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Commentary — From the Margins *The Function of Wilderness and Wildness*

PART ONE

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" (Ex 5:1)

1.

Why into the wilderness? Why not to Succoth? Or to Etham, which was in the wilderness toward the Sea of Reeds? Why was it necessary to hold a feast to the Lord outside of a civilized area, a question that has really never been asked nor well addressed?

Before beginning an exploration of *wilderness & wildness*, the question needs asked, what sound image did Aaron utter when he said to Pharaoh, *Thus says YHWH* [the unpronounced Tetragrammaton], *the God* [*Elohim* — technically, Gods] *of Israel*?

Did Aaron, as Moses' spokesman, actually say these words? Were these words the later production of Moses in the wilderness, or the production of Ezra and the scribes post-Babylonian exile? Certainly it isn't likely that Moses was writing down what Aaron said to Pharaoh when they initially spoke to Pharaoh? And how would they know that Pharaoh ordered that no straw be given to the Hebrews after they met with Pharaoh? Did Pharaoh give that order while Moses and Aaron were standing there? Or is the narrative a later production that covers in summary what was said and what the results were of what was said?

Most of Christendom—as well as most of Judaism—worships God without seriously questioning Holy Writ. The purpose of their worship is devotional: they believe that Scripture is the infallible word of God, but *infallibility* is a state of receipt, not a state of production. Words are composed of their sound or inscribed image (i.e., the *signifier* or *linguistic icon*) as well as the meaning (*signified* or *linguistic object*) assigned **by the reader** to the sound or inscribed image, with this being the case since the Tower of Babel where the descendants of Noah said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly" (Gen 11:3) and they built for themselves a city and a tall tower (allegedly to a height greater than the flood waters), and they said to one another that they would "make a name [*shem*] for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (v. 4).

How would making a *Shem* for themselves prevent them from being dispersed to the four corners of the earth, a question to which I will return? And

how would their *Shem* differ from Noah's Shem? from Noah's name? from Noah being a preacher of righteousness? Is there an element of unbelief, of unrighteousness imbedded in the construction of a city—and a city made from manufactured bricks rather than stone? In the juxtaposition of city and wilderness is the relationship between unbelief and belief, between sin and righteousness featured? Was the *Shem* in the land of Shinar symbolical Evil before any actual manifestation of evil occurred?

And *YHWH* came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And *YHWH* said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, *let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.*" (Gen 11:5–7 emphasis added)

A person doesn't usually talk aloud to himself or herself, and doesn't usually refer to him or herself in a plural pronoun. It isn't that it's never done; it is that it would be unusual. And where is *YHWH* when this deity came down to see the city and the tower that the children of man had built? Is this deity not down where this deity can see the city and the tower? So why does this deity need to go anywhere or speak to anyone about going down and confusing the language of man? Why not do it from where this deity is? So for this deity to say, *Let us go down and there confuse their language*, implies [and actually, requires] that one deity return to where the other is and the two deities go down and confuse languages by separating signifier from signified (i.e., the bricks), with these two deities functioning as one deity as a man and his wife are one flesh (see Gen 2:24).

Also, there is the question, how does any human person know and is able to record what is said by one deity to another deity as seen in Genesis 1:26 and in Genesis 3:22?

When a person worships God for devotional reasons, the person tends not to closely read Holy Writ for fear that close reading will reveal discrepancies that will harm the person's faith ... this person doesn't have the faith of Jesus (see Rev 14:12 in Greek), which cannot be harmed by closely examining and challenging Holy Writ. The Holy [i.e., the saints] keep the commandments of God and have the faith/belief of Jesus [τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ], not faith in Jesus. That is correct, the Holy [ἁγίων] have the faith, the belief of God that Jesus possessed; thus, they will keep the commandments for they strive to walk in this world as Jesus walked. They will walk as Jesus walked for they have the indwelling of Christ Jesus in the form of His breath [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]. They have been born of God through receiving a second breath [πνεῦμα] of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]. Therefore, in case a new reader wonders why my words are not more openly devotional, what impresses me is the intricacy with which Holy Writ, composed over millennial and edited by hundreds, has been woven together to reveal to the Elect those things that Jesus' younger brothers desire to know when they have matured beyond infancy. My

