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**HAVA SHALOM-GUY,
THE CALL NARRATIVES OF GIDEON AND MOSES:
LITERARY CONVENTION OR MORE?**

THE CALL NARRATIVES OF GIDEON AND MOSES: LITERARY CONVENTION OR MORE?

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Of the means employed by the author of the four-chapter Gideon cycle to construct a portrait of Gideon as a worthy savior of the Israelites from Midianite oppression, one significant technique is that of implanting conceptual, structural, or linguistic signposts to other biblical narratives or traditions.¹ The shared topical, linguistic, and structural features of the Gideon and Moses call narratives (Judg 6:11–24; Exod 3:1–15)² need no introduction, but identification of these narratives as belonging to a shared literary convention—a biblical “type-scene” of appointment and investiture³—

*This is an expanded, updated version of a paper delivered at the SBL International Meeting, Vienna, July 2008.

¹ On the literary analogies employed elsewhere in the Gideon cycle to achieve this goal, see H. Shalom-Guy, “Internal and External Literary Parallels. The Gideon Cycle (Judges 6–9)” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2003) (in Hebrew).

² The story in Exod 4:1–17 is apparently a secondary prophetic tradition on Moses’ investiture (see S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992], 135–46). Despite some similarities to our narrative, it cannot be considered a literary parallel. On the complex compositional-redactional process that united Exod 3–4 into a single story, see M. Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (Heritage of Biblical Israel Series, 2; New York: Behrman, 1969), 101–7; S. E. Loewenstamm, “Moses,” *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 5:487 (in Hebrew). On the delineation of Exod 3:1–15 as the Moses call narrative, see Z. Weisman, “The Charismatic Personality in the Old Testament” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1972), 193 n. 33 (in Hebrew); U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997), 30–40. See also M. Noth, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1962), 34; B. S. Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1974), 54.

³ On how similarities are used to build a model of appointment and investiture type-scenes, see R. Kilian, “Die Prophetischen Berungsberichte,” *Theologie im Wandel* (Tübinger Theologische Reihe, 1; Munich:

does not, in my opinion, exhaust their relationship.⁴ Close examination of these narratives—with reference to other examples of this genre—suggests not just shared convention but direct literary dependence: namely, that in building this appointment scene the author of the Gideon call narrative made deliberate use of the Moses narrative. My approach asks whether direct dependence between parallel traditions is indeed the source of the definitive similarity between them in cases in which the similarities (and differences) can be attributed to their belonging to a literary genre that largely dictated form and content for their authors and also required certain literary expressions or treatment of similar topics, or to a shared literary convention.

FEATURES OF BIBLICAL CALL NARRATIVES

Biblical scholarship identifies a number of elements specific to appointment and investiture stories.⁵ As defined by Habel, these include (1) the divine confrontation; (2) the introductory word;

Wewel, 1967), 356–76; E. Kutsch, “Gideons Berufung und Altarbau Jdc. 6,11–24,” *TLZ* 81 (1956), 75–84; W. Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte* (FRLANT, 101; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970); N. Habel, “The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives,” *ZAW* 77 (1965), 297–323. For the view that the similarities in the Gideon-Moses narratives inhere in their shared type-scene, see, for example, A. G. Auld, “Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament,” *VT* 39 (1989), 257–67 (258); B. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup, 46; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 148; R. H. O’Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (VTSup, 63; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 148; D.I. Block, *Judges-Ruth* (NAC, 6; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 253, 257.

⁴ Some scholars identify affinities between the stories that go beyond the type-scene of appointment. See W. W. Beyerlin, “Geschichte und heilgeschichtliche Traditionsbildung im Alten Testament (Richter VI–VIII),” *VT* 13 (1963), 1–25; R. G. Boling, *Judges. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (AB, 6A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 132, who for example sees Judg 6:16 as a direct quote of Exod 3:12; and more recently, T. J. Schneider, *Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 105–6; G. T. K. Wong, “Gideon: A New Moses?” Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, and W. Brian Auken (eds.), *Reflection and Refraction. Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (VTSup, 113; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 529–45.

⁵ See the literature cited in n. 3 above. Some scholars object to the premise that a particular genre has a fixed, uniform, undeviating pattern which excludes such definitive call narratives as those of Joshua, Samuel, and Elisha from this pattern. See R. Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,” *Int* 27 (1973), 447–48, 458–67; U. Simon, “Young Samuel’s Call to Prophecy: The Servitor Became a Seer,” *Reading Prophetic Narratives* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1997), 53–54; Y. Amit, *The Book of Judges. The Art of Editing* (trans. J. Chipman; Biblical Interpretation Series, 38; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 253–54, 256.

(3) the commission; (4) the objection; (5) the reassurance; and (6) the sign.⁶ All of these elements appear in the Gideon and Moses narratives. Other biblical call narratives, such as those of Joshua, Samuel, and Elisha, and of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, also broadly fit the above model, but, by comparison, the Gideon and Moses ones exhibit an outstanding level of shared topical-linguistic features.

My first observation is that not only are all of the above-mentioned elements of the call-narrative pattern present in the Gideon and Moses narratives but also in identical order. An additional narrative shares these elements, albeit in different order: the story of Saul's appointment as *nagid* (1 Sam 9:1–10:16). Although this could be seen as proof that the close relationship between the Gideon-Moses narratives is the product of their belonging to a particular type-scene, I argue that reference to the Saul narrative demonstrates the existence of greater mutual affinity between the Gideon and Moses narratives than that of either to the Saul narrative. This comparison, and the inclusion of the Saul narrative where relevant, underpins my contention that the Gideon narrative displays dependence on the Moses one and does not just reflect a literary pattern shared by other call narratives. Nonetheless, any discussion of how individual narratives fit a literary pattern must also note the manner in which each narrative adapts the elements of the pattern to its specific context.

