CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why this study?

This study was conceived at one of our table talks with my then dinner companion, now husband, André, one Saturday two summers ago. The discussion was on world leaders and their particular goals in different cultural, religious and political settings. Some of the leaders mentioned were Hitler and his concept of Aryan supremacy, Mahatma Gandhi and Sathyagraha, Martin Luther and the Reformation, and Moses with liberation and Yahwism.

I had many questions concerning leadership. Where does the leader receive his mission from? What is the social, political or institutional context in which a leader is produced? Does the leader pursue his own aspirations and values, or those of the followers he represents? Is he born with attributes and abilities that generate the leader in him, or are these qualities acquired? These and other questions gave rise to the initial interest in this study.

Although leaders appear in different times and different cultures, in religious or political contexts, it was argued that they all possessed a certain charisma. It was the word “charisma” that piqued my curiosity – of course at this discussion, it was used in a loose way to suggest popularity and attractiveness. Subsequently, Gillian Lindt’s (1987:485) entry on “Leadership” in “The Encyclopaedia of Religion”, where she makes the point that “… we know a great deal about individual religious leaders … but very little is known about the phenomena of leadership,” and then her elaboration on Weber’s concept of charisma in the same entry, is what prompted the topic: Moses and charismatic leadership.
1.2 The aim of this study

The aim of this study is to show the qualities and principles inherent in the charismatic leadership of Moses, and his influence on the beginnings of a national Israelite religion as a product of his charismatic personality. It is my hope that this paper will elucidate the phenomenon of leadership, particularly from the point of view of charismatic leadership. To this end the thesis:

- surveys briefly the historical studies on Moses;
- sketches a portrait of the character of Moses, based on biblical narratives in the book of Exodus;
- defines charismatic leadership according to the sociologist Max Weber;
- discusses the characteristics of a charismatic leader and compares them with possible similar qualities in Moses;
- examines the social, political and religious context within which Moses develops, operates and is validated; and
- suggests that the beginnings of a national Israelite religion in the form of mono-Yahwism might possibly be an example of the “new obligation” Weber (1968:243) refers to, imposed by the charismatic personality.

1.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis is that the charismatic personality of Moses influenced the initial stages of a national Israelite religion.

1.3.1 Explanation of terms

Charismatic: The term charismatic comes from the concept of charisma as used by Max Weber (1968:241) which I apply to Moses to mean “a certain quality of an
individual personality" who is "extraordinary" and "treated as endowed with supernatural ... powers" which are "regarded as of divine origin." Moses' creative leadership and personal attractiveness derives its impetus from a "higher power" named Yahweh, and it is under this presumed religious inspiration that Moses embodies "the values, motivations and aspirations" of both the followers, who are induced to follow him, and himself (Lindt 1987:485).

**Synonyms for God and god:** Because Weber speaks of divine, unprecedented, and the supernatural world, and his interpreters (Shils, Parsons, et al) use the synonyms higher power and ultimate source, it has become the vocabulary of this thesis. Weber uses the neuter in his reference to God in an objective way, as outlined in his framework for religious leadership, in general, and not specifically in a biblical sense, which would have its own particular, nuanced name for God. I use these various words, interchangeably, to mean God and god with a small g in an objective and subjective way respectively.

**Initial stages:** Initial stages refers to the early period which ushered in a new form of religious worship, going from family or clan-based religion to group or national religion. "Initial stages" also alludes to this transition, and the beginning of a phase of religious development hitherto unknown. This phase of religious development could possibly be dated around the end of the thirteenth century BC, but the dating is only hypothetical since nothing in the biblical traditions confirms this (Gottwald 1985:191-2).

**National Israelite religion:** To say that the national Israelite religion begins with Moses and his concept of one god in the form of mono-Yahwism requires an explanation. When, how, and at which point Israelite religion truly becomes a national monotheistic religion is an issue that is bedevilled with complexities. That Yahweh reveals himself to Moses, and enters into a covenant with him and the Hebrews, is attested to in Exodus 6:2. However, Yahweh appears to have had a
primordial existence, also known as the deity El Shaddai, worshipped by Moses' ancestors (Gottwald 1985:211). It is Moses, though, "…who first brought the whole people into covenant with Yahweh, as distinguished from the anticipatory covenants made earlier with the individual ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (:202).

