Mythic Time and the Festival Cycle

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The conception of time in rabbinic Judaism is typically characterized as historical and non-mythical. This conception the rabbis inherited from their Israelite ancestors. Ancient Israel adopted an historical perspective, conceived of time in a linear, not cyclical fashion, and believed that God acted in history. As a result, biblical Israel historicized the festivals and made them commemorations of historical events, not re-enactments of the cosmogony or the urzeit. Rabbinic Judaism brought this process to its logical conclusion by historicizing the remaining festivals, developing eschatology and thoroughly demythologizing time. So runs the standard description, which is based to a large extent on the oversimplistic distinction between "myth" and "history". Here I wish to consider whether there is another view in rabbinic Judaism. Despite the importance attributed to history, do rabbinic sources manifest a mythic view of time?

Before answering this question it is necessary to define precisely the idea of "mythic time". But this is no easy task. The diversity of definitions current in the literature renders "myth" in general, and "mythic time" in particular, vague and wide-ranging categories.¹ There looms the danger of circularity or tautology, namely, to propose a definition of mythic time and then show that rabbinic...
ideas conform to that definition. While methodologically sound, such an approach invites the criticism: but is that what we really mean by mythic time? – and thus begs the question it seeks to answer. Northrop Frye, for example, defines myth as “a story in which some of the chief characters are gods”, which renders either a good chunk of rabbinc literature mythic or none of it, depending on whether God is included in “the gods” or not. Of course all analyses of this sort involve a degree of circularity in that definitions and models do not arise in a vacuum but ultimately derive from the data to which they are subsequently applied. In this case, however, the lack of consensus about the concept “myth” makes the problem particularly acute.

Nevertheless, one must jump on the circle at one point or another, at least until a theory of myth gains sufficient acceptance so as to provide a common point of entry. Our purposes here will be best served by evaluating rabbinc sources in light of well-known and widely accepted treatments of mythic time. We shall take as points of departure the theories of Mircea Eliade, on the one hand, and Sigmund Mowinckel and the Scandinavian school of Bible study, on the other. In this way we can determine

whether the rabbinc view of time is mythic according to standard models. If the rabbinc conception falls short of these notions of mythic time, we still gain a better understanding of its nature. These two approaches represent not the last word on myth, but two points on the muddled plane of scholarship, two foci, which will help locate the rabbinc conception and chart its contours.

For Eliade, sacred or mythic time always relates to the time of origins. In illo tempore, the gods were active, the earth came into being and the foundations of cosmic order were established. On festivals religious man returns to the beginning and enters this primordial time, which is equivalent to true, real and meaningful existence. This experience is active; it requires religious man to re-enact the cosmogony. For in the cyclical view of time, the victory of creation over chaos in the urzeit was not final, but temporary. Each year the forces of chaos threaten anew. They must be defeated again in order for the world to continue. Religious man participates in the defeat; he performs the rituals which stave off the forces of chaos, repeats the sacred acts of the ancestors, re-enacts the cosmogony and thereby secures the continuation of right order. Mythic time is therefore cyclical and recoverable, and relates to the cosmogony. Human beings recover that time through ritual and drama.

Judaism and Christianity do not quite fit this model because both view time in a linear or historical fashion. Creation happened once and for all. It cannot and need not be repeated. The festivals

still enjoy some currency today, and comprise the most developed analyses of mythic time.

Myth and Reality, 5–6; The Sacred and the Profane, 95–99. Cf. Kees Bolle, “Myth”, Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. M. Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 10: 261–62: “A myth is the expression of words or events from the origin of the world that remain valid for the basis and purpose of all there is... A myth, whether its subject is the acts of deities or other extraordinary events, always takes us back to ‘beginnings of all things’; hence the cosmogony, the birth of the world, is a principal theme.” Note again the emphasis on the time of origins.


T. Gaster, Themes (New York, 1961) details at length types of seasonal rituals and how they enact the content of myths.
commemorate historical events – the exodus from Egypt, the revelation of the Torah, the birth of Jesus – they do not recover or re-enact the mythic time of the *urzeit*. Note here the familiar antithesis of myth and history. Regarding Christianity, however, Eliade insists that a mythic view of time remains. The Christian liturgical year relives the drama of Jesus’s life: the Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension. While these events occurred in history, they are annually repeated in the liturgy and the Eucharist. It is participation in, and experience of, this drama that provides salvation, hence Eliade admits we have “genuine mythical thought”. So the recovery of a sacred historical time – in this case the life of Jesus – and not the cosmogony can be mythic provided the drama is re-enacted or re-experienced each and every year. Yet Eliade does not completely forgo a connection to the cosmogony. He suggests that Christianity posits the *illud tempus* or the *urzeit* as the period of Jesus’s life, not that of creation: “But we should add that, for the Christian, time begins anew with the birth of Christ, for the Incarnation establishes a new situation of man in the cosmos.”

In biblical religion and rabbinic Judaism history is the sole locus of sacred time, which is marked by revelations or theophanies. God acts in history, not only in the *urzeit*. History therefore has meanings. So unlike primitive man, Jews need not return to the cosmogony in order to overcome the meaninglessness of historical time. But divine interventions in history occur at certain points; they do not recur at regular intervals. Theophanies and revelations are not recoverable and historical time not reversible. Jewish festivals, therefore, entail no re-enactment of the cosmogony, no re-experience of primordial time and no rituals that combat chaos and re-establish order. They simply commemorate the divine acts of the past. At best they establish connection with the divine and a sense of sacrality, but not mythic re-enactment and recovery. Commemoration of historical events involves religious experience, but that experience is not mythic. Vestiges of mythic time remain only in eschatology and messianism. For even in Judaism’s linear perspective, the *illud tempus* returns at the eschaton when the world reverts to the pristine state God created at the beginning of time. “History is thus abolished, not through consciousness of living an eternal present (coincidence with the atemporal instant of the revelation of archetypes), nor by means of a periodically repeated ritual (for example, the rites for the beginning of the year) – it is abolished in the future.”

