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The “RAQAF” Concept of Ruach Yahweh (GEN 1:2) in the Old Testament and its Implications on Contemporary Christianity

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Abstract

The idea of three persons in one God (Trinity) appear to have been taken /accepted with mixed feelings because it seems illogical to the rational mind. However, the inferences of more than a single personality in the Godhead is acutely obvious in the Old Testament. The study, therefore, is aimed at unravelling the visible fluttering role of *Ruach Yahweh* throughout the length and breadth of the Old Testament. An etymological Exegesis, and thematic trace of the concept in the Old Testament within the milieu of Historical and diachronic approaches amongst others, cannot be side-lined in a study of this nature. Without any gainsay, the complementary role of the Old Testament to the New could be further strengthened in a complex study of this nature. The active creative and integral place of *Ruach Yahweh* in the Old Testament is observed to be more pronounced, as it were, than is that of *pneumatosis* in the New Testament. The clarity of the New Testament Doctrine of Trinity can only be rational and logical by an understanding of the Hovering concept of *Ruach Yahweh* in the Old Testament. A far reaching and long-term effect is the end result of the study of this magnitude. Contemporary Christianity cannot feign ignorance of the little or no place given to this

important member of the Godhead. The three usages of Raqaf (Rachaph) during the creation, life and times of the patriarchs and the prophets of Israel were unique. The implications are enormous and outstanding both for Israel and contemporary Christianity.

Key words: Fluttering concept, Benefits and Adverse effects to Israel of Old Testament and contemporary Christianity

Introduction

In analysing the concept of the trinity, Keithward (1974, pp. 214-15) said that the third basic image in the concepts of the Trinitarian God is that of the Holy Spirit, the continuing renewing and creative power of God within the world, drawing it into unity with himself; for it comes to represent the work of God as an immanent power, present in the whole creation, active in bringing it to its final goal. Thus, the spirit is said to brood over the waters at creation to inspire artistic or literary works.

A lot of persons think and indeed, conclude that Ruach Yahweh (Spirit of God) is silent and therefore, not prominent in the Old Testament economy. This gross ignorance has climaxed in the apparent inability of researching on Ruachology in the Old Testament, as an academic exercise. Suffice it to say that the study of Ruach Yahweh in the Old Testament could be more rewarding, to a large extent, than that of pneumatology in the New Testament. The tripartite nature of the Godhead in the Old Testament is fundamental and critical to the understanding of the Trinitarian concept of the New Testament and the early church.

Equally important is the fact that Hebrew verbs have a wide range of meanings attached to them. Hence the understanding and usage of such terms need to be clarified. The thought pattern of the Hebrews in etymological and exegetical inference is, therefore, pivotal in a complex study of the topic under review. Moreover, it could be observed, with keen interest, that the integral role/place of Ruach Yahweh in verse 2, and Yahweh, the creator, in verse 1 is unique and indicative of an abiding relationship in the Godhead. This concept runs through the Older Testament; hence the thematic approach was co-opted amidst other methodologies. Consequently, the Hebrews who cannot access Yahweh due to His absolute holiness, do have an understanding of Yahweh, through the unavoidable activities of Ruach Yahweh. The significance of Ruach Yahweh, in the Old Testament, to the Israelites is visible in the vicissitudes of their national development. And if this were the case with pre-national, national, and national Israel, the understanding of the Hovering concept of Ruach Yahweh cannot be less significant to Contemporary Christianity. The pertinent nature of this study is vindicated by the foregoing, and subsequent subpoints and paragraphs.

Etymological Exegesis

It is necessary, at this juncture, to note that the essence of the Hovering concept is shredded in its varied synonyms like brooding; dominion; covering; abiding presence; controlling; position oneself; float over brood over; hang about, linger, poised, wait nearby; Waver; and cotter. The above-mentioned synonyms could portend the concept of staying suspended or flutter in the air near, by or wait close by in an overprotective, insistent or anxious way, to use the definitional approach of Webster's New World Dictionary of the second college edition. Furthermore, Opuowei (2017) has said:

The Hebrew verb "to move /to hover/to brood" is the word "rachaph" which is only used three times in the Old Testament- Genesis 1:2, Deuteronomy 32: 11, and Jeremaih