appreciation of the mind of Christ as I begin to experience its depth and complexity puts me in awe of what awaits spiritual maturity; for I am still an adolescent too young to figuratively drive the family car; i.e., to have use of the power of God that Jesus had when He walked the earth. The two witnesses will have use of this power. So devotion isn't for me a touchy-feely relationship with an illusion, but getting to deconstruct Holy Writ to find the mind of Christ that has been hidden by a plethora of signifiers from unbelievers of all sorts.

To know the Father and the Son is to have indwelling eternal life (John 17:3). To deny either the Father or the Son precludes the person from having indwelling eternal life although the denial itself can be forgiven when the person appears before the Lord in the great White Throne Judgment **if** the person has produced deeds during the person's life that reveal that the work of the Law has been written on the person's heart (see Rom 2:14–16), a euphemism for the person's inner self or soul.

Therefore, I have no fear of exposing seeming contradictions in Holy Writ that resolve themselves when enough knowledge is acquired ... the difficult thing for the spiritual infant to do—as difficult for the *baby Christian* as learning delayed gratification is for a human infant—is to wait in faith until an unknown matter resolves itself. Too often, the *baby Christian* gets frustrated and abandons study of Holy Writ, becoming an unbeliever; whereas the Christian who is foreknown by God learns to accept not knowing a thing without losing faith, without doubting that the matter will be known in due time. The Elect will learn to figuratively sit on their hands until the entirety of the matter is heard before they ask questions. Paul wrote to the holy ones at Philippi, “Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation” (Phil 2:14–15). So learning to be blameless requires the Holy to be like children who will do what they are told when they are told to do the thing without asking why. The *why* will come when the entirety of the matter is known.

Now, back to whether Aaron uttered the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* when he spoke to Pharaoh: at the Tower of Babel, sound images of words were separated from their meanings; for the bricks that the men of the city held before the Lord confused languages were the same bricks as these men of the city held after their languages were confused. The linguistic objects [signifieds] did not change a whit. But what the men of the city called the bricks did change so that one man could suddenly not make sense of what another man said in a miracle that will be reversed when the reality of Acts chapter two occurs. Thus, until the Second Passover liberation of Israel, and then 1260 days later when the world is baptized in spirit—in the divine breath of the Lord (Joel 2:28)—and all of humankind becomes *Israel*, signifiers will be separated from signifieds, with only a historical trace connecting one to the other, with this *trace* being found in stereotypes ...

When an English speaker hears the word <cow>, the English speaker doesn't think of a small animal, or of a biped, but thinks of a large, four legged animal that gives milk. The stereotypical image of a *cow* precludes a yappy little dog from being a *cow*. Thus, when a human person calls another human person a

cow, the person isn't saying that the other person has four legs, but has the mannerisms of a stereotypical *cow*.

The element of *Thirdness* in Charles Peirce's linguistic schema and the element of a historical trace in French linguistics connects the stereotype to the sound image; so when I write *bricks*, you as my auditor do not think of a puffball, but as something rectangular and heavy enough to break a window but not so heavy that it cannot be thrown. You don't necessarily know if the brick that I have named is colored red or yellow or some shade of brown, or if the brick has holes in it. All of these things need additional modifiers or qualifiers or describing adjectives. But if for my purpose the stereotype of a brick will suffice, I do not need to add additional words. The stereotype does all the work that I need done.

If I write, *the Lord*, there is a sense of singleness about the signifier that is absent in the word <us>. Therefore, to overcome the *pluralness* of <us> I would have to add many qualifiers and additional words, which are not in the brief Tower of Babel narrative to transform the deities in the conjoined *YHWH* into a signifier possessing the quality of singleness. But this can be done by translators over time as is seen in the iconic phrase <*the kingdom of heaven*> which in Greek is written as <τῆ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν —*the kingdom of the heavens* [plural]> (from Matt 5:19 & 20).

