among modern Jews in Southern Germany, Poland, and Galicia. Here the *n* is a nasal sound which has been inserted, whereas the *m* is represented by *w*. Somewhat modified, with the nasal insertion more pronounced, the same name appears in that of the well-known English novelist Zangwill.[74] By way of confirmation of the view here maintained Professor Paul Haupt

[71] Gen. 30^{11}. The *K'ri* בָּא גָד is an attempt to clear up the mystery.

[72] Gen. 35^{18}.

[73] See Delitzsch's *Assyr. Gram.*, p. 44, for numerous examples.

[74] See *The American Hebrew*, March 16, 1900. One might note also the modern Arabic form *Samwil* in *Neby Samwil* (see Smith's *Samuel*, p. 5), where the original *m* has become a *w* and by a secondary process another *m* has been inserted.

calls my attention to the play upon the name of Noah in Gen. 6[6f.] where twice the stem נחם is introduced.[75] This assonance becomes much more intelligible, if we assume also in this case a pronunciation like *naḫaw*. The Greek form Νεβρώδ corresponding to נִמְרֹד also becomes clearer if we suppose that the sound of the name approached *Newrod*.

IX.

Lastly, a word as to the interpretation of the name. Setting aside the various efforts to explain the name as a contraction, and separating it into the two obvious elements *shᵉmû* and *ēl;* the second, of course, can only be the name of God, while the first with the old nominative ending is identical with שֵׁם. To translate, however, as Gesenius and others propose, 'name of God' cannot be right; for, apart from other objections, what idea could such a name convey, and what motive could there be for calling a person 'name of God'? If, however, we turn to the Assyrian, a satisfactory interpretation can be found. The Assyrian equivalent of the Hebrew שֵׁם is *shumu*, which enters very frequently as an element into proper names; *e.g. Nabu-shum-ukin, Nabu-shum-iddin, Nabu-shum-ishkun, Marduk-shum-ibni, Bel-shum-uṣur*, etc.[76] Now in Assyrian *shumu* signifies not only 'name' but also quite frequently 'offspring'; and is, indeed, put down in a syllabary[77] as one of the synonyms of *ablu* and *maru*, the common terms for 'son.' It is in this sense that the word *shumu* is to be taken in the proper names above instanced. The names accordingly are to be translated: 'Nabu has established an offspring,' 'Nabu has given an offspring,' 'Nabu has placed an offspring,' 'Marduk has produced an offspring,' 'O Bel, protect an offspring.' The very same names, and others compounded with different deities, are found with the second element *ablu* 'son' instead of *shumu*[78]; *e.g. Nabu-abal-iddin, Marduk-abal-iddin, Shamash-abal-uṣur*, etc.; *i.e.* 'Nabu has given a son,' 'Marduk has given a son,' 'O Shamash, protect the son,' etc. Proper names of two elements occur also into which *shumu* enters; *e.g. Shum-iddin, Shum-ukin, Shum-uṣur, Iddin-abal,*

[75] וַיְנַחֵם יְהוָה and כִּי נִחַמְתִּי.

[76] See numerous examples in the indices to Strassmaier's *Babylonische Texte* and to Peiser's *Keilschriftliche Aktenstücke, Babylonische Verträge des Berliner Museums*, etc.

[77] V. R. 23, 29 *d*.

[78] Another synonym is *ziru* 'seed,' which likewise appears compounded with the name of a deity and the verbs *ukin, iddin, uṣur, lishir, etc.*, respectively.

Kin-abal, etc. Such abbreviations, brought about through the omission of the name of a deity, are quite common; and again, the verb being also omitted, we finally get such names as *Shuma*, *Abla*, *Ziria*.[79]

That the application of שֵׁם to 'offspring' was likewise in accord with Hebrew usage is shown by such a passage as Is. 14[22], וְהִכְרַתִּי לְבָבֶל שֵׁם וּשְׁאָר וְנִין וָנֶכֶד. The four terms שֵׁם, שְׁאָר, נִין, and נֶכֶד are practically synonyms, and the law of parallelism further produces the equations שֵׁם = נִין = 'offspring,' שְׁאָר = נֶכֶד = 'progeny.' Equally clear is the passage 2 Sam. 14[7], where the wise woman of Tekoa appeals to David not to permit the killing of her only son without whom there would be no hope for her שוּם־לְאִישִׁי שֵׁם וּשְׁאָרִית, "to establish for my husband a name and progeny."[80] Here the 'name' can only be the 'offspring.' In Ezek. 34[29] we have another instance of the use of our word in the sense of offspring as shown by the context, וַהֲקִמֹתִי לָהֶם מַטָּע לְשֵׁם.