23:9. In Syrian language, the verb ‘rachaph’ means to protect. The word “rachaph” in Genesis 1:2 indicates a high degree of gentle and loving care, even protective concern in its action. This is very appropriate in Genesis 1:2 where the earth is under attack from Satan who has rebelled against the Lord and has been cast down to the earth, bringing formlessness, emptiness, chaos, destruction and darkness. No wonder Jeremiah warns Israel (Jer 4:23) that rebellion against the Lord leads to Chaos, destruction and darkness as if the earth has become formless uncreated and chaotic (tohu wa bowu- Gen 1:2). This chaos and uncreatedness is the condition that the creative spirit of God came to “create” (bara-Gen 1:1) “reorder” and “remedy”. The spirit of God as the formative cause of life and order, therefore, moves, hovers, broods over the surface of the earth bringing His gentle, protective and loving care to put order upon chaotic surface of the earth (15th Sept 2017)

The exhaustive insight into the etymological and exegetical analysis of the fluttering concept of Ruach Yahweh, of the above citation is in the main, all-encompassing. Tit-bits of the exposition will be harnessed in the course of the study. Although Youngblood (1917), a professor of Old Testament treated nine theological concepts through the Old Testament-monotheism, God’s sovereignty, election, the covenant, theocracy, the law, sacrifice, faith and Redemption, the executive Actor and actions, in history, of the third person of the godhead is conspicuously omitted.

On a more serious note, strongstad (1984) has it that

As the standard lexicons remind us, both the Hebrew word Ruach and the Greek word pneuma originally meant “air in motion” ... these two words came to mean wind, breath, the human spirit and the divine spirit connoting, as they do, invisibility, power, and life, ruach and pneuma were appropriate words to describe God in action. It is the idea of “God in action” which stands behind the biblical record of the charismatic activity of the spirit of God (p. 13).

The above citation becomes pertinent as the fulcrum, of the study in Genesis 1:2 and serves as a verifiable theme across the Old Testament. God in action becomes the key word for the executive arm of the triune God, as it were, in the Older Testament. Furthermore, Matthew Henry (1974) drew a vivid picture of the scenery by spotlighting the fact that:

... it was without form and void. Tohu and Bohu, confusion and emptiness... this chaos represents the state of an unregenerate graceless soul, there is disorder, confusion, and every evil work ... it is dark till almighty grace effects a blessed change. The spirit of God was the first to reorder. God is said to make the world by his spirit psalm 33:6, Job 26:13; and by the same mighty work the new creation is effected... dead matter would be forever dead if he did not quicken it. And this makes it credible to us that God should raise the dead (p. 2).

The context that necessitated the fluttering concept of Ruach Yahweh is made obvious and vivid by the about reference. The inherent quality to resuscitate and animate “Tohu and Bohu” is actively conspicuous. In an absolute theatrical terms Jamieson et al (1961) displayed:

The earth was without form and void – or in “confusion and emptiness”, as the words are rendered in Isaiah 34:11. This globe, at some undescribed period, having been convulsed and broken up, was a dark and watery waste

for ages perhaps, till out of this chaotic state, the present fabric of the world was made to arise, the spirit of God moved, continued brooding over it, as a fowl does, when hatching eggs, the immediate agency of the spirit, by working on the dead and discordant elements, combined, arranged, and impended them into a state adapted for being the scene of a new creation. The account of this new creation begins at the end of the second verse; and the details of the process are described in the natural way an onlooker would have done; who beheld the changes that successively took place (p. 17).

The above notwithstanding, Walter C. Kaiser Jr (1970, p. 5) in an acute picturesque of the context of Genesis 1-11, referred to S. H. Hooke, when he said:

The Hebrew world used for the chaos of waters, “the deep” is *Tehom*, a word which is generally acknowledged to be a Hebrew corruption of the name of the chaos-dragon slain by Marduk before he proceeded to create order out of chaos.