1. THE DIVINE CONFRONTATION

In both stories a divine messenger appears to the hero.⁷ Moreover, the same expression is used to describe the revelation, though its

⁶ For Habel, the Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah call narratives present the complete pattern; those of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah do so more generally (“Call Narratives”). Richter, who treats only the Former Prophets, also added Saul's appointment as *nagid* (1 Sam 9–10) to the pattern. He proposes a five-element model of the appointment of a savior for Israel: the first is Israelite distress; the other four resemble Habel's numbers 3–6 (*Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte*).

⁷ In the continuation of these stories, the messengers are replaced by God. Thus, in Exod 3:1–15 we find 'ה מלאך in v 2; 'ה in vv 4, 7; and אלוהים in vv 4, 11, 13, 14, 15. In Judges 6:11–24, 'ה מלאך appears in vv 11, 12, 20, 21 (twice), 22; 'ה in vv 14, 16, 23. On this phenomenon, see Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 69–70; T. Rudin-O'Brasky, *The Patriarchs in Hebron and Sodom (Genesis 18–19). A Study of the Structure and Composition of a Biblical Story* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 2; Jerusalem: Simor, 1982), 31–47 (in Hebrew); and especially A. Rofé, “Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Traditions” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1969), 3–10, 343–46 (in Hebrew). Evidently, the LXX to Judg 6:14 “angel of the Lord” is a harmonistic reading (with v 11); and the LXX's rendering “The angel of the Lord said to him”: “The Lord shall be with thee” (v 16) reflects an attempt to blur the duality of the divine being

elements are ordered differently. In Judges the text reads, 'וירא מלאך ה' אליו (6:12) and in Exodus, 'וירא מלאך ה' אליו (3:2). This expression appears only once more in Scripture: in the mediated through a messenger revelation to Manoah's wife (Judg 13:3), where it is identical to the expression in Exod 3:2, namely וירא מלאך ה' אל האשה.⁸ Note that the combination of the root ר"א in the *nif'al* pattern, followed by the preposition אֶל, is common in biblical revelations⁹ and serves as a key word in the first part of the Moses call narrative (vv 2 [twice], 3 [twice] 4, 7 [twice], 9).¹⁰ In contrast, in the narrative of Saul's appointment, the appointer is not God or his divine messenger, but Samuel, "the man of God." The Saul narrative stresses the divine transmittal to Samuel of Saul's mission (1 Sam 9:15–16).

2. THE INTRODUCTORY WORD

In both narratives, either God or his messenger calls directly to the hero. These salutations are, however, worded differently. In Judg 6, the divine messenger says: ה' עמך גבור החיל (v 12).¹¹ In Exod 3 God calls to Moses from the burning bush by name: משה משה (v 4). This emphatic duplication of the name indicates the importance and urgency of the message (cf. Gen 22:11).¹² A doubled name also occurs in Samuel's call narrative (1 Sam 3:1–4:1a): Samuel Samuel (v 10). There it highlights the theophany and constitutes the fourth element of a literary pattern of three and four, as it follows three unanswered divine calls.¹³ In the story of Saul's appointment as

that revealed itself to Gideon or to soften its anthropomorphism. See Y. Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary* (Mikra Leyisra'el; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999), 124 (in Hebrew).

⁸ See Y. Zakovitch, *The Life of Samson (Judges 13–16). A Critical-Literary Analysis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 26, 55 (in Hebrew); Auld, "Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament," 258; Wong, "Gideon: A New Moses?" 531.

⁹ With reference to God: Gen 12:7, 17:1, 18:1; Exod 3:16, 4:1, 5; 1 Kgs 3:5; among others. The presence of the Lord (כבוד): Lev 9:23; Num 16:19; 17:7; 20:6. His prophet: 1 Kgs 18:1, 2:15. See Zakovitch, *Samson*, 48 and nn. 90–93; see also J. A. Soggin, *Judges* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1981), 115.

¹⁰ See Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 101 and below.

¹¹ The primary meaning of גבור חיל is warrior (Judg 11:1; 1 Sam 16:18), but it can also denote a person of means and standing (2 Kgs 15:20, 24:14), or someone possessing the ability to lead or fill a post (1 Kgs 11:28). Evidently, the primary meaning fits the context of choosing a leader to lead the warriors into battle, as Soggin, *Judges*, 115; and Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 124 suggest. Cf. Boling, *Judges*, 128, 131 who interprets the phrase here in its secondary meaning of a propertied, high-status person.

¹² See Cassuto, *Exodus*, 33; Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 71.

¹³ See Y. Zakovitch, "The Pattern of the Numerical Sequence Three-Four in the Bible" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1977), 97 (in Hebrew),

nagid, however, not only is there no direct divine call to Saul; it is he who turns to Samuel, without knowing the latter's identity (1 Sam 9:18).