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8 **Myth and Reality**, 168-171; The Sacred and the Profane, 111.
9 _The Sacred and the Profane_ , 111. See too Barbara Spirul, “Sacred Time”, Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. M. Eliade, 12: 539: “Christians structure all history around what they perceive to be a manifestation of the eternal in the temporal... Not only do Christian thinkers find eternity manifest in history, but like the Jews they also proclaim it evinced in the moment. The Gospel of John records the paradoxical message that eternal, absolute reality is always present, here and now in the timely. Portrayed in that gospel as the beginning, end, and center of time, Christ announces ‘I am’ (John 13: 19)... The point is emphatically made here that absolute reality is eternal and therefore always present, and for those of the faithful who identify with the timeless existing reality within their temporal selves, merely timely significance is transcended and eternal meaning is realized”. What Spruit means by “absolute reality” is close to “myth”. The “absolute reality” is identified with Jesus, who lived at a point in history. But this “reality” (or “myth”) transcends historical time and is always recoverable—clearly a mythic mode of thought.

10 Eliade wavers on the extent to which history provides “meaning”. See _Myth and Reality_ , 49.
11 _Cosmos and History_ , 111.
12 ibid, 111 112. See Robert A. Segal, “Eliade’s Theory of Millenarianism”, Religious Studies 14 (1978), 159 173. See too Childs, _Myth and Reality_ , 30-71 and Frank Cross, _Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic_ (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 89-90 who tend to emphasize the tension between history and myth in biblical thought. This tension, however, has been questioned by several scholars. Jon Levenson, _Sinai and Zion_ (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 153 points to passages such as Ps 65: 8 as evidence of a “unity of vision” and lack of tension between the two modes of thought. M. Fishbane, _Text and Texture_ (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 136-140 discusses the “inner biblical dialectic between the mythicization of history and the historicization of myth”. See too J. Hempel, “Glaube, Mythen und Geschichte im Alten Testament”, _ZAW_ 65 (1953), 109 ff. and Cross, 91 111. In a more theoretical treatment, Paul Ricœur, “Myth and History”, Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. M. Eliade, 10: 276-77 points out that the relationship between myth and history and between linear and cyclical time is extremely complex. Neither pair comprise binary opposites. Ricœur suggests the question cannot be discussed apart from consideration of literary genre, narrative forms, related modes of thinking including the “historical mode of understanding of a community”, and historiography. The complexity of narrative as a genre makes the contrast between history and myth in ancient Israel problematic. See too
Mowinckel and the Scandinavian school share much with Eliade, although they have a more sanguine view of myth in biblical Israel if not in rabbinic Judaism. Mowinckel stressed that myth has its origin and sitz im leben in cultic festivals, especially the great New Year or Enthronement festival. The festivals that became Rosh Hashana (= RH), Yom Kippur (=YK) and Sukkot, or the rites and concepts that later coalesced as these discrete festivals, were originally stages in a protracted drama celebrated over the course of the annual festival. During the festival Israel's myths were acted out in cultic drama and thereby actualized and experienced. Mowinckel reconstructed the structure of the main drama from fragments of biblical myth and comparisons with the Babylonian akkūtu festival. Through ritual and symbol the cult rehearsed Yahweh's victory over chaos, primordial monsters and assorted enemies, his enthronement and coronation as King, and his judgment of the world and its creatures. His victory brought renewed fertility to the earth and reinvigoration of nature, ensuring the world would continue for another year. This was basically a recapitulation of cosmogony, and the myths primarily cosmogonic, such as the "Creation Myth", the "Fight with the Dragon Myth", the "Myth about the fight of Nations", the "Myth about the fight of gods", the "Judgment Myth", and the "Myth of Dooms". Like Eliade, time was cyclical, the cosmogony had to be re-actualized on an annual basis, and the re-actualization took place through the cult drama. In this way mythic time was experienced in the annual festivals of the cult.

Mowinckel, however, did not limit the festival to cosmogonic myths and insisted that the cult also acted out the "exodus-myth", "the myth of the election of Israel", and "the myth about the making of the covenant". Events of historical significance were also expressed in the mythic cult-drama, and thus Mowinckel avoided Eliade's tendency to connect every myth to the cosmogony. History, for Mowinckel, was not the antithesis of myth, but was integrated into the cult. While such events took place at a certain point in history, they were re-enacted and repeated, and thereby experienced, on the festival. Thus the celebration of history and an historical view of time were not the great dangers to myth as they were for Eliade. But there was a greater danger for Mowinckel: the demise of the cult. Mythic expression and the recovery of mythic time required a functioning cult. Myths could appear in many forms – epic re-telling, poetic imagery, liturgy and hymns – but they were expressed in the ritual and drama of the cult.

15 Psalms, 1: 19: "The nucleus of Israel's festal myth was the remembrance of that historic reality: the Exodus, the election, the covenant, the immigration." See too 1: 108, 154–57.
16 Cf. Psalms, 1: 139–142. Mowinckel, in fact, finds the distinctive character of Israelite mythology over against that of the ancient Near East in the concept that Yahweh works and reveals himself in living history... in Yahweh the cult has been made into history, and history has been drawn into the cult.
17 Regerson, Myth, 130 criticizes Eliade on this point. See too the references in n. 12 on the overlap of historical and mythical modes of thinking in the Bible.
18 Thus in Psalms, 1: 152–53 Mowinckel explains that the "Myth about the fight of nations" is a "mutation" of the chaos myth "where the fundamental historical point of view of Israelite religion breaks in and depicts the distress in new guise". The mode of thinking was equally mythic, for the myth was enacted in the cult drama on the festival. Cf. p.175: "the whole thing has the character of a cultic and historical drama".
19 Psalms, 1: 166. Cf. Orten et al., Myths in the Old Testament, 11: "It is also characteristic of myth that it is, in one way or another, bound to the cult. This perception has been strongly emphasized in the research of recent decades. Widgren goes so far as to say that the moment myth is separated from the cult it ceases to be myth and becomes instead either saga or legend: 'myth describes the cultic ritual, and the cultic ritual lends impulsive force to the myth'. Mowinckel puts it just as strongly: 'A real myth is linked with the cult, has emerged from it, and expresses the fundamental events which happen and have happened, the salvific action which is 'recalled' in the cultic experience'". The citations are from G. Widgren, Religionsphilosophie (Berlin, 1969). 150 and S. Mowinckel, Religion og kultus (Oslo, 1930), 79. See too Childs, Myth and Reality, 19 and the literature cited in n. 2. It should be emphasized that this view relates to the general trend that considers myth to be inherently connected to ritual, as found in Robertson-Smith, Frazer, Gaster, the "Myth and Ritual
cult ceased to function? The mythic structure was projected to the future and became eschatological. The saving acts of YHWH, both cosmogonic and historical, were no longer actualized in the cult-drama, no longer experienced in the present, and consequently were transformed into hope for the future. The Judaism of the second temple period, and certainly rabbinic Judaism, had no functioning cult, hence no living myth. In place of the experience of mythic time the festivals were now occasions to hope and pray for eschatological deliverance.