Covenant would have implications not just for the religion of Israel, but for its political, social, and geographic life. In terms of the religion of Israel, covenant would create an exclusive relationship between God and Israel in the desert that would continue in Canaan, their geographic destination. Politically and socially it meant that "Israel formulated its self-definition as a people and its basic social institutions by means of the concept and ritual practice of a covenant with deity" (Gottwald 1985:204).

How national Israelite religion emerges and develops appears to have no consensus among the various schools of biblical thought. Here I summarize Gnuse's (1997) work.

The late nineteenth century AD scholars, with their critical approach, and influenced by the newly articulated theories of scientific evolution, described the development of Israel's religion as evolutionary, having "successive stages of animism, totemism, polytheism, henotheism or monolatry, and finally monotheism" (Gnuse 1997:63). These evolutionary assumptions would hold sway for sixty years, until challenged by William Foxwell Albright and his idea of a Mosaic revolution (:64).

In their reaction to the simple evolutionary paradigms given by the nineteenth century scholars, Albright, together with the Biblical Theology Movement, saw "…Israel's monotheism as a breakthrough rather than a gradual evolution …" (:65-67). This view prevailed between 1945 and 1970.
"More recently", suggests Gnuse, (1997:69), "biblical scholars appear to affirm the view that Israelite or Jewish religious development evolved in progressive stages or 'leaps' in the pre-exilic period until its culmination in the absolute monotheism of the Babylonian exile (586-539 BCE)."

Archaeologists have unearthed material, in the form of literary inscriptions, which gives rise to new theories about Israelite religion from around the ninth or eighth centuries BCE, suggesting "Israelite devotion to Asherah, the goddess of fertility, and other gods of Canaan, as well as so-called pagan activities like sun veneration, human sacrifice and cultic prostitution" (:69-72).

This suggests:
- a continuity between pre-exilic Israelite religion and Canaanite religion; and
- that quite obviously the essence of mono-Yahwism may have never fully existed in the pre-exilic period, or if it did, then it was only with a few people or in small groups.

Israel's religious odyssey is as complex as it is arcane. Whether Israel achieved her national religion by rapid adoption or slow evolution, or by a vacillation between the two, and by dabbling with Canaanite gods and pagan activities, one thing remains clear: monotheism does ultimately reach its purest form after six centuries, in the Babylonian exile, and Moses' centrality to the process remains undisputed, even if this occurs only in the very first stages.

1.3.2 Historical background

Up until the exodus, dated around the 13th century BC (Gottwald 1985:191-2), the religion of early Israel was characterized by individual and clan-based elements of God enshrined in the notion of promise and covenant (Fohrer 1973:39; Bright 1972:100): the promise from God as described in Genesis 15 of land; and the
covenant being the agreement that God makes with Abraham that he will have many descendants (Gen 15:18).

The prelude to the national history of Israel as narrated in the Hebrew Bible begins in Egypt with the invitation of Joseph to Jacob and his sons and their families, and their subsequent migration during the famine (Gen 47:11). The biblical account (Gen 47:1-5) states that the reigning king of Egypt welcomed Jacob and his tribes and settled them in Goshen, where they retained control of their cattle. Here they grew to become many people (Ex 1:7). Then there is a change. A new king comes to power in Egypt (Ex 1:8 ff) who knows nothing about the history of the Hebrews and their ancestors, or their arrangement with the old king concerning their residence in the land of Goshen. This change has two implications. First, because the Hebrews expanded numerically, the king feared they might join Egypt’s enemies and oppose him. So, from herdsmen who took care of their own lives they were made to become slaves of the state (Ex 1:11) with no rights.

Second, the king gave orders (Ex 1:16) to the Hebrew midwives to kill all their male babies at birth, which Ackerman (1974:85) claims would “calm his fears of invasion and insurrection.” Of course the midwives disobey the order (Ex 1:17) regarding the male baby genocide, and the king issues a command that all Hebrew baby boys be thrown into the Nile river (Ex 1:22).