It should be on record at this juncture, that the mythological motif of Old Testament traditions, where “*tehom*” (the deep) is not unconnected with a primary battle that initiated the creation (Isaiah 51:9), is not the stress area of this study, than it is the context from which *Ruach Yahweh* fluttered. Myer Pearlman (1937:291) speaks of “*Ruach Yahweh*”, as the creative spirit, the third person of the Trinity by whose power the universe was created. He cited Denie:

The Holy Spirit as *Diety immanent* (abiding) in all creation manifests His presence by what we call the laws of nature. He is the principle of order and life, the organizing power in created nature. All the forces of nature are but evidences of the presence and operation of the spirit of God. Mechanical forces, chemical action, organic life in plant and animal, energy connected with nervous action, intelligence, and moral conduct are but tokens of the immanence of God of which the Holy Spirit is the agent.

Textual Exegesis

It is pertinent to note that the Hebrew verb, “*Rachaph*” is only employed in three key texts of the Old Testament volume. A close and critical analysis of its usage in Genesis 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:11 and Jeremiah 23:9, is therefore necessary to convey its import. In Genesis 1:2, Livingstone et al (1969, p. 31) has it that:

God is the creator and nature is His handiwork. Though made by God, the earth was not yet ready for man. It was still in disarray, without form and void... and there was no light. However, there was activity. The spirit of God was continuously moving above the waters.

The stress area of the above citation is the continuous activity (*Rachaph*) of “*Ruach Yahweh*” in a formless, dark and void creation. The import here is the ‘*Rachaph*’ of “*Ruach Yahweh*.” So, it is an activity of order, light and habitable creation. In the second text, Deuteronomy 32:11, Livingstone et al (1969, p. 611) reiterate the fact that: “... we see God’s care of his people pictured ‘As Eagles’ ... God feathers the nest, ... God teaches the young to fly as nature intended.... God upholds the falling one”.

The stress area of the second citation is the symbolic activity of the Eagle towards its Eaglets. The import here is the “*Rachaph* of “*Ruach Yahweh*”. So, it is an activity of tender care,

watchfulness and close supervision. In the third instance, Jeremiah 23:9, Price et al (1966, p. 403) opined that

No group had been so troublesome to Jeremiah as the professional prophets and certain of the priests... Jeremiah felt crushed over what he perceived going on among the religious leaders of his day. Mine heart... is broken... my bones shake; I am like a drunken man... despite the curse of a drought with its attendant calamities, the people were flagrantly immoral... when the prophet saw these conditions in the light of the character of God and his holy word, he was overwhelmed with grief.

The stress area in this case is the distortion, bewilderment and chaos of a rebellious people in the face of God’s judgment. The import in the above instance is that only “*Ruach Yahweh*” can ‘raqaf’ over the overblouted professionalism immoral prophets and priests as to bring in sanity and reinstate moral values both in the religious circles and national Israel.

From the three textual usages of ‘*Rachap*’ in the Old Testament; a consistent parallelism is observed.

Genesis 1:2 ‘ <i>Rachaph</i> ’	Restoring order, shape, form actively to deep, dark waters. ‘ <i>Ruach Yahweh</i> ’ very active in creation as Executive Director
Deuteronomy 32:11 ‘ <i>Rachaph</i> ’	Symbolic Eagle depicts fluttering and dissipating protective care over its eaglets, exercising control over turbulent winds, ensuring safety and mastery.
Jeremiah 23:9 ‘ <i>Rachaph</i> ’	The bewilderment of Jeremiah, occasioned by rebellious and immoral religious leaders and nation brought under control and stability brought into Religion & society, by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the creator is absolutely incharge of his creation and creatures, irrespective of the apparent chaos and catastrophe. The third person of the trine God is actively in control visibly or invisibly.

In all three instances, the Hebrew verb “*Rachaph*” demonstrates the possessive ability and capacity of “*Ruach Yahweh*” from the commencement. Continuation and Consummation of God’s created order. So vivid is the import of the Hebrew verb, “*Rachaph*” that the three usages which spanned through the patriarches and prophets never contradicted itself. A thematic trace of this all-important Hebrew verb is therefore needful not only for the Old Testament, but its over-riding implications on the New Testament and contemporary Christianity.