3. THE COMMISSION

In both narratives the hero's mission is to save the Israelites. Naturally, the enemy differs in the Gideon and Moses narratives: Moses must deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians and Gideon from the Midianites. In their descriptions of the mission both narratives use the roots הל"ך and של"ח: to Gideon the divine messenger says (Judg 6:14):

ויאמר לך בכחך זה והושעת את ישראל מכף מדין הלא שלחתיך

And to Moses, God says (Exod 3:10):

ועתה לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה והוצא את עמי בני ישראל ממצרים

The roots הל"ך and של"ח are also paired in the call narratives of Isaiah (6:8) and Jeremiah (1:7), and in additional contexts (e.g., Gen 24:56, 58–59; 37:13; 1 Sam 15:20; 16:1). The root של"ח also appears alone in other appointment and investiture narratives (Exod 4:13; Isa 6:8; Jer 1:7; Ezek 2:3). With regard to Saul's mission, the enemy from whom he is to rescue the Israelites—"he will deliver My people from the hands of the Philistines" (1 Sam 9:16)—is naturally fitted to its context.

4. THE OBJECTION

In both stories the candidates initially refuse to accept the mission, and state their objections along with their underlying rationale. This "refusal" motif, the most common shared element in appointment and investiture narratives (see Exod 4:10; 1 Sam 9:21; Jer 1:6), functions both to frame the choice of the appointee as surprising or unexpected and highlights the authority of the divine appointer.¹⁴ In the case of the Gideon and Moses narratives, as in other call narratives, the objections and the rationales are fitted to the specific needs of the context.¹⁵ Gideon names two reasons why he is unsuited to lead the fight against Midian, both connected to status--tribal and personal. His clan (אלפי¹⁶) is the humblest in Manasseh,

and also in other theophanies not related to appointment or investiture (e.g., Gen. 22:11, 46:1).

¹⁴ Amit, *Judges. Art of Editing*, 247.

¹⁵ E.g., the rationales offered by Moses (in the prophetic tradition in Exod 4:1–17 [v 10]) and Jeremiah (1:6) have the shared element of difficulty in speaking and unsuitability for the proposed task: Moses to negotiate with Pharaoh; Jeremiah to prophesy to the people. See Amit, *Judges. Art of Editing*, 253–55.

¹⁶ The אלף, if it does not appear in its numerical sense of 1000, de-

and he is the youngest (הצעיר) in his father's household. His claim that the family unit ranks low within the tribal framework contrasts with the continuation of the story, in which his family is described as wealthy (vv 19, 25, 27),¹⁷ but this gap ensues from the modeling of Gideon's investiture on a pattern in which refusal is a major motif.¹⁸ His second claim relates to the fact that, as the youngest son,¹⁹ he lacks experience, especially in the military sphere.²⁰ Moses grounds his refusal in personal unfitness: "Who am I (מי אנכי) that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?" (Exod 3:11). The expression מי אנכי contrasts his lowliness to the immensity of the task: going before Pharaoh and taking the Israelites out of Egypt.²¹

With regard to Saul, his refusal is in harmony with the context in which it appears: the choosing of a king (1 Sam 9:21). Saul stresses the unlikely nature of his choice because he is a member of one of the smaller tribes, implying that someone from a larger tribe would be more suitable. There is some resemblance between Gideon and Saul's refusals: Saul states, "But I am only a Benjaminite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my clan is the least of all the clans of the tribe²² of Benjamin" (1 Sam 9:21). Both

notes a clan. On this and related terms, see S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel. The Institution of the Family (Beit 'Ab) from the Settlement to the End of the Monarchy* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 7; Jerusalem: Simor, 1996), 94–97. Occasionally, this term also denotes a fighting unit as in Num 31:4–5, where we find both meanings: clans and units of one thousand. See also G. F. Moore, *Judges* (ICC, 7; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895), 187; Y. Kaufmann, *The Book of Judges* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1961), 160 (in Hebrew); Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 125.

¹⁷ As Moore (*Judges*, 186), Kaufmann (*Judges*, 160), Soggin (*Judges*, 119–20), and Amit (*Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 125) note.

¹⁸ See Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 125.

¹⁹ This preference is unexpected in a society that favors the firstborn; see Amit, *Judges. Art of Editing*, 253 n. 43. However, transfer of hegemony from the firstborn is a widespread theme in the stories of the patriarchs (Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Zerah and Perez, Manasseh and Ephraim) and also appears in the stories of the election of David as king (1 Sam 16:11, 17:14; cf. Mic 5:1).

²⁰ See Amit, *Judge. Art of Editing*, 253–55; Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 125, where she notes the similarity to David, called הקטן, who remained at home while his older brothers went to war (1 Sam 17:14).

²¹ See Cassuto, *Exodus*, 36; Weisman, "Charismatic Personality", 196 n. 45 on the biblical meaning of this phrase and of the phrase מי עבדך (1 Sam 18:18; 2 Sam 9:8; and 2 Kgs 8:13). For these phrases in Hebrew epigraphic sources, see S. Ahituv, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions* (Biblical Encyclopedia Library, 7; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992), 36 (in Hebrew).

²² The plural form found in the MT probably reflects the influence of the preceding שבטי ישראל. The LXX and Peshitta have the singular. See P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel* (AB, 8; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 170; S.

underscore the relative weakness of the tribal units to which they belong: the אֵלֶּף (Gideon) and הַשְּׁבֵט and הַמְּשַׁפְּחָה (Saul) and both use the term צַעִיר: Gideon to refer to himself and Saul to refer to his tribe and clan.