We have, then, two poles. For Eliade, Jewish sacred time is historical, commemorating the acts of God in the past. For Mowinckel, it is eschatological, looking forward to the acts of God in the future. For neither is it cyclical or mythic.

Certainly both Eliade and Mowinckel are correct in part. Passover commemorates the exodus, Sukkot the desert sojourn, Shavuot the revelation of the Torah at Sinai. Even RH and YK are historicized in rabbinic thought: RH is the anniversary of the creation of the world or of Adam, and YK commemorates Moses descending from the mountain with the second set of tablets and the forgiveness for the sin of the molten calf. All of these festivals have a marked eschatological dimension. At the same time, some rabbinic sources portray the festivals in dramatic, recurring and, I would argue, mythic terms. This view can be seen in a series of midrashim concerning RH, YK and Sukkot that depict the three festivals as stages of a larger drama and as the recovery of a sacred time.

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20 Psalms, 1: 189-192.
21 Mowinckel believed that the cult essentially ceased functioning with the demise of the kingship and the basic monarchical structures. Moreover, Mowinckel shared Wellhausen's Christian-romantic bias against the Priestly Code. He claimed that under its influence the second temple cult was corrupted to the point where it was really not a cult at all. It had degenerated into slavish obedience to the commandments of God, rather than the living, cult drama of first temple times. See PsSt, 35-38.
22 Psalms, 1: 131: "In Israel all these ancient rites were gradually reinterpreted as symbolical expressions of the prayer to Yahweh to come and create life and fertility and peace and salvation 'light' ". So 1: 146-147: "In the Mishna we are told that on new year's day Yahweh 'judges', i.e. determines what is to happen in the coming year, both in nature and in the history of nations and the lives of individuals. In other words he lays down fate. This idea has older roots in the old enthronement festival... Like most other ideas from the enthronement festival this expression has been taken up by eschatology, but in itself it is neutral and originally had nothing to do with the eschatological 'change'." Cf. 1: 189-192; PsSt, 317-323.

24 bRH 11b, (according to R. Elisher), as well as the day on which the Patriarchs were born and died, Joseph was freed from prison etc., Leshanah Rabbah (henceforth, LrR), ed. M. Margoliot (Jerusalem, 1953 [60]), §29: 1 (668); Deuteronomy Rabbah, ed. S. Lieberman, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Shalem Books, 1992), p. 11 and Pesiqta Rabbati, ed. Meir Ish-Shalom (Tel Aviv, 1980), 166b set the creation on the twenty-fifth of Tishrei, making RH the anniversary of the sixth day of creation, on which Adam was created, sinless and judged. Cf. Tosafot, bRH 27b, s.v. heman natilin and below.
25 See Seder Olam Rabbah §6. According to PRE §29 YK was the date of Abraham's circumcision.
26 Let me stress that the question is not whether Jewish sacred time has a cyclical aspect. Obviously it does, as does all liturgical time. Certainly the festivals are celebrated each year and provide a recurring experience. But cyclical time is not necessarily mythic time. While the Jewish festivals commemorate historical events on an annual basis, they do not necessarily re-enact the cosmogony and return to the time of origins. When Eliade and Mowinckel use the term "cyclical", they mean that the same events occur time and again, not that the commemorations of these events take place time and again. On various types of "cyclical time", see James Barr, Biblical Words for Time" (London, 1969), 143-149. Barr notes, "In general it might be wise to abandon the phrase 'cyclical view of time' and in all cases specify such different possibilities as the following: (a) the circular movement of earthly existence, coming to be and passing away, (b) the circular movement of the heavenly bodies which measure or govern time, (c) the application of time of circularity as the example of uniform motion, (d) the idea of a cycle of cosmic process occurring only once but ending up where it began, (e) the idea of a cycle of cosmic process repeating itself indefinitely, (f) the idea of a temporal cycle in which all historical events recur as before. These are certainly not all the same". Jewish sacred time is cyclical in terms of (b), but Eliade and Mowinckel mean something closer to (e).
It should be noted that the dominant rabbinic conceptions of RH and YK are less historical than cosmic. Thus Mishnah Ros Hashana 1:2, "On RH all pass before him as sheep" points to an annual cosmic process of judgment, not an historical commemoration or eschatological age. Conceptions of the relationship between RH and YK appear already in tannaitic sources. In the Tosefta we find:

[A] Everything is judged on Rosh Hashana, and its sentence sealed on Yom Kippur. These are the words of R. Meir. On Passover, on grain. On Shavuot, on the fruit of the tree. On Sukkot, on water. And the sentence of human beings is sealed on Yom Kippur. R. Meir conceives of RH and YK as the two endpoints of the period of divine judgment. For R. Yehuda the judgment takes place on RH and human beings are sentenced on YK, while natural phenomena are sentenced in their appropriate time. This extended process and the idea of a connection between RH and YK generated the idea of the ten days of repentance, which gave the middle of the period an identity of its own. Note that the judgment of the natural world is in and of itself a mythic idea. What does it mean for the earth to be judged as to grain and water? The commentators are tormented by the fact that the amount of food and rain depends on the behavior of human beings and their sentence, and should not be determined autonomously.

B. Yehuda says: Everything is judged on Rosh Hashana, and its sentence is sealed in its time.

All the trees of the forest shout for joy. Ps 96:12. And it says, "Trees of the forest are overcome with joy" (1 Chr 16:33). The field rejoices (Ps 96:12). This refers to the world, as it says, "And it is happened when they were in the field" (Gen 4:8). And all that is in it (Ps 96:12). This refers to its creatures, as it says, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it" (Ps 24:1).