Thematic Trace of the Hovering Concept of “RUACH Yahweh”

Without controversy the Old Testament has proved to be resource material for symbolism and or typology. Hence, the symbols and types of the Old Testament have their anti-types and realities in the New Testament. There is therefore, the need to be cautious in the interpretation and application of Old Testament objects, to avoid the encapsulation of extreme typology or modern occultism- the zenith of witchcraft. While defining typology as the study of prophetic photographs of Christ taken from many angles, Lilian Bach (no date 5.7) has warned that:

A type may never be used to teach a doctrine, but only to illustrate a doctrine elsewhere plainly taught... it cannot be positively stated that anything is a type which is not somewhere in scripture treated as such... the type will be something seen, a temporal object, but the antitype will be unseen and spiritual. The type is something outward, present, of this world; the antitype gives the inward, future and heavenly aspect.

With the above insight into the meaning of types in the Old Testament, symbolism becomes a cautious field to tread upon. Thus, Old Testament symbols are simply foreshadowing a distant or future reality (Hebrews 8:5; 9:23) –Based on the above premise, the symbols of “*Ruach Yahweh*” in the Old Testament could be outlined, as to ascertain the application of the Hebrew verb, “*RACHAPH*”.

On the other hand, synonyms of the third person of the triune God is equally necessary. In Allison's (2017) lecture Notes on Ruachology, reference is being made to the use of wind, breath and Divine power, as synonyms of *Ruach Yahweh* (Psalms 78:39; Ezekiel 3:12, 14; 37:9). He opined that twenty-six (26), out of the thirty-nine (39) books of the Old Testament incorporated it while thirteen (13) books were silent, concerning the use of wind to symbolize *Ruach Yahweh*. In other words, two-thirds of the Old Testament volume upheld the case of wind-breath to typify *Ruach Yahweh*, whole one-third, may have employed a difference synonym. So then, the symbols of *Ruach Yahweh* in the Old Testament could range from:

Wind	-	Exodus 14:21; Genesis 6:17; 7: 22; Job 9:18; 19:17 Ezekiel 37:7-10
Seal	-	Mark of ownership Isaiah 63:10 Genesis 6:3
Water	-	Exodus 17:6; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 47:1
Fire/Light	-	Leviticus 6:13; 9:23-24; Exodus 3:1-4; 1 Chron 21:26
Dove	-	Isaiah 11:2, John 1:23; Genesis 8:8-12
Cloud	-	Exodus 40:33-34, 38; 1 Kings 8:10-11
Smoke	-	Isaiah 6:4
Glory of the Lord	-	1 Kings 8:11

Oil- Exodus 30:25; Leviticus 8:10-12; Psalms 133:2 is used to the symbolic presence of God in the Ark of the covenant- I Samuel 4:18-22; Joshua 3:16-17; Numbers 10:33

The numerous symbols of *Ruach Yahweh* in the Old Testament notwithstanding, it is the thematic trace of the Hebrew verb – ‘*Rachaph*’ in the Old Testament, that is the crux of this study. Following the *Analytical concordance to the Bible*, the three usages of *Rachaph*, as a Hebrew verb, could portend different meanings, but definitely portrays the Divine activity within the exclusive prerogative of *Ruach Yahweh*. The thematic trine of ‘*Rachaph*’ concept would mainly be observed within the trace frame of the creation, Patriarchs and prophets.

This covers the three diachronics of the old Testament, and so have far reaching implication in the old and beyond. In Genesis 1:2, it is ‘*Rachaph*’- move up

In Deuteronomy 32:11, it is ‘*RACHAPH*’- flutter

In Jeremiah 23:9, it is ‘*Rachaph*’- shake

The research is, therefore, tracing the concept of '*Rachaph*' that brings order, shape, normalcy to formlessness, void and darkness; the concept of '*Rachaph*' that brings a loving care, protection and training to amateur situation and *Rachaph* that brings a shaking/quaking destabilization to the sinful disposition and systems of humanity. On the other hand, it is also a trace to areas and incidences where the active role, *Rachaph*, of *Ruach Yahweh* is unavoidably absent. Hence, the implications of the study. The first case in point is in Genesis 6:3-

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

The above Biblical citation, no doubt, is the causative factor of the great deluge, and this is where the implication of the fluttering effect of *Ruach Yahweh*, should be pivotal to mankind. Even one of the spurious apocryphal books "Wisdom of Solomon" 10:4 refers:

Through his fault the earth was covered with a deluge, and wisdom came to the rescue, and taught the one good man to plot his plain wooden hulk.