The plural *heavens* presents problems for Christians who want only one heaven to exist, not two or many. Therefore, even though Matthew wrote a plural, translators have rendered the plural as a singular noun, thereby concealing knowledge for the devotional Christian that is readily available to all who read Matthew's works in Greek.

But the Christian who expects there to be only one heaven will read the plural <τῶν οὐρανῶν> as a singular noun despite the noun's obvious plurality. And this is what happened to the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*: the stereotypical image of God is that of a single deity, with monotheism being the *great* achievement of Judaism ... yes, it is quite an achievement to transform plural nouns (specifically, *Elohim*) into singular nouns while these plural nouns retain their plurality in their inscription. But it is not an achievement about which Judaism should be proud; for this *achievement* comes at a price, denial of Christ Jesus and therefore being precluded from having indwelling eternal life.

Every time a Christian thinks or utters the phrase, *kingdom of heaven*, with <*heaven*> being singular, the Christian can appreciate how easily the scribes of ancient Judaism when translating Moses' words, Moses' Hebrew, into the Hebrew of the scribes' day could use translation to conceal revealed information.

Although it isn't my intention to here make an Aristotelian argument for what I'm about to write—such an argument would probably be too technical for me to place in print—I will nevertheless present a case for the following:

Moses' use of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton *YHWH* was never intended to be pronounced, but functioned as an Egyptian glyph, a visual image that was more than could be represented by a single sound as the acronym *FYI* is not

pronounced as a word of three letters but functions as a glyph representing *For Your Information*—

Translation of the earliest portions of the Torah is always problematic for the temple in Jerusalem lost the Book of the Covenant (2 Kings 22:8) for generations; lost the Torah for so long that Judah in the days of King Josiah hadn't observed the Passover as it was written [commanded] to be kept since the days of the Judges (2 Kings 23:21–23). And scholars generally agree that based upon language usage, the account of the creation of Adam and the Temptation in the Garden entered post-Babylon compilation of Holy Writ (i.e., the work of the Great Assembly) from 9th-Century BCE House of Israel [Samaria] sources and not from 7th or 8th Century BCE House of Judah [Jerusalem] sources, suggesting that the Book of the Covenant that was found in the dilapidated temple during the reign of King Josiah and the prophecies of Jeremiah might well not have included what seems to be [but isn't] a second Creation narrative, one that focuses not on the Sabbath but on social order.

Usually a glyph that is an acronym becomes a pronounced word as in the case of the British acronym for **F**orced **U**nwanted **C**arnal **K**nowledge that was incorporated in the pronounced acronym *SNAFU* that I have heard used from pulpits. So acronyms that are glyphs become uttered words that are in turn incorporation into other acronyms that become uttered words ... except in the case of the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, that was given a differing acronym that was pronounced, *Adoni*, because the Tetragrammaton was too sacred to utter.

Aaron did not go to Pharaoh and say, *Thus says Adoni* (Ex 5:1). In reality, we don't really know what sound images that Aaron uttered when Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh—nor do we need to know. It is sufficient to say what is recorded in the Torah: Moses went to Pharaoh and demanded that Pharaoh let the people of Israel go three days journey into the wilderness to worship the Lord.

Certainly by the time the Great Assembly met to determine what should be included in Holy Writ and what should be excluded, Hebrew was a phonetic language, with its letters representing individual sound images. Since consonants tend toward silence through interruption of the vowel stream, only consonants needed to be written when writing materials were precious. Vowels streams or vowel sounds need not be recorded for there are a limited number of continuous sounds that could be made by human vocal cords, with the length and shape of the mouth determining this number—and the ear really doesn't hear sounds that the mouth cannot make. Templates in the mind supply *sounds* that should be heard even when ears do not hear the sound, with the English word *<can't>* being a prime example: English speakers when saying, *can't*, do not make the /n/ sound even though they hear the /n/ sound. What occurs is that English speakers put some nasalization on the vowel stream in going from /c/ to /t/ with this nasalization being sufficient to cause the mind to project the /n/ sound onto the sound image of the word without the /n/ sound actually being produced orally.

