

## 古代イスラエルにおける子牛崇拜

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**ABSTRACT** D. T. TSUMURA, “Calf-worship in Ancient Israel” The eighth century prophet Hosea declares that the northern Israel “incurred guilt through Baal and died” (Hos. 13:1), for they made for themselves “metal images, idols [of calves] skillfully made of their silver” (v. 2). The Baal cult was introduced officially by Ahab and his Phoenician wife Jezebel (1Ki. 16-18) a century before Hosea and was influential among the majority of the people, especially in the northern kingdom.

Calf-worship was originally introduced in the northern Israel by king Jeroboam so that the people need not to go to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh (1Ki. 12:28-29). However, its roots go back to the golden calf Aaron made to symbolize the God of Israel “who brought [them] up out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 32:4). Though neither Aaron nor Jeroboam intended to introduce a pagan god to the covenant people of Yahweh, these practices encouraged the people to yield to the Baal cult via calf-worship.

The fact that Yahweh was worshipped at various local shrines or temples, beside Bethel and Dan (1Ki. 12:29), is suggested by the phrases “Yahweh of Samaria” and “Yahweh of Teman” which appear in the ninth century inscriptions found at Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom. This is virtually the same as the phenomenon of the local manifestation of Baal at various holy places in ancient Canaan. Thus, the Yahweh cult and the Baal cult became identified with each other via calf-worship in ancient Israel. The breach of the second commandment blinded the covenant people spiritually and led them astray from the worship of the true God Yahweh.

Several observations can be made with regard to the development of calf-worship and the Baal cult in ancient Israel:

1) Yahweh worship had been practiced since before or during the

Patriarchal era in the MB age, but there is no trace of the Baal cult in the book of Genesis (see Gen. 4:26, Ex. 3:13-14, 6:2-3). Its influence among the Israelites became prominent only after their settlement in Canaan. On the other hand the name of Moses' mother *Jochebed* (Ex. 6:20, Num. 26:59) shows that the divine name Yahweh had been known among Moses' ancestors.

2) In order to visualize Yahweh, Aaron made a golden calf (see Ex. 32:4) modeling it after the Canaanite Baal cult of the LB age, like the calf reflected in the Ugarit mythology. Note that the senior deity El was symbolized by a bull. Aaron presumably knew of the Canaanite deities while he was still in Lower Egypt (the Delta).

3) The local manifestation of Baal in such places as Ugarit, Aleppo, etc. seems to have influenced the practice of the local manifestation of Yahweh, first in Bethel and Dan during the tenth century, then in Samaria and in Teman during the ninth century. The "calf of Samaria" (Hos. 8:6) during the eighth century refers to such a localized Yahweh modeled after the Baal cult.