This is indicative of the fact that, according to Rehwinkle (1951, p. 95), the Jews of that time considered the flood of Noah an historical fact.

However, beyond Rehwinkles historicity of the flood are two outstanding and phenomenal questions, What and Who was the precursor of this first devastation of humanity and the created universe? This aspect of the research, sidelined hitherto, is now brought to the fore. It is the utmost declaration of the infusal or, simply put, the withdrawal of the active three-fold 'rachaph'- effect of *ruach Yahweh*, upon Noahs' world.

Analytically, the clause "*Ruach Yahweh*' will not strive (Genesis 6:3), involves the use of a highly technical term, "Strive ". This is because the Hebrew verb (7:7) 'dun' 'down' (to rules judge) used only once in the entire Old Testament, has its English cognate verb "dun", which means to importune for payment of a debt. The English verb 'dun' is equally an ally to another English verb 'din', which means to harass with insistent repetition. Meanwhile, the English equivalent importune means to request with urgency; to pester with requests, to entreat and to solicit: whereas the underlying concept, according to *Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus*, is to counteract, to counterbalance and to dabble into. It is hence obvious that a working definition for the Hebrew verb 'dun' with its English cognate and ally 'dun' & 'din' respectively, could be 'ruling or judging someone with the intention of making consistent /persistent appeals. Henry (1961, p. 17) lent his voice by saying that:

The blessed spirit strives with sinners, by the convictions and admonitions of conscience, to turn them from sin to God. If the spirit be resisted, quenched, and striven against, though he strives long, he will not strive always, Hosea 4:17.

The understanding of the above explanation is that of the absence of the consistent appeals embodied in the 'dun' of '*Ruach Yahweh*' with mankind. One can now imagine the colossal loss of humanity and the created order due to the unavoidable absence of the valuable *Rachaph* effect of *Ruach Yahweh*.

A critical examination of the pre-patriarchal world, in Genesis 1-11, would reveal a period of apparent APOSTASY adumbrated by the murder of Abe by Cain, the terrifying effect of the deluge and the calamitous dispersion of the Tower of Babel. Right after the first of use of

‘Rachaph’ in Genesis 1:2, the rest of the pre- Patriarchal period was epitomed in ante-diluvian and post-delusion world. It was for this period that e.g. White (1984) recorded

The antediluvians were without books, they had no written records; but with their great physical and mental vigor, they had strong memories, able to grasp and to retain that which was communicate to them, and in turn to transmit it unimpaired to their posterity (p. 4).

Undoubtedly, the physical and mental prowess of the antediluvians must have informed their overall independence from Ruach Yahweh; which plunged the infant world into chaos. It was such a world of prevailing iniquity of disobedience and rebellion that white (opt cit: 55) further said:

The world was in its infancy; yet iniquity had become so deep and wide spread that God could no longer bear it, and [when] he said, “will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth”. He declared that his spirit should not always strive with the guilty race. If they did not cease to pollute with their sins the world and its rich treasures...

The outcome of the devastation of the antediluvian world is rather told than experienced. It was a carnage, indeed, of every living thing upon the face of the earth. The consequences of the absence of ‘*Rachaph*’ concept of *Ruach Yahweh* can be so grave, as *Opowei* (op cit) mentioned that ‘*Rachaph*’ means to protect in the Syrian language. Thus, in relation to the text under review, the anti-diluvian world was out of reach of the ‘*Rachaph*’ protection of *Ruach Yahweh*, and so had to court the judgment of God. In other words, ‘*dun*’ as found in Genesis 6:3 could conveniently be taken as an autonym of ‘*Rachaph*’, in an exegetical sense. The pre-patriarchal world of Genesis 1-11, appears to be a period of disobedience and outright rebellion against God. Hence the usage of the Hebrew verb ‘*dun*’ once within this period of about 2000 years. In their work, ‘*In search of Noah’s Ark*’, Balsiger and Sellier (1976:203) summed up that we have dealt with the historical accuracy of the Bible, the anthropological evidence for a great deluge, the scientific evidence supporting a universal flood and environmental conditions needed to produce a flood.