On my way into town last week, I had the radio on and listened to Rush Limbaugh trying to pronounce the name of a city that he had never heard when he was a hearing person. He couldn't make the sound. There was no template in his brain that could be *tricked* into producing the sound for the city's name. So he

did the best that he could and let it go at that, something I understand for I was born with an audio dysfunction that sometimes makes talking on a telephone difficult and at other times doesn't get in the way. As a result, there is no word that I cannot mispronounce; that I haven't publicly mispronounced. There are times when I cannot read aloud. Thus, I do not speak in public often. I never know in advance if I can or cannot for the situation will often change either way within an hour. But this audio dysfunction (a form of dyslexia) doesn't effect reading silently or writing (other than I cannot spell phonetically).

A human infant doesn't utter words even after the infant is able to hear and recognize words because the infant's mouth cavity is too short to form consonants. A dog that recognizes human words and responds with vocalized barking has too long of a snout to form consonants. Thus, again, it was only consonants that needed to be recorded when phonetic inscription began around three millennia ago—and it was only consonants that were written through the 1st-Century CE and as late as the 4th-Century CE. Thus, Holy Writ was without vowel pointing when the words of Jesus were recorded. Vowels were added when inscribed texts figuratively traveled through the wilderness from one polis to another polis where its inhabitants hadn't heard the words of the text spoken and thus had no mental templates to produce the sound of the words.

But returning to that early period before Israel left Egypt, whose language was recorded in glyphs: was Moses' inscription of language purely phonetically based, considering that he was educated in Egypt and in Pharaoh's house? Not likely. In creating an inscribed alphabet in which to write down the words of the Lord, Moses should have taken advantage of acronyms and glyphs as a stenographer of a generation ago took dictation in *Shorthand*, which uses glyphs for common words, glyphs that the stenographer recognizes at a later date and glyphs that can be deciphered by others who have learned *Shorthand* as a written language.

The difficulty in *reading* Mayan inscription has been in realizing what its glyphs represent. And Indo-European language users have wanted to assign sound images to Egyptian hieroglyphs, making these hieroglyphs into letters rather than concepts. This tendency has delayed by a couple of centuries truly understanding ancient Egyptian culture.

But it isn't in understanding ancient Egyptian inscription where the problem facing endtime Christians resides: it is in stepping behind the work of the Great Assembly (הַקְּהִלָּה הַגְּדוֹלָה), an assembly of 120 scribes, sages, and prophets from the days of Ezra to the emergence of Rabbinical Judaism following the destruction of the Herod's Temple (ca. 70 CE). The Great Assembly is the transitioning authority between the latter prophets and the Rabbis, the *authority* that fixed the biblical canon, introduced the triple classification of the oral law, and established institutional prayers, with *the men of the Great Assembly* becoming a metaphor of the ideas, rules, and prayers fathered in the post-Babylon period after the last of the minor prophets wrote.

The problem facing endtime Christians is recovering what the Great Assembly subtracted in their canonization of Holy Writ.

The novel *Don Quixote* is an excellent example of what is lost in translation; for an English translation of Miguel de Cervantes master work will be made from

a language that had few words (16th-Century Spanish may not have used over three thousand words) into a language that regularly uses 70,000 words and has more than 600,000 words available for use. Cervantes' peer, William Shakespeare reportedly used 37,000 words in his plays [I didn't make a word count when studying his plays]. Regardless, because Cervantes had a limited vocabulary with which to work, Cervantes cleverly employed doubling for extended narrative sequences, where the same word had two or more meanings thus producing two narratives with a single set of words [linguistic icons], something that I as a writer can certainly appreciate. But Cervantes' use of doubling is inevitably lost in English translation, where one set of meanings [linguistic objects] is used to determine which English word will be used for the Spanish word. Therefore, at best, an English translation is only half of what Cervantes wrote when he penned *Don Quixote*. The other half remains concealed by the translation.

