

(ii) *Ceremonies and observances*

It is logical to accept that the founder of a religion would introduce some ceremonies and observances. The sacred tent and the ark of the covenant seem to have been central to worship. Other aspects of worship which can reasonably be attributed to Moses include:

The sabbath	Ex 20 ⁸
A covenant rite	Ex 24 ⁸
Circumcision	Ex 24 ²⁵⁻²⁶
Passover	Ex 12 ¹⁻²⁸
Consecration of first born	Ex 13 ¹²⁻¹⁶
Consecration of holy mountain	Ex 19 ¹⁰⁻¹³
Tribal rods in tabernacle	Num 17 ¹⁻¹¹

(iii) *The nature of God*

Moses' deep apprehension of the nature of God is apparent in the Decalogue. The first three commandments contain a richness of understanding in which theologians are still exploring new dimensions. Consequently, it is not difficult to attribute to Moses other passages which explore the nature of God, for example, Ex 33¹²⁻²³ and Ex 34⁶⁻⁹.

(iv) *The priesthood*

Doubt has sometimes been cast on the authenticity of a priesthood of the Mosaic period and even on the reality of Aaron. However, it is obvious that Moses must have been familiar with an elaborate priestly organization in Egypt. Further, it is a strong tradition that his father-in-law, Jethro, was a priest of Midian (Ex 3¹). As far as Aaron is concerned, there is no real reason to doubt his existence, nor his priestly calling. When exactly the Levitical priesthood was formed is not easy to say, but an incident at Kadesh could be a memory of the founding of this group (cf. Ex 32²⁶⁻²⁹). To doubt that Moses could have introduced a cultic system staffed by priests is to do him a serious injustice.

(v) *A divine covenant*

While the idea of a covenant with a god was not unknown in pre-Mosaic times, it took a special brand of genius (or divine inspiration) to formulate the Sinai covenant pattern as the tradition has survived. Research into this field has been extensive and is so well known as to need no repetition. However, when the impact of this covenant theology over thousands of years is considered, the originator of the pattern ought not to be dismissed as a vague, shadowy figure. The covenant theology of Moses not only acts as the foundation stone of a vast theological structure, but it is also an impressive achievement in its own right.

(vi) *The concept of revelation*

No doubt various religious traditions existing in pre-Mosaic times claimed that special revelations from gods had occurred. Indeed, examples such as Hammurabi's reception of the law are quite common. However, what authenticates the Mosaic claim is the proof of God's action in the Exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. The record of such authenticated revelation in later Israel is partly what gives the tradition its unity. A whole stream of revelatory experience seems to flow from Moses' original experience.

C. *The foundation of a legal system*

In the Decalogue and the beginnings of the Book of the Covenant (Ex 20²¹–Ex 23) Moses gave to posterity the foundations of a legal system which is still in existence among Jews and which has influenced other law codes in various cultures at different periods of history. Further, the Mosaic concept of divine law is so essential to Judaism, Christianity and Islam that the very existence of these religions provides a living monument to Moses of Sinai.

Of course, the law codes in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus represent two collections influenced fairly directly by Moses and, though it is fairly obvious that he did not produce them, nevertheless they are attributed to him, which in itself is a tribute to his prestige.

d) *The tabernacle tradition*

It would be surprising, perhaps, if the tabernacle tradition as described in Ex 25–31 and Ex 35–40 should prove to be historically accurate in every detail in terms of religious practice during the Wilderness Period. However, it is generally accepted that there was a sacred tent at that time, though it may be difficult to identify, from the tradition, which strands are of Mosaic origin. It is possible that a more appropriate starting point for an investigation would be the sacred tent erected by David for the ark (cf. II Sam 6¹⁷ and 7^{2,6}). It seems that David instituted sacrifices in or beside the tent when he first pitched it in Jerusalem.

When David took over the Jebusite city, made it his capital and brought the ark there from its retirement, he was undoubtedly reconstituting, in some sense, the religious principles of the tribal confederation which had collapsed under Philistine pressure. It is a reasonable assumption, therefore, that he introduced a full sacrificial system to be operated by Abiathar and Zadok (cf. II Sam 20²⁵). It is the belief of the present writer that the priesthood of the Jerusalem sanctuary in David's time was an elite within the Levitical priesthood and, indeed, was conceived of as a