The Pisqa interprets the rejoicing of the fields and their contents of Ps 96:12 as the exultation of the entire world and all living creatures, as the general exuberance of all nature. The second half of the verse, "all the trees of the forest" is juxtaposed with the parallel verse from Chronicles which lacks the word "all." The homilist interprets the verses to refer to different types of trees: Ps 96:12 pertains to trees that do not bear fruit (all the trees, even those that produce no fruit); 1 Chr 16:33 relates to trees that bear fruit. The homilist alludes to the lulav, which consists of a palm and the etrog (trees which bear fruit) and willows and myrtles (which do not bear fruit). The source of this image is a baraita, bMen 27a:

The four species of the lulav: two of them produce fruit, and two of them do not produce fruit. The ones that produce fruit require those that do not produce fruit.
fruit, and the ones that do not produce fruit require those that produce fruit. Thus one does not fulfill his obligation until they are all in one band.\textsuperscript{34}

Thus the first half of the verse describes the rejoicing of the fields and the earth’s creatures, and the second half proclaims the rejoicing of Israel with the lulav. The lulav thus exemplifies the rejoicing of nature and incorporates Israel in the rejoicing of all creation.

The homilist then interprets the following verse, Ps 96: 13, as the advent of God on RH and YK. Nature exults and Israel rejoices with the lulav when God comes to “judge” or “rule” the earth. At first reading the rejoicing seems to be an acclamation or salutation at God’s approach—“before the Lord, for he comes.” But since Sukkot follows YK we should understand the rejoicing as a response to God’s arrival and translate: “Why? For he came on RH and YK”, reading ba’ as a perfect, not a participle. In the parallel in Tanhuma 'Emor 18 indeed we find: “For He came. He came to judge the world on YK.” The rejoicing on Sukkot, the waving of the four species, is a response to the advent of God and divine judgment that took place on RH and YK.

The midrash may reflect the familiar mythic structure which biblical scholars reconstruct as the basis of the ancient enthronement festival. Each year the forces of chaos threaten and the world-order is in danger of disintegrating (these stages are not explicit in the midrash). God approaches, defeats the enemies (this is also not explicit) and sits in judgment. He recreates or re-invigorates the natural world, ensuring its continuity. Then the world and human beings rejoice.\textsuperscript{35} Indeed, Mowinckel claimed that the very Psalms that provide the verses of this midrash served as the liturgy of the enthronement ritual.\textsuperscript{36} If this is reading in too much, at least we have an annual cosmic drama of the re-establishment of God’s sovereignty. While the perspective is not explicitly cosmogonic, I think that this motif is implicit. Nature and the creatures of the earth rejoice at the judgment, the re-establishment and re-ordering of natural forces, essentially a renewal or re-creation of the cosmos. Essentially the myth that is rehearsed is the cosmogony of Gen 1, of “creation without opposition”.\textsuperscript{37} God orders the world, creates living creatures, and repeatedly judges that “it was good”. Here God has rendered a similar judgment, in response to which the world rejoices.

Note that the midrash does not reflect a commemoration of the original creation—“a memorial to the first day” (zikaron leyom rishon)—as found in the liturgy. This is not a description of RH or YK of Year One, of the creation, but of God approaching on each RH and YK. Similarly, the rejoicing marked by Sukkot is not linked to the harvest or the pilgrimage, nor to the desert sojourn in booths, but to the celebration of the kingship of God actualized during the previous festivals. There is absolutely no historical element; it is a thoroughly cosmic process.

How does this conception of the festivals square with the definitions of myth and mythic time proposed by Eliade and Mowinckel? First, the perspective is cosmic and cyclical, not commemorative; the events recur each year. The historical perspective that Eliade and others claim spells doom for myth is lacking. Second, there is a larger drama at work, a substantive relationship between the festivals. That drama, or at least part of it, namely the jubilation at God’s judgment, is enacted ritually with the lulav. Finally, there are clear cosmogonic themes, if not explicit re-enactment of the cosmogony.

A related conception of these three festivals appears in Leviticus Rabbah 30: 2.

\textsuperscript{34} The baraita does not appear in the extant tannaitic midrashim, nor in the PT, but was apparently well known to the homilist. He does not mention the lulav explicitly, assuming the allusion to “trees that produce fruit” will be understood. Note that the next verse in Chronicles (1 Chr 16: 34) is identical to Ps 118: 1, the precise point in the Hallel at which the lulav is waved. This provides an additional hint that the “trees” allude to the lulav species. Cf. the interpretation of R. Asher, §26 in his notes to bSuk chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{35} It is interesting that Mowinckel identified Ps 96 as one of the enthronement Psalms. He interpreted the psalm as a description of YHWH’s advent, the restoration of right order, and the concomitant rejuvenation of nature. Mowinckel would have been pleased with the compiler of this Tanhuma. On this midrash see too J. Stern, “Reference Modes in the Rituals of Judaism”,

\textsuperscript{36} Psalms, 1: 108.

\textsuperscript{37} I have borrowed this term from Jon D. Levenson, Creation and the Persistence of Evil (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 122. See too 54, 127.
Delights in your right hand are victory (Ps 16:11). R. Avin said, this is the lulav, like the one who is victorious and takes the palm (bâit). A parable: Like two who appear before a judge, and we do not know which one is the victor. When one carries off the palm (bâit), then we know that he is the victor. So, too, when Israel and the nations of the world appear before the Holy One on Rosh Hashana, bringing charges against each other, we do not know which ones are victors. But when Israel departs from the presence of the Holy One with their lulavs and their etrogos in their hands, we know that Israel are the victors.39

R. Avin pictures Israel and the nations arguing in court before God the judge on Rosh Hashana. He does not specify the point at which God pronounces the verdict, but it is presumably YK. On Sukkot Israel departs victoriously, celebrating with great joy. R. Avin compares the lulav to the bâit, the later Greek term for the palm,40 and likens the ritual waving of the lulav to a victory parade. In Hellenistic and Roman times palms were routinely given to victorious athletes,41 so the palm became the outstanding symbol of victory in classical culture42 and in Jewish-Hellenistic literature.43