Even if Moses would have written in the Hebrew language of the Great Assembly, which he did not do—he wrote in a much earlier form of Hebrew, or proto-Hebrew script—the centuries between Moses and the Great Assembly would have required that Moses' use of Hebrew be translated into the Great Assembly's use of Hebrew, a point that I have illustrated by introducing the opening lines of an English Romance ... I have used *Havelok the Dane* before, so this time I'll use *Sir Orfeo*:

We redyn ofte and fynde ywryte,
 As clerkes don us to wyte [know],
 Þe layes þat ben of harping
 Ben yfoude [composed] of frely [noble] þing.
 Sum ben of wele and sum of wo, (*Some been of well and
 some of woe*)
 And sum of ioy and merþe also, (*And some of joy and
 mirth also*)
 Sum of trechery and sum of gyle,
 And sum of happes þat fallen by whyle [at times]
 Sum of bourdys [jests] and sum of rybaudry,
 And sum þer ben of þe feyre.

I translated two of these first eleven lines from 14th-Century English into 21st-Century English so that difference can be seen: all of these lines can be read and understood is read phonetically, with the thorn /þ/representing /th/. Thus in the Great Assembly translating Hebrew texts from the period of King David or King Saul into the Hebrew they were then using would be as you, an educated reader, translating the opening lines of *Sir Orfeo*, an interesting romance, into the English you use. And the Hebrew King David would have used would be as different from the Hebrew or proto-Hebrew that Moses used as David's Hebrew would have been from that of the Great Assembly.

Again, Holy Writ is not infallible, a state of receiving the text, but is inspired, the state of production of the text. We know that Holy Writ is not infallible because of what Peter said and Luke records in Acts chapter two; for what occurred on that day of Pentecost following Calvary was NOT the fulfillment of

the prophet's Joel's words, but a type of the still-future fulfillment of Joel's words.

Let there be no mistake: the Bible, Old and New Testaments, were written under inspiration of God, but written in the language of the person receiving the inspiration, with the language subject to the vagaries of time.

Translating Egyptian hieroglyphs into Indo-European languages presented certain problems until computer programs were developed to decipher the glyphs ... most likely King David would not have recognized a word Moses wrote as being composed of glyphs, each representing a concept, and certainly the Great Assembly would not have recognized a three-letter word Moses used as a glyph of the sort that *FYI* is.

Once written or inscribed Hebrew became a fully functioning phonetic language, the shorthand acronyms that should be present in proto-Hebrew inscription would disappear ... just as I seldom write <*can't*> even though I say it regularly, but write instead <*cannot*> because that was the standard expected when I was taught to write, any shorthand glyphs that Moses employed would have been reduced to phonetic words by the time of King David.

Now take this principle of a letter combination—a three letter Hebraic alphabet combination—as a possible glyph and consider the unpronounced Tetragrammaton *YHWH*: if the Tetragrammaton were a glyph, the presence of a fourth letter would remove the glyph from the world of physical things. A three letter glyph would represent a physical thing, with more than three letters being present forming what would be equivalent to an English clause, except for the Tetragrammaton that was for even early Hebrew writers unbreakable as marriage for Hebrews was unbreakable until Moses gave to Israel divorce because of the hardness of Israelite hearts.

In Moses introducing divorce to Israel—and in Moses recording the Tower of Babel narrative in which the Lord *divorces* word meaning from the sound image of the word—Moses understood more than the Great Assembly understood about how language works and about the nature of the Lord. And <*Shem*> is now a glyph that represents more than <*name*>.