From this application of the word such phrases as "to rub out the name" and "to wipe out the name," in the sense of complete annihilation,[81] become intelligible. By the 'name' the 'offspring' is primarily meant.[82] Without 'offspring' the memory of the individual, of the clan, and of the nation necessarily vanishes. With this usage vouched for, and with the Babylonian proper names as a model, we need have no hesitation in rendering שְׁמוּאֵל as 'Son of God.'[83] The name will thus be the correlative of אֲבִיאֵל 'my father is God'; and in view of the importance that the doctrine of sonship to God has acquired in Christian theology, it is interesting and significant to find this doctrine current, even though in a crude form, at so early a period.[84]

[79] *Ia* is not the suffix of the first person, but an emphatic afformative.

[80] Kautzsch, *Die heilige Schrift* renders correctly "*Nachkommen*."

[81] *E.g.* Deut. 7[24].

[82] So also in the Aramaic inscriptions, *cf.* Cook, *Glossary of Aramaic Inscriptions*, p. 114.

[83] It is of course possible that the Hebrews had at one time names composed of three elements after the pattern of the Babylonian names above instanced. In that case שְׁמוּאֵל would represent a curtailment, the verb as the third element being omitted. That verb would naturally have been one conveying the idea of giving, or creating, or establishing; and the name would have signified 'El has given (or created, etc.) an offspring.' Still, so long as no evidence is forthcoming that the Hebrews formed proper names in this way, the conjecture cannot be seriously considered.

[84] According to Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, p. 130, the name שְׁמוּאֵל would be paralleled in the name of a Babylonian ruler *Shumu-la-ilu*, who lived more than 1000 years before the Hebrew prophet; but his proposition has not met

with approval. Whether, however, Hommel, *Altisraelitische Überlieferung*, p. 98, is correct in explaining *shumu* as a contraction from *shum-hu* 'his name,' and in rendering, "Is Shum-hu not god?" is even more doubtful. His theory that *shumu* is a substitute for the name of some deity is open to serious objections, but even granting this to be the case, *la* in *shumu-la-ilu* is more likely to be the emphatic *lamed* attached to nouns and verbs, which is found in Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic. *Shumulailu* would then be 'Shumu is indeed god.' In late Hebrew usage "The Name" is used for God, but it is hazardous, in default of any evidence, to carry back such a substitute to the pre-exilic period; and unless we do so, a name that signifies 'The name is indeed god' is as unintelligible as 'Is not his name god?' In view of such a name as *Shumma-ilu-la-iliâ*, occurring on contract-tablets of the Ḫammurabi dynasty (see Hommel, *ib.*, p. 71), it is eminently likely that *shumu* in *shumu-la-ilu* is an entirely different word from the Hebrew שֵׁם. Besides *Shumu-la-ilu* we have a ruler *Shu-mu-a-bu-am*, the first king of the Babylonian dynasty. The subject is still further complicated by such variants as *Shumu-la-el* and *Shumu-ente-al* (*sic!*) (Pinches, *PSBA.*, XXI., p. 161).

At all events the comparison with שְׁמוּאֵל is exceedingly doubtful. On the other hand the name שְׁמוּאֵל as that of an Aramaean occurs in the late Babylonian contract tablets under the form *Sha-am-ili* (Strassmaier, *Darnistexte*, No. 265. 9; *cf.* Kohler and Peiser, *Studien zum Babyl. Rechtswesen*, IV., pp. 6 and 30; and it also appears on Palmyrene monuments; see de Vogue, *La Syrie Centrale*, No. 65. 2; Halévy, in *Revue Semitique*, II., p. 214; and *cf.* Derenbourg, *Géographie du Talmud*, I., pp. 22 and 224.