5. THE REASSURANCE

Here we find a close linguistic parallel: the use of identical language. As worded in both the Gideon and Moses narratives, the expression כִּי אֵהְיֶה עִמָּךְ (Judg 6:16; Exod 3:12), which follows the hero's refusal, is unique. This language, and its allusion to the divine name,²³ manifests divine support for the chosen appointee. Although the phrase הִיָּה עִמָּךְ appears as a formula of encouragement and support in other call narratives (e.g., Josh 1:5, 9; 3:7; 1 Sam 10:7) and contexts (Gen 26:3; 31:3; Deut 31:23; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Sam 7:9//1 Chr 17:8), this precise wording is found only in the Moses and Gideon narratives.²⁴ Moreover, even though the phrase כִּי אֵלֹהִים עִמָּךְ (1 Sam 10:7) appears in the Saul narrative, as opposed to the Gideon and Moses stories, it does not follow the refusal, but is placed between the description of the future signs (10:2–6) and their realization (10:9–10).

6. SIGNS

In each story the hero is granted a sign which certifies that he is the chosen divine emissary. Gideon requests a sign to validate the messenger's supernatural nature: וַעֲשִׂיתָ לִּי אֹת שְׂאֵתָה מִדְּבַר עָמִי (Judg 6:17). The test is the reception of the meal offered by Gideon: if the messenger eats, he is human; if not, he is superhuman. The messenger's refusal to eat the meal, the fire that springs up from the rock, and the messenger's subsequent disappearance attest both to his supernatural nature and to the fact that Gideon is the chosen emissary who will rescue Israel from the Midianites.

The offering of a meal to the divine messenger represents the degeneration of a motif of divine visits to humans in which the meal represents a stage of hosting, or a divine test of human behavior, commonly found in folktales.²⁵ In the case of the Gideon narrative, the messenger's refusal to partake of the meal reflects a

Bar-Efrat, *1 Samuel* (Mikra Leyisra'el; Jerusalem: Am Oved, 1996), 141 and passim (in Hebrew).

²³ Cassuto, *Exodus*, 36–38; D. N. Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL* 79 (1960), 151–56; and Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 81–84.

²⁴ As noted by S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: The University Press, 1911), 22; Boling, *Judges*, 132; Wong, "Gideon: A New Moses?" 534. On the LXX's harmonistic version, see n. 7 above.

²⁵ E.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1.8 lines 611–724; Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.493–540; *Aghat* 2.5 lines 4–31).

relatively late notion, which has additional biblical (Judg 13:16) and post-biblical exemplars (such as Tob 12:19), that angels do not partake of food in the company of humans.²⁶

To Moses, God offers a sign in order to prove that he is his chosen emissary (Exod 3:12):

זוה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון
את האלהים על ההר הזה

There is lack of clarity with regard to the referent of the deictic pronoun *זוה*—is it the first strophe of v 12, namely, the bush, or the future event of the Israelites' worshiping on this mountain²⁷—and the commentators are divided as to the nature and timing of this sign. I suggest that this sign was not given at the theophany,²⁸ but was intended to take place in the future: the sign being that after their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites will worship God on the mountain where God had revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.²⁹ Unlike other suggested exegeses of this verse, this one addresses both parts of the verse and not just its opening.

Thus the signs in the Gideon and Moses narratives differ as to initiator, nature, and time of occurrence. Gideon initiates the request for a sign, whereas God offers a sign to Moses unasked. Also, in Gideon's case the signs are integral to the appointment scene; the one given to Moses will apparently take place in the future. The Saul narrative, like the Gideon one, has three signs: the information that his father is concerned for him, the offering made by persons unknown, and Saul being gripped by the spirit of the Lord (1 Sam 10:2–13).

LITERARY DEPENDENCE

Many scholars interpret the shared features from appointment-investiture narratives in identical order in the Gideon and Moses narratives, their topical-linguistic similarities, but also their distinc-

²⁶ In post-biblical recountings of the visit of the divine messengers to Abraham, the former do not actually engage in the act of eating. See *T. Ab.*; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.11.2; *b. Baba Mes'ia* 86b; *Gen. Rab.* 45; *Lev. Rab.* 34:8; *Qob. Rab.* 3:14; and *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Gen 18:8. See also A. Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), 174–81; Rudin-O'Brasky, *Patriarchs*, 55 and n. 24 there; Zakovitch, *Samson*, 57; and Amit, *Judges. Art of Editing*, 255–56 and 255 n. 45.

²⁷ See Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 74–77 and n. 2 there; and Childs, *Exodus*, 56–60.

²⁸ The sign is that he acts by divine power (see *Exod. Rab.* 3:4). See also A. Ehrlich, *Mikrâ Ki-Pshutô. The Bible According to Its Literal Meaning* (Library of Biblical Studies; reprint, New York: Ktav, 1969), 1:138 (in Hebrew); or the bush (Ibn Ezra and S. D. Luzzato).

²⁹ See Driver, *Exodus*, 23; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 36; Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 76, among others.

tive features, as reflecting the adaptation of these conventions to the specific contextual needs of each narrative.³⁰ I suggest, however, that the discussion can be taken one step further. I argue that consideration of additional data from these narratives has the ability to show that they not only share a type-scene but that there is direct literary dependence between them, and its direction: namely, that the Moses call narrative served as a building block for the Gideon call narrative and his commissioning as savior. In demonstrating literary dependence between traditions, it is the confluence of multiple shared structural, topical, linguistic, and stylistic features that is decisive. In the case of the Gideon and Moses call narratives, the narratives display a level of shared elements unmatched by any other biblical call narratives, including Saul's investiture.