It was in this period of physical, political, economic, and religious distress that Moses arose to lead the Hebrews out of oppression to the portals of the Promised Land. As a political and religious leader, inherent traits of charisma in his personality allowed him to create a new religion moving from a clan-based piety to a mono-Yahwism, which I argue is national Israelite religion in its nascent from. This is linked indissolubly with the Exodus group and its liberation. The social turmoil of the Hebrews in Egypt, their lack of solidarity, their inability to act politically, their oppression, and their need of a national religious consciousness, all provide the framework in which the charismatic leader emerges, develops,
operates and is validated. Moses will unify, organize, empower, liberate, nationalize and define for the Hebrews their collective goals, and will begin "completely de nouveau, guided by [his] own creative religious experience" in the form of the burning bush in Exodus 2 (Wach 1944:297).

1.4 Methodology

To explain the phenomenon of charismatic leadership, and provide an analysis of the characteristics of a charismatic leader, I use the socio-religious method, within which I employ Max Weber's paradigm of charismatic leadership in the religious sphere. The sociological method provides the "ideal types" or interpretative framework that I apply to Moses to identify common as well as distinctive elements in his charismatic style. Moses shows many traits of charismatic leaders, one of the most common of which is the claim to be in touch with God. This characteristic shows Weber's psychological preoccupation with the charismatic phenomenon and is not the focus of this thesis. Rather, I choose to concentrate on the socio-cultural and religious aspects of charismatic leadership.

Charismatic leadership has a reciprocal nature, and must therefore be viewed as an interaction between the personality of the leader, on the one hand, and the followers wanting certain wishes granted, on the other. Only a very particular socio-historical context will allow the charismatic person to prevail and accomplish his mission.

In chapter 2, using the principles of literary science and the narrative literature in the Hebrew Bible, I attempt to sketch a possible portrait of Moses so that his character and personality might be elucidated.
I do, however, begin by briefly sketching the main positions regarding the historicity of Moses. Here I argue that whether or not Moses is historically verifiable, we cannot simply eschew him, because the new religious consciousness and the unification of the Hebrew people all have their origins with Moses. I therefore make an assumption that Moses was a person in history whose reality is endorsed only by the Hebrew Bible.

However, there appears to be no objective way of proving whether God was in communication with Moses, or whether Moses participates in the supernatural world which he makes the source of his message. One cannot know either way. I therefore make no theological assumption concerning this tête-à-tête between Moses and God. And yet, it is his mystical and unique experience of the burning bush when he first encounters The Divine (discussed in 4.4.2.1) that results in him becoming a leader. Moses’ experience of the burning bush is in the form of a "call" that validates his claim to authority.

While this thesis uses literary science principles, and deals briefly with historical issues, the main methodological thrust is that of a socio-religious approach.

1.5 A brief survey of the research on the historicity of Moses

To posit Moses as a charismatic leader, and to claim that the beginnings of Israel’s religion are a product of this charismatic personality, is to also assume the historicity of such a person as gleaned from the evidence of the Hebrew Bible.

This section briefly explores the debate by a few Old Testament scholars on the historicity of Moses. While Bright (1972:124) takes the biblical text at face value, Ehrlich (2001:40) treads less cautiously by placing Moses “in the realm of legend”.

* Friedland, W H 1964. For a Sociological Concept of Charisma. Social Forces 43(1), 18-26, attempts to examine
Indeed, Moses’ birth is presented to us in the form of a legend, but as Auerbach (1975:9) has elaborated, it does not make the personality in question here unhistorical.

Closely linked to the historical debate on Moses, is the question concerning Israel’s religion. Did Moses create Yahwism through his own innovative personality and charisma, or was he merely acting as Yahweh’s agent? Or do both possibilities apply?