God determined to destroy the world of Noah because of its in-depth ungodliness. It was Alfred M. Rehwinkel (1951:58) who paraphrased the ordeal when he said:

God has resolved to bring a flood upon the earth to destroy it. The Hebrew word “Mabbul” translated “flood” is used only for the waters of Noah; and it is used only here and in Ps 29:10- Noah was to build him an ark, or a vessel, to escape the flood. The word “ark” seems to be derived from the Egyptian language and signifies “chest” or something to float. The word occurs only twice in the Bible, here for the ark of Noah and again in Ex 2:3-5 for the ark of bulrushes in which the infant Moses was saved from the cruel decree of pharaoh.

The pivotal and integral place of “*Rachaph*” effect of *Ruach Yahweh* cannot be overstressed. The destruction of Noah’s world, with all its human and materials resources, was the absence of ‘*Rachaph*’ of *Ruach Yahweh* fixed in the ‘not striving’ with men in Gen 6:3. That was the premier negative implication of the ‘*Rachaph*’ concept of *Ruach Yahweh* in the pre-patriarchal period.

It was, therefore, certain that the use of '*Rachaph*' as enshrined in Genesis 1:2 was bringing of order, shape and form to a devastated and dark universe or creation. The absence of the brooding effect was equally felt in Noah's generation. It was indeed, a destructive moment that is better heard than experienced. Hence, a further implication to our contemporary situation will be highlighted in the final sub-point of the study, as indicated in the body of the work.

The '*Rachaph*' concept and the Patriarchs:

The second usage of the Hebrew/Syrian verb "*Rachaph*" belongs to the Patriarchal period:

In Deuteronomy 32:11, it reads:

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings...

The above text is conspicuously placed within the time line of the patriarchs. Undoubtedly, the analysis is "God feathering the nest (verses 8-10); God stirring up the nest (verse 11a); God teaching the young eaglets to fly as nature intended (verse 11b); and God upholding the falling ones (verse 11c). That is God's care for his people vividly pictured in the Eagle and her eaglets. We now turn to the exegesis of the fluttering effect of '*Rachaph*' concept that brings a loving care, protection and training to amateur situations. Jamieson et al. (1961:164) eulogized when they said

This beautiful and expressive metaphor is founded on the extraordinary care and attachment which the female eagle cherishes for her young. When her newly fledged progeny are sufficiently advanced to soar in their native elements, she in their first attempts at flying, supports them on the tip of her wings encouraging, directing, and aiding their feeble efforts to longer and sublinear flights so did God take the most tender and powerful care of his chosen people; He carried them out of Egypt and led them through all the horrors of the wilderness to the promised inheritance

The above is quite revealing that Israel as a chosen people is contingent upon the promise made by God upon Abraham and his descendants. The corollary is obvious of the mother eagle and her eaglets with God and his people, Israel in their infancy relationship. Henry (1960, p. 203) likewise has it that God bore Israel on Eagles wings (Exodus 19:4),

... When they were in love with their slavery, and loth to leave it, God be Moses, stirred them up to aspire after liberty. He carried them out of Egypt, led them into the wilderness, and now at length had led them through it.

The fluttering concept of '*Ruach Yahweh*' is quite visible in this divine relationship between God with the patriarchs and their descendants. The active role of fluttering carried out by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was thus summarized in the edited work of Bruce (1979, p. 280), when he said: "The deliverance of Israel is spoken of in three ways, being compared to the care a man takes of the pupil of his eyes, the way an eagle teaches it's young to fly, and the guidance of a shepherd".