An initial indication of dependence comes from the presence of *additional* topical-linguistic similarities outside the literary pattern of appointment. These elements include (1) an unanticipated revelation; (2) national distress; (3) fire; and (4) fear inspired by an encounter with divinity. As was the case for Habel's six defining characteristics of call narratives, here too we find adjustments to each narrative's specific context.

1. AN UNANTICIPATED REVELATION

In both narratives, the unexpected revelation comes while the protagonist is busy with everyday tasks,³¹ though the tasks differ: Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress (Judg 6:11) in order to keep the Midianites from destroying the produce (see Judg 6:1–3; cf. 1 Sam 23:1);³² Moses was engaged in herding his father-in-law Jethro's sheep in the desert (Exod 3:1–2).³³ Samuel's commissioning of Saul as *nagid* is also unexpected, and takes place while Saul was seeking his father's asses (1 Sam 9:3–19).

³⁰ This assumption is found in studies carried out from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, which attempted to establish a literary model of appointment and investiture recognizable by fixed elements that appear in undeviating, or nearly undeviating order. These two narratives served as an important stratum for building this model. It is also found in more recent studies. See n. 3 above.

³¹ Habel, "Call Narratives," 298, 303; Weisman, "Charismatic Personality," 194; Wong, "Gideon: A New Moses?" 533.

³² See Kaufmann, *Judges*, 158; Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 123–24.

³³ On the widespread biblical (and ancient Near Eastern) motif of leaders as shepherds, or their denotation as shepherds and the people as their flock (Num 27:17; Jer 23:1–4; Ezek 34; Ps 78:70–72, among others), a metaphor applied to God as well, see Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 67–68 and n. 1 there; R. Kasher, *Ezekiel. Introduction and Commentary* (Mikra Leyisra'el; Jerusalem: Am Oved, 2004), 2:674–76 (in Hebrew).

2. NATIONAL DISTRESS

The call to both leaders to deliver the Israelites from an external enemy comes at a time of crisis.³⁴ Gideon makes reference to the state of national distress, described at greater length in the cycle's exposition (6:1–6): "If the Lord is with us, why has all this befallen us... Now the Lord has abandoned us and delivered us into the hands of Midian" (Judg 6:13). In the Moses narrative, God refers to the distress of the people: "I have marked well the plight of My people in Egypt and have heeded their outcry because of their taskmasters; yes, I am mindful of their sufferings" (Exod 3:7) and "Now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me; moreover, I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them" (v 9).³⁵ The Saul narrative as well contains a description of the Israelites' distress, in God's words to Samuel: "for I have taken note of My people, their outcry has come to Me" (1 Sam 9:16b). This description contains language found in the Moses narrative (Exod 3:7, 9), creating a parallel between present Israelite distress and what it experienced in Egypt.³⁶

3. FIRE

The revelation in both stories involves fire,³⁷ a typical element in descriptions of divine theophany (e.g., Gen 15:17; Lev 9:24; Judg 13:20; 1 Kgs 18:38). But the fire signs are not identical. In Gideon's case, "A fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and

³⁴ Richter (*Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte*, 15–17) and other scholars in his wake view this as the first component of the appointment type-scene. See n. 3 above.

³⁵ The description of the people's distress in v 9 is superfluous and sheds light on the complex process of the story's formation. Scholars who accept the documentary thesis ascribe the superfluity to the conflation of two parallel sources (J and E). See Noth, *Exodus*, 38–45; Childs, *Exodus*, 52–53. R. Rendtorff ("Tradition-Historical Method and the Documentary Hypothesis," *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies* [Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1969], 9), and A. Rofé (*Introduction to the Composition of the Pentateuch* [The Biblical Seminar, 58; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 98–101) maintain that vv 8–9 are an addition aimed at incorporating the continuation of the history of Israel and its inheritance of the land into an Egyptian-Sinai tradition. Greenberg (*Understanding Exodus*, 101–2) argues that vv 9–15 constitute a unit added from a different call narrative. Note these verses' distinctive vocabulary: the leading root is ש"ה, God is called אלוהים, whereas in the larger framework we find ר"ה (3:2, 3, 4, 7, 16; 4:1, 5) and YHWH. Moreover, their elimination does not affect narrative continuity.

³⁶ See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 179; Bar-Efrat, *1 Samuel*, 140. The affinity between the texts is even greater in the LXX to 1 Sam 9:16, where עני precedes עמי. See I. L. Seeligmann, "Menschliches Heldentum und Göttliche Hilfe: Die doppelte Kausalität im alttestamentlichen Geschicht sdenken," Erhard Blum (ed.), *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (FAT, 41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 156 n. 44.

³⁷ See Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 148.

the unleavened bread...” (Judg 6:21); in Moses’ case, “a messenger from the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame...” (Exod 3:2).

4. FEAR INSPIRED BY AN ENCOUNTER WITH DIVINITY

In both stories the protagonists express fear at having seen God or his divine messenger face-to-face,³⁸ and the root יר"א is used to describe their reaction. This fear of seeing God or a divine messenger is a frequent component of biblical divine revelation to humans and its most definitive expression, which reflects the notion that death results from seeing God, is found in Exod 33:20.³⁹ Note, however, that in the Moses and Gideon narratives, each of these figures expresses his fear at different stages in the narrative: Moses at its beginning, and Gideon, at its conclusion. They also express their fear differently: Moses hides his face, “for he was afraid (כי ירא) to look at God” (Exod 3:6), and Gideon voices his concern with the words, “Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen a messenger from the Lord face to face (כי על כן ראיתי מלאך ה' פנים אל פנים)” (Judg 6:22). In his comforting words to Gideon, God refers to this fear, saying, “Have no *fear* (אל תירא), you shall not die” (Judg 6:23).