38 PRK and some manuscripts of LeR read “the heavenly counterparts (tâ’ass) of the nations.” See below.
39 LeR 30:2 (694). The parallel at PRK 27:2 (404-407) presents R. Avin’s statement following the question of why both simha and hagiga offerings are necessary. But since the answer – R. Avin’s parable – relates to the lulav, the response does not address the question. See the classical commentaries and Margoliot’s notes.
40 The classical Greek term for palm is phōneîx. Later sources use bâit or bâion from a root borrowed from Egyptian. See Pavly-Wissing 20.1, p. 386, s.v. phōneîx.
41 Pausanias, Periegr. VII 48, 2 notes, “At most games, however, [the victor] is given a crown of palm, and at all a palm is placed in the right hand of the victor” (LCL, trans. W.H.S. Jones [Cambridge, 1935], 4:137). Suetonius, Caligula, 32, 2 relates that Caligula, after killing a gladiator (who intentionally fell), “ran about with a palm branch as victors do” (LCL, trans. J.C. Rolfe [London, 1914]).
42 Plutarch, Quaest. Conv. VIII 4, 723 B, relates a discussion in which his companions consider the question: “Why, at the various athletic festivals different kinds of wreaths are awarded, but the palm-frond at all of them?” “Palm”, in fact, became synonymous with victory in later classical literature. See too Cicero, Rusc. 6.17; Vergil, Aeneid, 5:339; Apuleius, Metamorphoses 2, 4. During their triumphal processions the triumphators wore a tunic adorned with palm leaves, the tunica paltama. See Livy, Ab Urbe Condita XXX 15.12 and X 7, 9.43

The same mythic structure of the previous midrash appears, although it has been translated into national categories. This is not a judgment of the natural world on a cosmic plane, but of good and evil nations. Of course this too is an ancient idea and appears in Ps 2, 46-48 and 76-77: the enemies are the nations that rebel against the Israeliite king, the vassal of God, or against God himself; they are defeated and subjected to judgment and punishment.44 The battle has been reduced to a juridical struggle, a war of words, evidence and testimony, which perhaps reflects the reality of Byzantine Palestine when the Jews did not have an army and would not fight on the battlefield. Still, the palm branch, the bâit, which was held by the emperor or general celebrating a military triumph, evokes martial themes. Note that the nations no longer fight against God, as in some biblical passages, but against Israel, God’s people. In the rabbincic conception God is too powerful for mere mortals to combat in any type of rebellion.45 Again Sukkot is the final act of the drama and a response to the events that take place in the initial scenes on RH and YK. It is hard to think of a more expressive “dramatic representation of myth” (to cite Mowinckel) than waving the lulav as a sign of victory.

To offer an eschatological interpretation of the midrash is tempting. The heavenly trial points to the eschaton when the judgment will be reality, Israel will be rewarded and the nations punished. This may be true – eschatology and myth, as we have seen, are certainly related. But the midrash speaks of an annual

apparently on account of the palm branches, makes the explicit comparison to Sukkot.
45 The parallels to Ps 47, which Tractate Soferin 18: 11 designates as the Psalm for RH, and which Mowinckel (Psalmus, 1: 121) considered to be the Psalm sung during the actual enthronement ritual are striking: (2) All you peoples, clap your hands, raise a joyous shout for God. For the Lord Most High is awesome, great king over all the earth; (3) He subjects peoples to us, sets nations at our feet... (9) God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. (10) The great of the peoples are gathered together, the retinue of Abraham’s God; for the guardians of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted”. In this case the nations have been relegated to accepting God’s sovereignty. They cannot rebel or fight, but must acclaim God and accept his judgment.

43 In 1 Mac 13: 51, Simon celebrated the purification of the Akra with “praise and palm branches and harps and symbols and violins and hymns, and with songs”. Similar celebrations are described in 2 Mac 10: 7, which,
trial. Each RH Israel and the nations stand in judgment, and each Sukkot Israel wins. The midrash describes what takes place each year. The point of view is mythic and cyclical, not eschatological and linear.

The midrash reflects cyclical time and an annual drama. There is no connection to cosmogony, so this conception might fail Eliade’s definition of myth. On the other hand, Mowinckel’s view of Israelite myth included the election of Israel and other historical events. In this view we would define the paradigmatic triumph over the nations as myth.

A variation on this understanding of the three festivals finds expression in PRK 27: 7 (412–13). The Pisqah compares Israel to a city which owed taxes to a king.

On the first day (Lev 23: 40). [Sukkot falls] on the fifteenth day [of the month], yet you say on the first day! R. Mani of Sheav and R. Yehoshua of Sikhin in the name of R. Levi: A parable: it is like a province that owed arrears to the king, and the king went to collect them. [When he came within] ten miles the notables of the province went forth and praised him, so he remitted one third of their taxes. Within five miles the councillors went forth and praised him, so he remitted one third of the taxes. When he entered the city all its inhabitants went forth and praised him. The king said, let bygones be bygones. From now on we begin the account anew.

So too Israel comes on RH and repents and the Holy One forgives one third of their sins. During the ten days of repentance the pious ones fast and the Holy One forgives most of their sins. When he comes on YK all Israel fast and the Holy One forgives all their sins… Between YK and Sukkot all Israel are busy with the commandments: this one is busy with his sukkah, and that one is busy with his lulav. On the first day of the Festival they take their lulavs and etrogs in their hands and praise God, and God says, ‘I already forgave you for the past, from now on reckon your sins’. Therefore it says, [And you shall take]

on the first day (Lev 23: 40). What is the first day? The first day of the Festival is the first day of the reckoning of sins.

The textual irritant for the homily is the problematic phrase of Lev 23: 40, “you shall take on the first day”, since Sukkot falls on the fifteenth day of the month. The homily explains the phrase as the first day of a new account of sins, an interpretation that already connects Sukkot to RH and YK through the themes of sin and forgiveness.

The midrash expresses a keen sense of drama through the use of a parable which draws on a noted institution (and favorite literary motif) of the Greco-Roman culture of late antiquity: the imperial adventus, the emperor’s approach and entrance into a city escorted by his royal retinue. In this case the king approaches with the specific purpose of collecting the taxes owed him. The province’s fealty has been called into question by its failure to pay, so the king advances to reassert his authority, presumably prepared to use force if necessary. In view of this possibility, delegations of townsmen greet the king far before his arrival and shower him with praise. The king reciprocates for the show of homage by forgiving a portion of the taxes owed. When the entire city applauds the king at his entrance he is both persuaded that the failure to pay taxes in the past was not a willful rejection of his authority and simultaneously moved by the unanimous praise to remit the very taxes that had served as the reason for his approach. The final scene leaves the king and his subjects together within the city, a beautiful illustration of the now restored relationship between the two.