The person in history is connected with the way he acts in history, and what he accomplishes. His achievements could be proof as to whether he existed. If, on the one hand, Moses was merely a functionary in acts that were performed by Yahweh, it could be relatively easy to assume that he is a fictitious creation. On the other hand, if Moses is a real person in history, who through the particular qualities of his charismatic personality is able to create mono-Yahwism, which ultimately becomes a national Israelite religion, then his achievements provide strong evidence for his existence. For is this not what Bright (1972:124), mentioned below, (in 1.5.1) means when he says, “To deny that role to Moses [i.e. as the great founder of Israel's faith] would force us to posit another person of the same name”?

1.5.1 The historicity of Moses

No one has captured the position of Moses in the text as candidly as John Bright (1972:124) has done. “Over all these events (Exodus through Deuteronomy) towers the figure of Moses. Though we know nothing of his career, save what the Bible tells us, the details of which we have no means of testing, there can be no doubt that he was, as the Bible portrays him, the great founder of Israel’s faith.
Attempts to reduce him are extremely unconvincing. The events of Exodus and Sinai require a great personality behind them. And a faith as unique as Israel’s demands a founder as surely as does Christianity – or Islam, for that matter. To deny that role to Moses would force us to posit another person of the same name”.

Bright’s Moses is a Moses of historical importance who exists only within the pages of the Hebrew Bible. Any reconstruction of the historical Moses, for Bright then, will depend solely on the biblical narratives. Bright assumes the existence of this figure and admits to the lack of historical verification. His Moses is authenticated by the text itself.

Elias Auerbach (Auerbach 1975:7) offers a similar approach to the historical Moses. He notes: “Our sources are exclusively biblical; nothing is known about Moses from any other source,” for example from Egyptian records, so that “… only the biblical narratives remain.” For Auerbach, like Bright, to reconstruct Moses means going to the only source – the biblical text itself.

Dewey M. Beegle, on the other hand, accepts that there was a Moses, but concludes his book by saying, “the leading role in the whole story is Yahweh’s. Moses was a gifted man, but it was only by Yahweh’s grace that he lived to exercise those gifts” (Beegle 1972:347-8). Beegle’s Moses certainly does not have the same cachet that Bright’s Moses has. All honour is given to Yahweh, relegating Moses to a secondary role as if to say Moses took no initiative in the whole story. Beegle’s Moses acts as a pawn to Yahweh’s authority.

An image of the historical Moses originating in Germany is less conservative, and in fact sceptical, as seen in Noth’s (1960:136) observation: “To describe him [Moses] as the ‘founder of a religion’ or even speak of a ‘mosaic religion’ is quite misleading and incompatible with the Moses tradition as it was developed later on”.

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Noth’s answer to the historical question of the beginning of Israel’s religion underplays the figure of Moses and his contribution to that beginning. It is this attempt “to reduce him” [Moses], that Bright (1972:124) notes as “unconvincing”.

More recently, Carl S. Ehrlich has considered the figure of Moses in Judaism in a way that is not altogether different from Noth’s idea. He says: “While the Jewish religion [has] ... occasionally been referred to as the Mosaic faith, this is a misnomer that apotheosises Moses in a manner out of keeping with Jewish tradition” (Ehrlich 2001:12). In the ensuing discussion Ehrlich (:12) points out that “Judaism has maintained the distinction between the object of worship, namely God and the major source of the revelation concerning the divine” as found in the character of Moses. Indeed, the origins of some religions are closely linked with an individual, and it would almost appear as if the individual alone was responsible for its success, as in the case of Buddha or Muhammed.

The biblical narratives allow us to endow Moses with the many qualities of a leader, such as negotiator with the Pharaoh, miracle worker, mediator between Yahweh and Israel, lawgiver, and leader of the Exodus. From these descriptions, there is no apparent deification of Moses. In all the roles he plays, he plays them as a man albeit with extra-ordinary qualities. No doubt, his ability to challenge, create and change the order of society accords him certain deference. But there is no contest between Yahweh and Moses. Yahweh remains The Divine authority under whose inspiration, the text tells us, Moses brings to bear his uniquely personal response to human crises.

Ehrlich (:40) further notes that, “... Moses belongs firmly in the realm of legend. There is no external evidence for his life and deeds. Whoever he was, all that remains of him is the legacy that future generations have attached to his name”.