Thus, the "*Raqaf*" of *Ruach Yahweh* could be spotted easily through the infancy period of the patriarchs and their descendants. Symbolically speaking from the burning Bush (Exodus 3:1-4) to the consumption of the sacrifice (Leviticus 9:23-29) to the Ichabod episode (1st Samuel 4:18-22) to the point of the glory filling the Temple of Solomon (1 Chronicle 21:26, 2

Chronicles 5:13-14) etc, one could see an array of the active fluttering effect of **'Ruach Yahweh'**. The fluttering effect of **'Ruach Yahweh'** was such that king David literally prayed and said "cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy **'Ruach Yahweh'** from me" (Psalms 51:11). There is no doubt, that the anti-deluvian period and generation must have learnt their lessons so well to avert a re-occurrence of the deluge. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (now Israel) enjoyed such a relationship with God through theophanic God, revelations and dreams, such that there was little or no casually recorded. It was, as it were, a people under Divine tutelage. The symbolic Ark of the Covenant played the active role of **'Ruach Yahweh'**.

Hence Anderson (1966:39) gives his insight of the sacred objects associated with the wilderness period the most interesting and important is the Ark. The story of its being brought into the camp to ensure victory (1 Sam 4, 2 Sam 11) suggests that it represented the mighty presence of Yahweh with His people particularly in what were regarded as holy wars against the enemies of Yahweh and His people. The patriarchs and their immediate descendants enjoyed the Eagles' pedagogy and nursing care, as long as they were obedient to the directives of God. It was a victorious flight and flying session for infant Israel on Eagles wing into the occupancy of inhabited countries and nations. So long as the protective coverage of the pillar of Cloud by Day and the pillar of fire by night "Raqaf" over infant Israel, they had enough care, food, water, shelter etc. it was clearly reiterated thus:

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people ex 13:21-22

It was such loving and protective care that resulted in their being dreaded by surrounding nations. On the other hand, those who abused and misused the "Raqaf" of **Ruach Yahweh**, died in the wilderness and did not inherit the Promised Land. It was obvious that Israel became what they are by the singular act of "Raqaf" of **Ruach Yahweh** on the descendant of the Patriarchs.

Raqaf and Post-Patriarchal Periods

The period under review has to do with the adulthood of the nation of Israel. Coincidentally, the third usage of the Hebrew verb "Rachaph" was application used within this period in the Old Testament document.

It reads:

Mine heart within is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake, I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine had overcome, because of the Lord and because of the words of His holiness, Jeremiah 23:9

The above timeline falls within the period when prophets and prophecy has been instituted in Israel. The prophetic period was another moment where **'Ruach' Yahweh** inspired the prophets for mighty acts. The New Testament paraphrased it by saying:

All scripture is inspired by the Holy spirit for holy men of old spake as the spirit moved upon them, 2 Peter 1:20-21

Reference is being made to Old Testaments prophets that the spirit of God moved upon to prophecy. Hence, it is the exclusive preserves of ***Ruach Yahweh*** to initiate prophecy. No man can initiate as to foretell and forthtell, the past, present and future, that he is oblivious of. It takes someone who know these realms to accurately bring to the fore, these unseen and incomprehensible facts of eternity. Jamieson et al (1961) lent their voices that

God's judgment upon faulty prophets are stupefying like wine the effects of the Holy Spirit also are compared to those of wine... because God's holy words wherewith He threatened severe penalties ... against the breakers of His law (p. 624).

It is indeed real that the '***raqaf***' of ***ruach Yahweh*** break bones into pieces of sinning humanity, the flood of Noah's standing as evidence. Matthew Henry (1960:979) has it, that he was troubled:

Because of the Lord and his judgement which comes like a deluge. He trembled to think of the run and desolation which were coming from the face of the lord and from the face of the word of his holiness.

Bruce (1979, p. 778) equally inferred that

... the corruption of the word by false prophets was alarming when compared with the lord's word that leads to inevitable judgment for claiming falsely to be the bearer of God's word.

Jeremiah is greatly perplexed, no doubt, over the complacent nature of the false prophets who carry out wickedness with impurity. Jeremiah is broken and shaken, knowing the consequences of this evil upon Israel.