The spatial-political dimensions through which the action unfolds in the parable are decoded on a temporal-mythical plane in the application. The advent of the king is the “adventus” of God on RH and YK, and he comes not to collect taxes but to require sins of

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47 Some versions have “the leaders of the generation fast on the eve of RH” in place of “Israel comes on RH and repents”. See the variants in Mandelbaum, 412, 1. 10–11. On the versions and their relationship to popular customs, see D. Sperber, Minhagai yisrael (2 vols; Jerusalem: Rav Kook, 1989–91), 2: 217–18 and n. 45.

48 A tradition attributed to R. Aha appears here in certain manuscripts. See n. 51.

the past year. Israel’s failure to fulfill the commandments has called into question their fidelity to God, so he approaches to reassert his authority and “collect” what is due. Rituals of repentance on RH, the ten days of repentance and YK move God to forgive one third of their sins.\(^5\) After YK, by occupying themselves with the commandments of the upcoming festival, Israel again demonstrates obedience. The climax occurs on Sukkot. A favorable judgment has been rendered, the sins of the past expunged, the relationship restored and so the people take their lulavs and praise God. At this point God “lets bygones be bygones” and begins a new reckoning.\(^5\)

Once again the festivals mark stages of a larger drama, although the nature of the drama differs from that of the previous traditions. The judgment is not of forces of chaos on the cosmic plane, not of the enemies of Israel, but of Israel alone. The issue is the internal struggle of good and evil, of sin and virtue within the community, of fidelity to the covenant. And if the narrative is not cosmogonic, the rituals point to the familiar structure of seasonal and New Year festivals described by Eliade, Mowinckel and others.\(^5\) The periods of repentance and fasting on RH and YK purge evil from the community, and the lulav, which praises God, celebrates the eradication of sin. The emphasis is on commandments and obedience, sin and forgiveness, not cultic purification rites that work e.\(\text{o}\) opera operato. However, this contrast should not be overstated, because moral and religious offenses, not simply impurity and cultic taboos, typically pose the same danger to cosmic order.\(^5\) The sins of the past year have introduced evil and chaos into the world, and, if not for atonement and forgiveness, punishment must follow. While the nature of the punishment is not fleshed out in either the parable or its application, it certainly includes destruction of the Jewish people (analogous to the king potentially destroying the city), and perhaps the entire world. In this way the judgment entails cosmic consequences, albeit indirectly. Only if the Jewish people are judged favorably by God will the people and the world continue to exist. In any case, the festivals are not historical commemorations of events of the past but stages of an annual drama. Each year God sits in judgment and decides the fate of the nation. Rituals of atonement propitiate God and produce a favorable judgment. Finally the sins are forgiven, a relationship restored and a new beginning to the cycle takes place.\(^5\)

PRK 29: 1 (333-34) relates the judgment more directly to the urzei.\(^5\) After noting that the world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul and that Adam was created on Rosh Hashana, the homilist narrates Adam’s sin and judgment, which took place within a few hours of his creation. The homilist concludes: “God said to him [Adam]. This is a sign for your descendants. Just as you came before me for judgment on this day and departed with a pardon, so in the future your descendants will come before me in judgment on this day and depart with a pardon.” The sin, judgment and forgiveness of Adam in illo tempore are paradigmatic of the sin, judgment, and forgiveness that human beings experience annually on RH or over the course of RH, YK and Sukkot. Note the parallels to the previous

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\(^{50}\) Note that the nismah does not cohere precisely with each point of the parable, not an uncommon phenomenon, although some variants attempt to forge a better fit. Two delegations approach the king in the parable but there are three occasions for atonement before Sukkot. The leading citizens preface the whole town in the parable but all Israel atones on RH. Thus some variants begin the nismah with the “leaders of the generation” on the eve of RH. And see n. 47.

\(^{51}\) This point is underscored in a tradition of R. Aha which appears near the end of the homily. R. Aha suggests God puts forgiveness “in trust” in order that Israel remain uncertain as to their fate. God actually forgives on RH and YK, but intentionally delays his response in order to fill Israel with awe and motivate them assiduously to attend to their sukkoth and lulavs. On Sukkot Israel demonstrates that their repentance on RH and YK was sincere, that they fully intend to obey the dictates of their king, so God begins the new reckoning. This tradition appears in different positions in the manuscripts of both PRK and LeR (see Mandelbaum’s apparatus, p.413 II. 1-3 and 6-9; Margoliot’s apparatus and note to line 7, pp. 705-706), indicating that it was a marginal gloss later incorporated into the text. In some manuscripts where the tradition appears within the homily, it can be read as relating to the time between RH and YK, not between YK and Sukkot.

\(^{52}\) See especially T. Gaster, Theb, 35-39.

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\(^{53}\) Cf. Mowinckel, Psalm, 1: 178.

\(^{54}\) The “Additional Parsha for Sukkot”, PRK 458, II. 15-18 portrays the festivals in this way and emphasizes the rejoicing on Sukkot.

A different outcome of the festival drama is reflected in a tradition found in the “Alternative Parsha for Sukkot” of the Pesiqta deRav Kahana. What happens if God judges Israel unfavorably on RH? In that case the final act of the drama would not be joy or praise, but the opposite.

R. Elazar bar Maryom said: Why do we make a sukkah after YK? To tell you this: You find that on RH God judges all human beings, and on YK he seals the sentence. It may be that the sentence of Israel will be exile. Accordingly they make a sukkah and exile themselves from their homes to the sukkah, and God counts it as if they were exiled to Babylon, as it says, Write and scream, Fair Zion, like a woman in travail. For now you must leave the city and dwell in the country—and you will reach Babylon. There you shall be saved, there the Lord will redeem you from the hands of your foes (Micah 4:10).

Here R. Elazar bar Maryom considers the darker side of God sitting in judgment. In contrast to PRK 27:7, this tradition assumes that all sins may not be forgiven on YK. If God judges Israel unfavorably then a severe punishment awaits her. Sukkot is not an opportunity to begin a new reckoning, but an opportunity to pre-empt the penalty incurred on YK. Dwelling in the sukkah dramatizes the potential punishment of exile and is considered equivalent to the actual experience of that punishment.

