

## LECTURE TWO

The same position obtains in Biblical poetry, which is the direct and spontaneous expression of the soul of the people, who are accustomed to think of their God in personal terms. The extent to which the practice prevailed among the general population of using the Tetragrammaton in daily life we now know from the Lachish texts. When the writer greets his friend, he uses the Divine Name ('May YHWH cause my lord to hear tidings of peace', and so on); when he takes an oath, he swears by the Name, and even apart from these conventional expressions, he mentions the Tetragrammaton only. The name 'Elōhīm is not found once in all the Lachish Letters. This is paralleled by the greetings recorded in the Bible (Jud. vi 12; Psalms cxxix 8; Ruth ii 4), to which I shall revert subsequently. I shall likewise explain later on how this premise enables us to understand the rabbinic enactment that a man should use the Name in greeting his fellow.

On the other hand, our *wisdom* literature has been influenced appreciably by the tradition of the general sapiential writings, of which I have already spoken. The teachers of wisdom in Israel identified the non-specific 'El of the Gentile sages with their One God, and following the literary practice of the wise men of other nations, they, too, frequently employed the generic terms 'El, 'Elōab, 'Elōhīm, preferring them to the national Name, YHWH. Only Proverbs forms an exception; possibly its compilers wished to give to the universal material of the book an Israelitish quality also in this respect, that *mainly* they used the national name for God — mainly, but not invariably. In the Psalms, which often show the influence of the wisdom literature, the use of general names for the Deity, like 'El and 'Elōhīm, instead of the Tetragrammaton, is not infrequently due to reasons similar to those mentioned above. The prevailing view that in the Elohist Psalms the name 'Elōhīm is not original, and that only at a later period did the scribes substitute it for the Tetragrammaton, which was written there in the first instance, is only partly correct. Although it may be conjectured that such was the case in some psalms, in certain other psalms 'Elōhīm was undoubtedly fully intended by the author. When the poet wished to convey the general idea of Divinity, or to mention the Almighty as the God of the whole world, as the Creator of the entire universe, as the Deity of all peoples, he gave preference to the general Names. This tendency is clearly seen in

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