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Some Important Terms from: Geller, 'The Religion of the Bible'

Tanakh – and acronym referring to the Jewish Bible based on:

Torah (Teaching/Instruction; usually referring to the first five books of the Bible)

Nevi'im (The Prophets; divided into Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings; and Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve)

Ketuvim (The Writings)

YHVH/YHWH - the Tetragrammaton (the four letters), the name of the God of Israel, probably pronounced Yahweh. In antiquity replaced with the Hebrew word 'Adonai = Lord.

Monolatry/monolatrous – the worship of a single god without denying the existence of others, also called henotheism.

Monotheism - See Deut. 4:35; the belief in the existence of a single god.

El, Ba'al, & Asherah - three of the most important of the Canaanite gods/goddesses mentioned in the Bible. El becomes a way to refer to Yahweh, the God of Israel. Asherah may have originally been Yahweh's spouse.

hypostatization - To make into or treat as a substance, to hypostatize. On page 2022 Geller uses this term to describe the opinion of some scholars that Asherah may not refer to the goddess, but to Yahweh's power in providing fertility to animals and humans.

theophany/theophanic – See Exodus 19-20; the impressive, fear inducing appearance of God.

palladium – a thing on which the safety of a nation/people is believed to depend, in this case the ark of the covenant of ancient Israel.

akitu festival- the ancient Babylonian New Year's Festival.

Mari- an ancient city-state on the Euphrates river from the 2nd millennium BCE.

divination - any method or technique to acquire information from God or the gods.

Inviolability of Zion = the Zion tradition: Mt. Zion was the site of the Yahweh temple in ancient Jerusalem. It was believed that Yahweh would protect Zion and Jerusalem because of the presence of his temple.

monomyth - An archetypal myth; a theme that underlies a number of superficially different myths.

coterie – a group or collection.

eschatology/eschatological – having to do with the end, the eschaton.

oracle – in biblical studies, this refers to the communication from God received by a prophet and passed on to the king or the people. Oracles are found in the books of the prophets.

apocalyptic – both a worldview, in which the belief is expressed that the day of the Lord will come very soon, and a type of writing which expresses that worldview. In the Christian Bible, parts of the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are apocalyptic.

halakha/halakhic – In Judaism, refers to the commandments of God to be followed in daily life.

suzerain – overlord, ruler.

vassal; vassal treaty – refers to the nation/state ruled by a suzerain/overlord. The vassal treaty is a type of treaty used by the Assyrians which detailed the obligations of the vassal.

necromancy – a type of divination (see above) in which the spirits of the dead are questioned. Necromancy was a widespread practice in ancient Israel.

transcendence – refers to the belief that God is beyond the everyday world.

immanence – refers to the belief that God is present in the everyday world.

theophoric – refers to a part of a name (place name or personal name) which is made up of the divine name. For example, in the name Elijah, jah is a shortened form of the name Yahweh which is found in many names. In the name Israel, el is a name which refers to God.



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