I have deconstructed the Tetragrammaton enough times that I don't again need to do it here: if you haven't already done so, read the first four chapters of *A Philadelphia Apologetic — 2012* [or a later edition if there ever is one] for the deconstruction of the Tetragrammaton. So I want to work on another Hebrew letter combination that seems to be a glyph: רוע [ʾōwr], translated into English as <skin>, with the English word *skin* not fully conveying the meaning incorporated in the three letter Hebrew glyph. For when “the flesh of the bull and its skin [רוע — Strong's #H5785] and its dung” (Ex 29:14I shall be burned with fire outside the camp of Israel—outside the camp is in the wilderness—as a sin offering, the word רוע would best be rendered into English as *hide*; for in English, *skin* carries the connotative implication that hair is not included.

The Lord commanded Moses to say to the people of Israel in the wilderness:
Speak to the people of Israel, saying, *If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the LORD's commandments about things not to be done,*

and does any one of them, if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the LORD for a sin offering ... the skin of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung—all the rest of the bull—he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap it shall be burned up.

If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. ... As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. And he shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it up as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the LORD his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, *a male without blemish*, and shall lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a sin offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. So the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven.

If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, *a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed*. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering. And the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven. (Lev 4:2–3, 11–14, 20–31 emphasis added)

Two things: Grace as Israel's garment covering sin covers unintentional transgressions of the commandments, not deliberate transgressions such as

worshiping God on the day after the Sabbath [τῆ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων] instead of on the Sabbath. And for priests or the entire congregation, the sin offering is figuratively more costly than for a leader or for one of the laity—and when it is the blood of Christ that cleanses consciences, there would seem to be no difference between priest and leader, the whole congregation and a member of the congregation whereas there is *difference* that is concealed by the language of Christianity, a subject that hasn't been explored.

The second thing is that whereas there is distinction made between its flesh [edible], its head [mostly inedible], its legs [mostly inedible], its entrails [mostly inedible], its dung [inedible] *and its skin*, there is no distinction made between hide with hair on it and hide without hair that has been or will be tanned and made into leather.

I have tanned quite a few hides: I was once slipping hair on a couple of deer hides when a Seventh Day Adventist minister came for a visit—he thought he had a possible member for his congregation as I had my wife take our then two year old daughter to Sabbath services. But after watching me slip hair, peeling away handfuls of hair after the hides had been soaking in a weak lye solution (wood ashes mixed in water) for several days, the minister evidently concluded that I was too *wild* to be a member of his congregation: I never saw him again.

It takes a weak caustic solution dissolving the protein of the hair follicle to allow the hair to slip and the skin to be freed of hair so it can be tanned, made naked; so skin as represented by the three-letter Hebrew word <רוע> includes both hide and hair as well as the nude hide. But not always:

Or, when the body has a burn on its skin [רוע] and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a spot, reddish-white or white, the priest shall examine it, and if the hair in the spot has turned white and it appears deeper than the skin [רוע], then it is a leprous disease. It has broken out in the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a case of leprous disease. But if the priest examines it and there is no white hair in the spot and it is no deeper than the skin [רוע], but has faded, the priest shall shut him up seven days, and the priest shall examine him the seventh day. If it is spreading in the skin [רוע], then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a case of leprous disease. But if the spot remains in one place and does not spread in the skin [רוע], but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar of the burn. When a man or woman has a disease on the head or the beard, the priest shall examine the disease. And if it appears deeper than the skin [רוע], and the hair in it is yellow and thin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is an itch, a leprous disease of the head or the beard. And if the priest examines the itching disease and it appears no deeper than the skin [רוע] and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up the person with the itching disease for seven days, and on the seventh day the priest

shall examine the disease. If the itch has not spread, and there is in it no yellow hair ... (Lev 13:24–36)