From the three usages of the Hebrew verb "raqaf", one could visualize the benefit of the fluttering concerns of Ruach Yahweh, as well as the adverse effect associate with lawlessness. Moreover, the institution of prophecy and prophets in the Old Testament was by Revelation and inspiration. Equally important is the fact that Freeman (1983, p.103) drew the line:

The true prophet receives the revelation through the media of dreams and visions according to Numbers 12:6. And he said hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Yahweh will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. (Amos 3:7)

The vital role of prophets and prophecy in the Old Testament cannot be relegated to the background. The prophetic institution was such that Ruach Yahweh was its Executive Director. As such the 'Raqaf' concept cannot be passive, hence the enormous benefits, as well as adverse effect of His acceptance and rejection respectively. Consequently, Christianity of the New Testament being an off shot of Judaism of the Old Testament, much is expected, in that absolute dependence upon the Raqaf effect should be permanent.

Implications on Contemporary Christianity

There is a clarion call for continuity, contingent upon the fact that the third member of trinity in the Old Testament, is same as in the New Testament. The three outstanding usages of "Raqaf" in the Old Testament, should not begin and end with that testament. If the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old, then there should be a greater manifestation of the active role of Ruach Yahweh in the New Testament than is being experienced today.

Christianity should allow the Holy Spirit to have a brooding effect as in Genesis 1:2 in order to be shaped and brought into normal form. Secondly, the fluttering effect of Ruach Yahweh in Deut 32:11 should be visible upon the church and Christianity. Christians and Christianity should not claim mastery of spiritual realms. Thirdly, the shaking effect as in Jeremiah 23:9 should keep the church on her toes, in realizing her reason for being. On the contrary, Contemporary Christianity appears to be divergent from Biblical Christianity.

Christianity, contemporarily speaking appears to be more political, tribalistic, worldly, legalistic, materialistic, and independent of the Holy Spirit. The characteristic features of contemporary Christianity appear to negate the tutelage of Ruach's Raqaf. This may be the reason behind Jesus zealous cleansing of the temple in His time

... Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting... he ... he made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple ... and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables, and said into them... take these things hence; make not my father's house an house of merchandise (John 2:13-16)

Jesus said the temple has been made a den of thieves according to Matthean (21:13) and Lukan (19:46) accounts. Worth still is the fact that the Johannine apocalypse used the term "making merchandise with the souls of men (Revelation 18:11-13). If and where Christianity deteriorates to merchandise with the souls of men, ethnicity, politics of power tussle, display of wealth and materialism and indulgence in modernize occultism, then the world will have been plunged into the lifestyle of the ante-delluvians. Where this is the case, severer judgment of God becomes inevitable.

Furthermore, the claims of some Pentecostal denomination would be a ruse if the concept of "Raqaf" of Ruach Yahweh is not experienced, it will then be spelling doom for Christianity in particular, and the society at large.

Conclusion

It is hereby revealed that the Hebrew verb "Rachaph" (Raqaf) used only thrice in the Old Testament, (Genesis 1:2; Deut 32:11 and Jeremaih 23:9) spanned through the three time periods of creation, patriarchs and prophets. The reverse will not be the case for Contemporary Christianity if she fails to allow the "Raqaf" concerns of Ruach Yahweh. Indeed, it will be in the interst of contemporary Christianity to have and experience the "Raqaf" experience of Ruach Yahweh, otherwise the saying, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the son of man (Matthew 24: 26-28) will have a repeat. The implications of the "Raqaf" concept for those who understand and accept it, will be advantageous, than those who reject the brooding, fluttering and shaking effect of Ruach Yahweh. Contemporary Christianity can avoid this mistake of rejecting the hovering concern of Ruach Yahweh that culminates in colossal damage of man and his environment.

Recommendations

1. Individual Christians, should as a matter of urgency hang on, and clive to the brooding effect of Ruach Yahweh of Genesis 1:2
2. Christianity and Pentecostals should ensure that the doctrine and practice does not negate the Raqaf effect of Ruach Yahweh.

3. Society should be alerted of the fact that the universe was created and is owned by the creator, God (Ps 24) and be responsible to God.
4. Any further flagrant disobedience to the word of God, will like the world of Noah, attract still penalty from God, even though not by the flood, but some other means, may be by fire 2 Peter 3:10-11
5. Nations, and political powers, should pray for the fluttering effect of Deut 23:11 to ensure national development.
6. Sanctions should be placed on any person or group of persons who disobey God, otherwise the affect could be on the innocent masses.
7. Those who prophecy falsely in the name of the Lord should desist because judgment is imminent.

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