Most scholars admit to the lack of outside sources concerning Moses. However, legends and myths may be fictional, but do they not carry historical value in
reconstructing the figure concerned here? Even if the Moses stories are weighted by myths and legends, what ultimately is their heuristic value in uncovering the historicity of Moses?

Auerbach (1975:9) has some answers. “Legends which centre around events or persons have almost always some sound historical substance …. Consequently, events must not be considered as unhistorical because they are given in legendary form. Rather, for the ancient historical narrative of the East, this is the given form of presentation. King Sargon of Akkad, although his birth, youth, and rise to royal dignity are related in the form of a legend, is a historical personality”.

Auerbach’s reference to the legendary form of the ancient historical narrative and its treatment of the tale of King Sargon’s birth, may be applied equally to the birth motif in the Moses story (Ex 2:1-10), which is discussed in detail in chapter four.

1.5.2 Conclusion

Since we cannot prove or disprove Moses’ historicity, it is surely pointless pursuing such a debate. However, something as extraordinary as the creation of the beginnings of national Israelite religion presupposes an extraordinary individual behind it. The biblical text describes a period in Hebrew history where a whole community went through profound changes of a legal, political, religious and geographical nature. The driving force behind these changes was Moses, and in this figure, we are presented with someone who exemplifies all the elements of charismatic leadership which were later set out by Max Weber. This is the focus of the study that follows.

In the next chapter, I will sketch a possible portrait of the character of Moses by looking at narrative literature in the Hebrew Bible, from the book of Exodus.
CHAPTER 2
THE CHARACTER OF MOSES

2.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I have tried to argue the question about the historicity of Moses with the aim of finding the truth - an attempt Fokkelman (1999:58) would declare to be "fruitless". He would accuse me of being "stupid as to play off one writer against the other." However, not having done what I might be accused of would not have allowed me to know what the thinking around this rather "desperate" (Fokkelman's word) question is.

In this chapter I am taking counsel from Berlin (1994:16), who draws on T. Todorov, by simply looking at the narrative literature in the Hebrew Bible itself, using "...the principles of literary science rather than the principles of some other science" like psychology or sociology, to sketch a possible portrait of the character of Moses. The purpose is to elucidate the character of Moses using only what is given in the Hebrew Bible book of Exodus, and to explain why only what is given, is given. Any temptation to explain Moses' behaviour as emerging in the neuro-constitution of his brain will be avoided, for this, I believe, is the work of scholars suitably qualified in those particular disciplines.

To this end then, the chapter attempts to investigate the following:

- narrative as a form of representation;
- three character types as portrayed by Berlin;
- a character sketch of Moses; and
then offers some preliminary conclusions.
2.2 Narrative as a form of representation

If history denies us access to Moses, then it is to the biblical narratives we must go in order to glean a description of the character of Moses. Moses can only be known as he is presented in the narratives. Of course, there is no way of assessing whether Moses is accurately represented, but Bar-Efrat (1989:47) indicates that "we can judge whether a particular character is convincing as a human being...". This is important later when I discuss the characteristics of a charismatic leader in chapter 4, because it takes a certain kind of human character to be a convincing charismatic leader.

In the Hebrew narratives, the writer establishes himself as the narrator. This means that "the narrator draws those lines and selects those details, right down to the smallest that suit him" (Fokkelman 1999:55). The narrator then is not without authority, and "his authority is a result of his position as narrator" (:55). In the light of this statement, it is worth noting how certain characteristics attached to names, places, sanctuaries or rites are preserved with astonishing persistence, while information regarding, for example, physical traits of human characters in the Hebrew Bible hardly exist. For this reason, it is not possible to construct a physical portrait of Moses. Bar-Efrat (1989:48) says, "...information about someone's outward aspect serves solely as a means of advancing the plot or explaining its course". Berlin (1994:34) articulates a similar point, adding that "the ratio of description in general to action and dialogue is relatively low and character tends to be subordinate to plot". And yet physical appearance, dress, gesture and mannerisms are part of characterisation, albeit only the surface of characterisation. We would have to be happy with the epithetic "a fine baby", in Exodus 2:2 as the sum total of Moses' physical description.