The expression כי על כן ראיתי מלאך ה' פנים אל פנים, used to describe Gideon’s fear, appears only once more in the Bible, in the story of Jacob’s struggle with a “man” at the ford of Jabbok (Gen 32:23–33): כי ראיתי אלהים פנים אל פנים ותנצל נפשי (v 31).⁴⁰ Evidently, the author of the Gideon story borrowed this phrase from the Jacob narrative. The suggestion that it was the author of the Gideon narrative who borrowed this phrase is based first of all in the fact that the expression ראה מלאך/אל פנים את פנים is well grounded in the Jacob story, where it serves as a covert name-midrash for Peniel, mentioned in the following verse (v 32). It appears that the name-midrash in v 31 is a secondary addition.⁴¹ In

³⁸ Weisman, “Charismatic Personality,” 194.

³⁹ Cf. Isa 6:5 and Gen 16:13, 32:31, which show that the individuals in question understand that they will not die in consequence. See Moore, *Judges*, 189; Boling, *Judges*, 225; Zakovitch, *Samson*, 55, 67–68; Amit, *Judges. Introduction and Commentary*, 226.

⁴⁰ The combination פנים אל פנים appears three more times in the Bible but with different verbs: Deut 34:10; Exod 33:11; and Ezek 20:35. The combination פנים ראה also appears elsewhere in the Bible, where it can signify actual vision (by humans)—Gen 31:2, 5 among others; refer to God—Exod 23:15, 33:20, 23, 34:20 among others; or encounter in war—2 Kgs 14:8, 11.

⁴¹ See B. O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament* (BZAW, 108; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968), 29; C. Westermann, *Genesis 12–36. A Commentary* (trans. J. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 519; Y. Zakovitch, “Yabbok, Peniel, Mahanaim, Bethel: Name Midrashim as Reflections of Ideological Struggles,” *Ariel* 100–101 (1994), 191–204 (192) (in Hebrew).

addition, the phrases **רא"ה פנים/ראה פני אלוהים** serve as a leitmotif in the story of Jacob's struggle at the Jabbok.⁴² There are additional similarities between the Jacob and Gideon stories: in both a heavenly being appears in human guise; both of the protagonists discover the heavenly nature of the "human" at the close of their encounter; both assign names—one to a place, and the other to an altar—in commemoration of the experience they have undergone. The basic similarity between these two stories that treat different subjects—one the investiture of a leader, the other a struggle with a heavenly being—led the author of the Gideon story to draw attention to the resemblance between the stories by inserting the phrase **ראה מלאך ה' פנים אל פנים**.⁴³

Nonetheless, proof of literary dependence relies not only on the shared features of the call narrative type-scene as adapted to the individual contexts, but also on features shared only by the two traditions in question. In the case of Gideon and Moses, this is the phrase **כי אהיה עמך**. As noted above, the phrase **היה עם** appears as a formula of encouragement and support, with variants, in other call narratives (and literary contexts).⁴⁴ This exact phrasing, however, appears only in the Gideon and Moses narratives, where it provides evidence of divine support. Even though the combination **היה עם** functions as a leitmotif in the Gideon call narrative, scholars identify the source of the phrase in the Moses story,⁴⁵ because of the accompanying name midrash containing the divine name **אהיה אשר אליכם: אהיה** ... **אהיה שלחני אליכם: אהיה** ("Ehyeh asher Ehyeh...He who calls himself Ehyeh has sent me to you"—Exod 3:14).⁴⁶ The name-midrash exegesis enhances and underscores the quality of divine support for Moses. The proximity of the two in the Moses narrative and the emphasis on the element **אהיה** demonstrate that this formula is well entrenched there and originated in that context. This further supports my contention that the author of the Gideon call narrative was familiar with, and used, elements from the Moses one.

Another significant linguistic affinity is the use of the phrase **וירא מלאך ה'** in both narratives, albeit in slightly different word order. A final, added similarity outside the scope of the call narrative type-scene relates to the use of the Exodus context in the Gideon appointment narrative. In referring to divine salvation,

⁴² See Zakovitch, "Yabbok," 193.

⁴³ According to Wong ("Gideon: A New Moses?" 536), the restricted phrase **פנים אל פנים**, two of whose five occurrences in the Bible refer to Moses (Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10), voices the special divine-Moses relationship.

⁴⁴ See near n. 24 above.

⁴⁵ See Moore, *Judges*, 185, 186; Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 91; Boling, *Judges*, 132.

⁴⁶ See Boling, *Judges*, 132.

Gideon asks: “Where are all His wondrous deeds (נפלאותיו) about which our fathers told us, saying, ‘Truly the Lord brought us up from Egypt (הלא ממצרים העלנו ה’ (Judg 6:13). Although העלה ממצרים⁴⁷ or נפלאות⁴⁸ frequently appear in biblical descriptions of the Exodus, note that both appear in the Moses call narrative: “I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out (להעלות) from that land” (Exod 3:8); “and I have declared: I will take you (אעלה) out of the misery of Egypt (v 17); I will...smite Egypt with various wonders (בכל נפלאותי)” (v 20). I suggest that their appearance in the Gideon story again demonstrates that its author deliberately drew upon the Moses narrative, which he had in front of him. It seems less likely that he simply inserted phrases belonging to the biblical descriptions of the Exodus.