In the matter of leprosy, skin was skin—

But when at his mother Rebekah's insistence, Jacob put "the skin [ריוע] of the young goats" (Gen 27:16) on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck, Jacob put goat hides with hair on them over his hands and neck ... if Adam and Eve, when they realized they were naked, were garmented in skin [ריוע] to clothe them, then most likely they were garmented as Esau was garmented while still in his mother's womb. Translators have added words to Genesis 3:21 for the passage to make sense to them. But it is in the *smoothness* of the Leviticus text pertaining to leprosy where Moses' use of Hebrew has been seemingly been upgraded into Hebrew that is a phonetic language ... a branding iron burns the animal's hide, hair and skin, but a brand isn't anything like leprosy, with the English signifier <brand> having at least two signifieds, one being a length of wood that has been plucked from the fire as Joshua the high priest is plucked from the fire (Zech 3:2).

Again, the House of Judah and the Temple in Jerusalem lost the Book of the Covenant (2 Kings 22:8) for some generations as seems to be the case—for Jeremiah records,

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, *for all these nations are uncircumcised*, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart. (Jer 9:25–26 emphasis added)

For Judah to have ceased circumcising its male infants would indicate that Judah had lost the Book of the Covenant for a considerable length of time. But for the northern kingdom of the House of Israel that had been taken captive a century earlier to have continued to outwardly circumcise its male infants would also indicate that the captive northern kingdom of Samaria had retained one or more copies of the Book of the Covenant, or at least the portion that contained the Genesis narratives.

In trying to retrieve a language of three and a half millennia ago, but a language that was replaced three millennia ago by the same language as the English of a half millennia ago is still English but not the language Americans use as they text hasty messages to friends they will see in minutes; in trying to retrieve a language composed of three-letter Hebrew roots that cannot definitively be shown to be glyphs, but seem to be glyphs; in trying to get back to the time before linguistic signifiers were separated from signifieds at the Tower of Babel, the difference between the "unappreciable" Hebrew letter /'aleph/ and the peculiar Hebrew letter /'ayin/ that begins the Hebrew root for *light* and *skin* respectively would seem to say that if Adam would have eaten of the Tree of Life, he would have been clothed in light [in Latin letters, 'ôwr] rather than in skin [ôwr], with the smooth breathing on <'ôwr> thereby making Adam a smooth man dwelling in tents as Jacob was a smooth man, and with the rough breathing on

<'ôwr> making Adam a rough man dwelling in the fields as Esau was a man of the fields. But there is more to these two roots that really are glyphs regardless of whether a strong case can ever been made for this reality.

If a primary Hebrew root was once a glyph or was a glyph when Moses first wrote the language, then the skin in which the Lord clothed Adam and his wife would have caused Adam to appear as a wild man when he was driven out from the Garden of Eden; for as a glyph the Hebrew word רוע translated as *skin* would say something about hair length and density that covered the skin, information that was lost by the time the Great Assembly codified the Torah, clarifying obscure passages without seeming to add to or subject from the words of Moses, but also not really understanding the words of Moses who, again, would seem to have written before Hebrew was an inscribed fully-phonetic language.

The person who comes to Scripture for purely devotional reasons keeps God at a distance regardless of whether the person realizes that this is what the person does. In order to maintain the *majesty* of God, the devotional Christian cannot closely read Scripture nor critically examine apparent discrepancies in narratives—the devotional Christian doesn't even want to know that these things exist. But when Jesus is the person's friend and elder brother, the distance between man and God is shrunk to that of a human older brother and infant younger brother, with the younger brother wanting to imitate the older brother and learn what the older brother knows. Therefore, the distance between the devotional Christian who wants to keep God at a distance far enough away that God doesn't really interfere in the Christian's life (unless of course the Christian is in real trouble) and the Christian who has a close relationship with his elder brother is about the same as the distance between the devotional Christian and Christ Jesus; for the Christian who walks as Jesus walked forms the Body of Christ.

Moses was to take Israel three days' journey into the wilderness ... is three days' journey far enough away that a city cannot be seen. Yes, probably. To worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24) requires the Christian to journey into the wilderness that separates heaven from earth.

In the second part of this Commentary, the *wild man* will be considered.

[to be continued]

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