The narrator of the Exodus narratives has exclusive right to determine what is mentioned and what is not. The narrator does not pander to the modern reader's need for visual images regarding characters. Mendenhall, quoted in de Vaux
(1966:15), says that the writer of antiquity writes to "preserve" and not to "create", as one sees in the block characterisation which generally occurs fairly early in the pages of the modern-day novel, making the character intelligible for the action and dialogue that later unfolds. Perhaps the Bible's exclusion of Moses' physical portrait causes the reader to refrain from making an association between his physical appearance and his nature (Bar-Efrat 1989:48). However, David, Bar-Efrat (:50) reminds us, is the exception because his beauty is described in 1 Sam 16:12 not to show any "development in the events associated with him" but simply because "his external beauty may have been one of the reasons for his popularity with the people ...".

The Bible's reticence in dealing with the physical image of Moses has not stopped artists and filmmakers alike from creating their own visual image, even if it is the rather unfortunate sculpture by Michaelangelo. While we are curious about our character's image, it is only the surface of characterization giving us only one dimension. For beneath the surface of appearances we want to know who the person Moses is: to see what he sees and feel what he feels; to know what is "at the heart of his humanity" (McKee 1999:101). These aspects of his character will help construct a certain type or a combination of types of personality of the charismatic leader, Moses.

2.3 Character types

Berlin (1994:23) lists three types of characters:

- flat characters possess "a single quality or trait;"
- round or fully fledged characters are complex characters "manifesting a multitude of traits and appearing as 'real people,' " while,
- an agent or functionary character has no characterization at all. This kind of character is "a function of the plot or part of the setting" (:32).
Is Moses a flat or round character, or does he serve as a mere agent? Or is it as simple as that? The complex features making up Moses' portrait emerge only by degrees and only through the dialogue and action in the narrative. For although Moses may not be "seen", he can be perceived through his "thoughts, emotions and motivations" (Berlin 1994:38).

2.4 A character sketch of Moses

"True character," says McKee (1999:101), "is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure the deeper the revelation, the truer the choice to the character's essential nature." The first time Moses is encountered as an adult is in Exodus 2:11-14 where he is visibly disturbed after discovering the plight of the Hebrews. The narrator chooses not to prepare the reader for the way in which Moses reacts to the sight of an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. The narrative is sketchy, revealing snatches of Moses' character. Moses, it is told, is now an adult who appears to know he is of Hebrew descent but discovers for the first time the plight of his people. His early identification with the Hebrews is strong. Moses displays a violent temperament, killing the Egyptian not in the heat of the moment, but in a more premeditated fashion, first looking around to see that no one was watching. Moses is cautious and thorough: not only does he make sure no one is looking, he also gets rid of the body afterwards.

In these verses mentioned above, we see what Moses sees: "... he saw how they were forced to do hard labour", "... he even saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew...", "when he saw that no one was watching...", "...he ... saw two Hebrew men fighting" [italics mine]. The verb "to see" in the perfect tense is frequently used. Does it contribute to how one sees the character? Quite. "Seeing", according to Bar-Efrat (1989:21), "is mentioned more often than hearing, and this is not surprising since the individual usually learns about the situation through the sense
of sight. The other senses feature much less." Simply put, we see what Moses sees, and through this perceive his world view.

Moses' killing of the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12 is echoed in Exodus 32:26-28 when he gives orders to the Levites to kill all those who were disobedient in not keeping the law. Of course there is no proportionality between Moses' earlier killing of one Egyptian, and the three thousand Hebrews who are later killed at his command. Clearly, Moses is not afraid to enforce his authority.

The character of Moses is also revealed through his emotions. From his passionate sense of justice comes Moses' outburst of anger. An emotion encountered again in Exodus 32:19 when his "anger burned" and he throws down the tablets and breaks them. This seems to be a very petulant action, and why is he suddenly angry now? He knew what had been going on regarding the worship of the golden calf – God had told him. He was calm and sensible with God, now he's petulant and irrational. What purpose is served by breaking the tablets? Apart from it being a symbolic gesture, this is not clear. Perhaps it is one thing being told by God about the appalling behaviour of his people, and quite another thing when he actually sees it for himself. Here again Moses displays a strong sense for what is right by being angry at those who do not have the same sense. His anger could stem from being let down, which would make the emotion valid (but not the manner in which he directs it, though).