Through these means the author of the Gideon story drew analogies between Gideon’s call, patterned on the model of appointment stories, and that of Moses, the ideal emissary, as portrayed in such verses as Num 12:7; and Deut 18:18, and 34:10.⁴⁹ As shown here, the two narratives share not only the fundamental topical and linguistic similarities inherent in the appointment pattern, but additional topical and linguistic ones as well. The comparison to Saul’s appointment as *nagid* further strengthens my negation of the proposition that the similarities between the Moses and Gideon narratives are simply attributable to their belonging to type-scenes of appointment of investiture. Although the Saul narrative has all the elements of this pattern and can be considered a close exemplar, they are ordered differently and the degree of affinity between the Gideon and Moses narratives—even though each adjusts the elements to its specific needs and context—remains greater than that of either to the Saul narrative. These similarities are summarized in the tables below.

⁴⁷ The combination עלה ממצרים is used to denote the departure from Egypt (Gen 13:1, 46:4; Exod 3:8, 17; 13:18; Judg 11:13, among others), whereas ירד ממצרים refers to going to Egypt (Gen 12:10, 42:3, 46:3, 4, among others). See Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 21 and n. 2 there.

⁴⁸ Biblical prose consistently uses this term for God’s redemption of his people through the Exodus and the conquest (Exod 3:20, 34:10–11; Josh 3:5, among others). See Y. Zakovitch, *The Concept of the Miracle in the Bible* (Broadcast University Series; Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence, 1991), 13–16; and Moore, *Judges*, 184–85. On this term in biblical poetry, see Zakovitch, *Miracle*, 13–16.

⁴⁹ As Greenberg (*Understanding Exodus*, 91, 96) argues.

THE CALL NARRATIVES OF GIDEON AND MOSES

The Call Narratives of Gideon, Moses, and Saul
A. Shared features of appointment and investiture stories

Call Narrative	Confrontation between Appointer and Appointee	Personal Address	Commission	Refusal	Reassurance	Signs
Gideon (Judg 6:11–24)	Angel (vv. 11, 12, 20–22) “The angel of the Lord appeared to him” וּרְאָא אֱלֹהֵי מְלָאךְ ה' (v. 12) God (vv. 14, 16, 23)	“The Lord is with you, valiant warrior” (v. 12)	“Go (לך) in this strength of yours and deliver Israel from the Midianites, I herewith make you my messenger הלא שלחתיך.” (v. 14)	“He said to Him, ‘Please my lord, how can I deliver Israel? Why my clan (אלפי) is the humblest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest (הצעיר) in my father’s household.’” (v. 15)	“The Lord replied, ‘I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian to a man.’” (v. 16) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי ה' כִּי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ	Three signs (vv. 17–21): The meal is transformed into an offering Fire rising from the rock The angel’s disappearance
Moses (Exod 3:1–15)	Angel: “An angel of the Lord appeared to him.” (v. 2) וַיִּרְא מְלָאךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי God (v. 4)	“Moses, Moses” (v. 4)	“Come, therefore, I will send you (לך) (וּאֶשְׁלַחְךָ) to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites from Egypt.” (v. 10)	“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?” (v. 11)	“And He said, ‘I will be with you.’” (v. 12) וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ	“and this is the sign for you that I myself have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will (all) serve God by this mountain.” (v. 12)
Saul (1Sam 9:1–10:16)	Divine revelation to the prophet Samuel (9:15–17)	Saul addresses Samuel (9:18)	“At this time tomorrow, I will send a man . . . and you shall anoint him ruler of My people Israel. He will deliver My people from the hands of the Philistines.” (9:16) “And for whom is all Israel yearning, if not for you and all your ancestral house?” (9:20b) “...and said, “The Lord herewith anoints you ruler over His own people.” (10:1b)	“But I am only a Benjamite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my clan is the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin!” (9:21)	“For God is with you.” (10:7) כִּי אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ	Three signs (10: 2–13) The message of his father’s concern The offering given to Saul by unknown persons The spirit of God grips Saul

B. Additional shared features

Call Narrative	Unexpected revelation	Fear: Encounter with divinity	National distress	Fire
Gideon (Judg 6:11–24)	“His son Gideon was then beating out wheat inside a wine-press.” (v. 11)	“And Gideon said: ‘Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.’ but the Lord said to him, ‘All is well; have no fear, you shall not die.’” (vv. 22–23)	Narrator: “The hand of the Midianites prevailed over Israel.” (vv. 2–6) Gideon: “‘Truly the Lord brought us up from Egypt!’ Now the Lord has abandoned us and delivered us into the hands of Midian!” (v. 13)	“A fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.” (v. 21)
Moses (Exod 3:1–15)	“Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro...drove the flock into the wilderness” (v. 1)	“And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.” (v. 6)	“And the Lord continued, ‘I have marked well the plight of My people in Egypt and have heeded their outcry because of their taskmasters; yes, I am mindful of their sufferings.’” (v. 7) “Now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me; moreover, I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them.” (v. 9)	“An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed.” (v. 2)
Saul (1 Sam 9:1–10:16)	While searching for his father’s asses (9:3–19)	-----	“For I have taken note of My people, their outcry has come to me.” (9:16b)	-----