We detect the familiar drama of judgment, sentence and response to the judgment for RH, YK and Sukkot. Again the festivals and their rituals are not historical. The dramatization of exile by moving from houses to sukkot resembles the dramatic representation of myth Mowinckel and others claim took place in the cult. Following this ritual enactment of punishment, God saves the people, as the prooftext from Micah suggests. Sins are forgiven, the relationship restored and the annual cycle begins anew. Note that the drama involves God and Israel, as in the previous tradition, not God and chaos or Israel and the nations. Once again the drama re-enacts not the cosmogony but the relationship between God and the people.

Let me conclude this survey with a few citations from the liturgy. The Mishna and Tosefta refer to the malkhuyot, “verses of
kingship", recited in the Rosh Hashana liturgy. These verses mention God's kingship in the past, present and future, for example, "The Lord shall reign forever and ever", (Exod 15: 18) and "Thus said the Lord, the King of Israel, their redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but me" (Isa 44: 6). However, the Tosefta states that the verses are recited "in order that you make him king upon you". Thus the liturgical recitation serves as a coronation rite that actualizes the experience of God as king. Whatever the belief about God's reign in the past or dominion in the eschaton, rabbinic sources emphasize that the liturgical experience applies to the present. The phrases that conclude the malkhuyot along with the zichronot and shofarot ("verses of remembrance" and "verses of the shofar") are also telling: "Today the world is born (hayom barat 'olam). Today all creatures of the world stand in judgment." The first sentence can be translated, "this day the world was created", meaning that this New Year's day is the anniversary of creation. But in light of the continuation, which clearly refers to the present, perhaps it should be taken as present tense as well. If this understanding is correct, then the prayer reflects the mythic view that the cosmogony recurs each year. Because the continuation of the world depends on the annual divine judgment, the judgment essentially constitutes re-creation. In any case, with the second sentence the worshipper expresses his understanding of a process taking place in the here and now.

III

What can we conclude from this survey?

(1) In these sources the festivals are neither periods of historical commemoration nor of eschatological hope. They express what happens now, not in the past or future. The events recur each year at the same season.

(2) The festivals mark stages of an extended drama. A narrative framework connects the festivals in a substantive way. God plays the leading part in the drama, although nature, Israel and the nations also feature. Parts of the drama are act out through ritual, such as the lulav expressing acclamation at the advent of God or victory in the judgment, and the sukka enacting punishment and exile. Parts of the drama, however, including the approach of God, are not acted out. In this respect rabbinic religion differs from Near East and perhaps biblical religion, where human characters, the king, probably did play the parts of the gods or God—although this is debated. But to a certain extent myth is dramatized in the cult, that is, the synagogue cult.

(3) Cosmogonic motifs are elusive. There is no struggle between God and cosmic forces of chaos, no real rebellion of nations, no repetition of a divine victory. God is simply too powerful to be threatened by other forces. When rabbinic traditions do recover

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61 The Mishna does not prescribe specific verses. However, because the verses and blessings are almost identical in all liturgical rites, the selection of verses and the entire composition must be early. Amoraic sources cite a passage from a prayer called the Tektita deu rav which appears in the zichronot section; yRk 1: 3, 57a, LevR 29: 1, p.668; PRK 23: 1, p.333. See J. Heinemann, "Malkhuyot, zichronot veshofarot", MA'yanot 9 (1968), 551–55; L.J. Liebreich, "Aspects of the New Year Liturgy", HUCA 34 (1963), 140–41, 159–70; Goldschmidt, MAHTON LEHAMIM NO'AMIM, 28–30; I. Elbogen, Halakhah beyyise'ed, ed. J. Heinemann (Tel Aviv, 1972), 108 and J. Heinemann, Halakhah betequfot ha'amim veha'amim (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 141.

62 tRk 1: 12. Variants: "make him king upon them", "upon all his creatures" and "upon the work of his hands". SIFRE NUM. 77, ed. H.S. Horovitz, (Leipzig, 1917), pp. 71–72 reads: "Make him king upon you first..."

63 So Goldschmidt, ibid., 1: 244. Cf. P. Scensgaard, "Time in Judaism", Religion and Time, eds. A.N. Balslev and J.N. Mohanty (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 73–74. (This essay should really be entitled "Time in the Bible", for the author devotes the bulk of his forty pages to biblical views of time [depending heavily on Mowinckel]. Scensgaard devotes a page or two to Josephus, 4th Ezra and other exemplars of non-rabbinic Judaism [pp. 94ff], but avoids a discussion of rabbinic Judaism by noting that the rabbis who have left their mark in the Talmudic literature did not develop a historiography [p.102]).

64 Liturgical poetry (piyyutim) composed for Sukkot regularly connects Sukkot to RH and YK and expresses many of the mythic ideas discussed above. See J.L. Rubenstein, A History of Sukkot during the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods (Dissertation; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1992), 443, 450–52.

65 Ricouer points out that since there is no theology in the Bible, the enemies are not primordial forces of evil, but people within history such as Egypt and the Philistines. This fact requires a new myth. See the discussion in Rogerson, Myth, 141.
the cosmogony it is the cosmogony of Gen 1, where a transcendent God creates the world without opposition, where the forces of chaos, like the tanninim, the great sea monsters, and the tehom, the Deep, are integrated into creation. These midrashim do not require human beings to participate actively in the cosmogonic process, performing rituals that ensure the endurance of the world. Human beings participate by acclamining God as creator, or as subjects of the judgment. Indeed, the cosmogonic motifs that feature in rabbinic tradition relate to the latter stages of the cosmogony when God asserted his sovereignty and exercised judgment. Although God was always king for the rabbis, his sovereignty still had a cyclical component. Like the emperor who approaches the city in the parable, God acts like a king on the festivals. He judges the people, forgives or punishes. He is now experienced as king. This is not all that different from the biblical perspective. Mowinckel emphasized that when the Israelites cried out YHWH malakh, “Yahweh has become king”, they did not mean that he had not been king in the past. The mythic perspective actualized and reified that sovereignty, and enabled the Israelites to experience this truth, not simply know it. Thus rabbinic thought may qualify as myth even by Eliade’s definition of myth as the re-enactment and recovery of cosmogony, but it is not the typical cosmogony of the ancient Near East.

A second type of cosmogonic reflex in rabbinic myth derives from Adam as the paradigmatic Ancestor, as the archetypal first human. The drama of Adam and God in illo tempore – sin, judgment, pardon – are paradigmatic for the annual encounter of each individual and God. The festivals recover that mythic time by rehearsing the drama through the liturgy. The concluding forgiveness and pardon are considered a re-creation of life – and thus the cycle begins again.

(4) More prominent than cosmogonic motifs are themes of the covenantal relationship between Israel and God and the struggle between Israel and the nations. These are set out along an historical axis in the Bible. Both the Pentateuchal description of the forty years in the desert and the Deuteronomist's account of the period of judges and kings relate the history of loyalty to the covenant and its violation, faith in God and apostasy, sin and repentance on a national scale, divine protection and love as opposed to punishment and wrath. Biblical and postbiblical authors trace the struggle of Israel and the nations – the Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Assyrians, and Babylonians, later the Greeks and Romans – in historical terms, although in some prophetic oracles such as the so-called “trial speeches” the nations are an archetypal assembly, and not identified with an historic people. Of course these two themes are interrelated, as Israel’s triumph or subjugation depends on its fulfillment of the covenant. Some rabbinic traditions dehistoricize – I would say mythicize – these motifs. The relationship between Israel and God and issues of sin, obedience, judgment and forgiveness are dramatized each year during the festivals. The drama takes place, if not in primordial time, then certainly not in historical time either. Likewise the struggle between Israel and the nations and the victory of Israel loses connection to any specific nation and historical period. It is dramatized over the course of the festival in a cosmic or “other” time. In this respect the rabbinic view of time is mythic. The festivals dramatize paradigmatic or archetypal events, which, although they may have originated within history, are no longer conceived in historical terms. In Mowinckel’s terms, rabbinic traditions include “historico-mythical acts of salvation” such as the “covenant myth” and the “election myth”. In Eliade’s terms, there is a parallel to the Christian re-living the Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension, the historical events that provide meaning and salvation. Just as Eliade claimed for the Christian that the incarnation and resurrection introduce a radically new age,

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66 Psalms, 1: 114–15. "To the Israelite way of thinking there is no contradiction between this and that he is king for ever; such a contradistinction is modern and rationalistic".


68 Psalms, 1: 112.
essentially a cosmogony, so the election and covenant represent a
new age or cosmogony. Rabbinic myth annually re-enacts
archetypal and paradigmatic, though primarily not cosmogonic,
events.

(5) The models of Eliade, Mowinckel and many others place
heavy emphasis on the connection of myth and mythic time to the
cosmogony, which, we noted above, is elusive in rabbinic traditions.
Clearly rabbinic traditions will be judged mythic according
to theories of mythic time that place less emphasis on the
cosmogony. Some scholars indeed define mythic time as "other
time" or a "time altogether different from the time of our
experience". Paul Ricoeur defines that myth "takes place in a
time different from ordinary experience". For Claus Peterson
myth relates not to historical time but to a "besonderen
Zeitkategorie" which is "vor oder jenseits der geschichtlichen
Zeit". James Kugel writes that, for the rabbis, "The Bible's time
was other time, discontinuous with later events and yet, because of
its special character, one which was constantly about to impose its
mark on the present. Bible-time was forever looming." While
Kugel does not employ the category of myth, the notion that
biblical time is both "other" and "discontinuous" and yet seeks to
impose its mark on the present basically describes a mythic view
of time which suits the view of time in rabbinic traditions. The
annual trial between Israel and the nations, the advent of God on
RH and other such events take place in a similar type of
discontinuous "other" time, which is not necessarily related to
the cosmogony. In other respects these understandings of myth parallel
that of Eliade and Mowinckel: mythic events are paradigmatic
for the present and are generally expressed through symbols and
rituals. Judged by such models the rabbinic view of time is
completely mythic.

69 Several rabbinic traditions equate the giving of the Torah with
the creation of the world. Thus Song of Songs Rabbah 7: 1, 11: "If [Israel] had not
accepted the Torah, I would return the world to formlessness and void (tohu
va’tohu). For Huna said in the name of R. Aha: It is written, Earth and all its
inhabitants dissolve; [it is I who keep its pillars firm] (Psalms, 75: 4). Had Israel not
stood before Mt Sinai and said, All that God has spoken we will do and obey (Exod
24: 8), the earth would already have dissolved to nothingness. Who founds the
world? I (anokhi). As it says, I (anokhi) keep its pillars firm. By the merit of I
(anokhi) am the Lord your God (Exod 20: 21), I keep its pillars firm". Cf. PRK
9: 1, p.147; bShab 88a; bAZ 3a. Since creation depends on the covenant,
covenant myths can be considered cosmogonic.

70 K. Bolle, Encyclopedia, 10: 264: "Typically the myth presents itself as
telling its listeners of a time, altogether different from the time of our
experience". Bolle, however, also links this time to the cosmogony: "Eliade has
rightly emphasized the cosmogony as the fundamental myth". Cf. Otzen et al.,
Myth in the Old Testament, 7: "Myth exceeds the boundaries of history, and the
events of which it speaks lie beyond the pale of real time, in which historical
events occur. Myth has its own time, which may be designated mythical time;
it consists of Urzeit and Endzeit, that which lies both before and after historical
time". Except for the last sentence, this definition characterizes the time of the
rabbinic traditions. It is "beyond the pale of real time" and history, but not that
of Ur- and Endzeit.

71 "Myth and History", 278.

72 Mythos im Alten Testament (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 26, 31. See too
J. Hempel, "Glaube, Mythos und Geschichte im Alten Testament", ZAW 65
(1953), 109–167.

73 "Two Introductions to Midrash", Prooftexts 3 (1983), 141. Emphasis in
the original.

74 Cf. Ricoeur, "Myth and History", 280–81: "As a kind of counterpart
to historicizing of the origin myths, could it [=the theological plan of history]
not itself function as a myth, in the sense of the transcendental founding of
present history on the basis of a more fundamental history?... Nevertheless,
we must admit that by calling salvation history itself a myth, we are stretching
the notion of myth beyond its strict sense of a history of origins in illo tempore... 
Would we then be justified in speaking of a return to mythical time by way of
a history-like narrative, on the basis of theologies presiding over the narrative
composition itself, as, for example, in the conception of history as salvation
history? This could be done only by ascribing the term myth the extremely broad
sense of a founding narrative that is related to everyday existence".