Assimilation between heroes in similar national or cultural roles is frequent in biblical narrative and motifs are transferred from one character to another, intensifying the initial resemblance between them and between events in different stories.⁵⁰ Here I note that a number of biblical figures are assimilated to the figure of Moses and mention two of the best-known examples: Joshua and Moses, and Elijah and Moses. Thus the strong resemblance between the appearance of “the captain of the Lord’s host” to Joshua (Josh 5:13–15) and the initial divine revelation to Moses at Horeb (Exod 3:1–15) is obvious (see especially, Josh 5:15 // Exod 3:5) as is that between the crossing of the Jordan (Josh 3–4) and the splitting of

⁵⁰ There are many examples of assimilation in the Bible. See Y. Zakovitch, “Assimilation in Biblical Narratives,” J. H. Tigay (ed.), *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 175–96. For a consideration of comparative structure, analogy, and parallels, see M. Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel. A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat Gan: Revivim, 1985), 19, 22–23.

the Red Sea and the Israelite passage on dry land (Exod 14). It serves to establish Joshua's authority as a worthy successor to Moses. In the episode related in 1 Kgs 19, the figure of Elijah at Horeb is assimilated to that of Moses during the revelation at Horeb after the sin of the golden calf (Exod 33:17–23). Here the purpose of this assimilation is criticism of the prophet who, instead of pleading for them, asks for heavenly vengeance against his people.⁵¹

Throughout his literary life in Judges, Gideon is depicted as a complex personality with varied, even opposing characteristics; this duality is a feature of the initial stratum of the cycle and also the additions to the original narrative.⁵² In the first part of the narrative, the outstanding feature of Gideon's behavior is his lack of confidence and hesitation regarding his ability to lead the fight against the Midianites (Judg 6:13, 15) and his doubts concerning divine support for him, which leads him to request signs (6:17–21, 36–40). Another, related aspect is his cowardice: he threshes wheat in a winepress and not in the field because of his fear of the Midianites (6:11); and descends to the Midianite camp with his attendant Purah because he is afraid to go unaccompanied (7:10–11).⁵³

⁵¹ See Y. Zakovitch, "A Still Small Voice: Form and Contents in I Kings 19," *Tarbiz* 51 (1982), 329–46 (in Hebrew). On the similarities between Joshua and Moses, and Elijah and Moses, see E.L. Greenstein, "The Formation of the Biblical Narrative Corpus," *AJSR* 15 (1990), 151–78 (171–72). Greenstein, however, proposes a different basis for these similarities.

⁵² The growth of the Gideon cycle is a debated matter, which I will not discuss here. For a comprehensive survey, see Shalom-Guy, "Gideon Cycle," 52–56, 251–57 (English abstract—9, 16–19).

⁵³ Others have commented on Gideon's hesitation, doubts, and fearfulness as found in different units of the Gideon cycle. See Block, *Judges-Ruth*, 272–73; J. C. Exum, "The Center Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges," *CBQ* 52 (1990), 417–18; O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, 150, 160; and more recently, G. T. K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges. An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup, 111; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 158–60.

This contrasts with Gideon's portrayal in other units of the cycle as the chosen emissary of God and his regime as a period of divine rule.⁵⁴ The author of the cycle created this image by using repeated elements from descriptions of other judge-saviors, in particular the aspects that shape him as a divine choice: direct or mediated (by messenger) divine revelation, signs, or divine inspiration of the hero. The assimilation to Moses enhances Gideon's aspect as God's chosen messenger.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, in the case of the Gideon narrative, the purpose of the assimilation to Moses is not in my opinion to shape Gideon as a "new Moses,"⁵⁶ but rather to create a more positive image of Gideon as a worthy divine choice to lead the Israelite campaign against Midian.

I also briefly note that in portraying the appointment of Gideon as savior the author does not confine himself to assimilation to the figure of Moses alone. For example, Gideon's request for a sign and the corresponding sign has parallels to Abraham's hosting of the divine messengers (Gen 18:1–15). I also noted the similarity between Gideon's fear of having experienced a divine encounter and Jacob's fear at the conclusion of his struggle with the messenger at the ford of Jabbok (Gen 32:31). This indicates that the author of the Gideon story also sought to compare Gideon to Abraham, and to Jacob. Like the comparison to Moses, the purpose of these allusions to these great leaders of the Israelite people was to elevate Gideon's stature in the reader's eyes.

In summation, the similarities between the Gideon and Moses call narratives go beyond those of the shared features of stories of appointment and investiture, which are found here in identical or-

⁵⁴ This latter feature has been overblown in some studies. See, for example, J. Dishon, "Gideon and the Beginnings of Monarchy in Israel," *Tarbiz* 41 (1971–72): 255–68 (in Hebrew).

⁵⁵ This is not the place for further discussion of the complex portrayal of Gideon in the cycle. For a treatment of the multifaceted and multi-layered portrayal of Gideon as reflected in the different strata of the cycle, see Shalom-Guy, "Gideon Cycle"; idem, "Jeroboam's Reform and the Episode of the Golden Calf," *Shnaton* 16 (2006), 15–27 (in Hebrew), which shows how this unit criticizes Gideon and his actions.

⁵⁶ As some scholars claim. See Beyerlin, "Geschichte und heilgeschichtliche Traditionsbildung," 9–10, 24; Block, *Judges-Ruth*, 257.

der. Additional topical similarities, and shared expressions, one unique to these two stories, indicate literary dependence by the author of the Gideon narrative on the Moses story in creating his story. Could there be a more effective way of elevating the Gideon portrayed as a timid, cowardly individual into a worthy leader of the Israelites than by comparing him to Moses, the archetypical leader?