In Midian (Ex 2:17), Moses again demonstrates his strong sense of right and wrong when he acts to stop the shepherds' selfish and wrongful behaviour. Moses is unselfish and altruistic, a quality that will surface again and again in his battle with the pharaoh for the release of the Hebrews. His explicit commitment to people (whether his own or the helpless women at the well) establishes a leitmotif for Moses' charismatic leadership discussed in chapter 4.
Midian also expands his biography somewhat. Moses marries Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, who gives him a son (Ex 2:21-22). The naming of his son, Gershom, is revealing in that it shows Moses’ difficulty in assimilating with the Midianites. Although Moses is married to a Midianite, he still identifies strongly with the Hebrews. No information, however, is given concerning Moses’ feelings towards these developments in Midian. The narrative is silent about whether he was a loving husband and father. No glimpses of intimacy between him and Zipporah, or between him and his son are shown. Moses is presented here as a flat character (Berlin 1994:23) or, as I see him, a one-dimensional being.

In the verses describing Yahweh God’s introduction to Moses in the form of the burning bush (Ex 3), Moses shows a curiosity and goes to investigate without being afraid. His answer, “Yes, here I am,” when he is called, is a sign of a self-assured and fearless person. Moses, however, fears only God, as seen in his response when he covers his face and refuses to look. In verse 11 of the same chapter, Moses’ statement, “… I am nobody. How can I go…” is a perfectly reasonable one. Indeed, how can one man take on the state of Egypt? Said matter-of-factly, a man of reason and caution. He may be afraid to look at God, but he’s not afraid to ask a sensible question. Does the “…I am nobody” denote humbleness or lack of self-belief? Perhaps this is open for debate, but compared to the might of the pharaoh, it is probably not an unrealistic assessment of himself. Here, through Moses’ dialogue with God the reader can identify with him.

In the words, “…when I go … what can I tell them?” (Ex 3:13), Moses is again presented as a sensible, cautious man, thinking through all the problems he is likely to face and requiring a proper plan of action from God. God does indeed make a long speech (Ex 3:14-21), outlining a detailed plan of action, and making extravagant promises, but Moses’ response is again very matter-of-fact: “…but suppose the Israelites do not believe me …” (Ex 4:1). I don’t think Moses is making an excuse here; he is simply getting all the assurance needed for the difficult task ahead of him. Of course, our hopes are further diminished when he
announces his speech impediment (Ex 4:10), a trait that is not noted earlier in the narrative, though perhaps it only needed to be articulated at this point. Moses' physical peculiarity is revealed, making the reader wonder about God's choice of an inarticulate negotiator. Moses' objection, nevertheless, is still a practical concern.

Exodus 4:13, "...No, Lord, please send someone else," reveals how difficult and stroppy Moses has become. God has just said, in the preceding verses, that he will make sure Moses speaks well, but Moses wants someone else sent. God calls his bluff, though, by procuring Aaron as his accompanist in the negotiations. Moses has now run out of excuses.

During most of Moses' dealings with the pharaoh (Ex 5 - Ex 10), he is pretty much carrying out God's instructions. Not much in the way of character is revealed, and in fact, throughout these negotiations he acts as an agent rather than a rounded or even flat character.

Moses also calls on Yahweh to intercede on behalf of the Egyptians (Ex 8:9), and the Hebrews (Ex 17:4), showing his reliance on his god when the situation is desperate. He is also a judge, who after taking advice from Jethro (Ex 18:13-26) regarding his heavy workload, establishes a hierarchical system of judges, thereby creating an administrative framework. Moses shows his ability to act on the practical advice given to him by Jethro. Moses also demonstrates his managerial skills by the way in which he is able to organize a large group of people through delegation. Through all of these actions, Moses not only reveals his spiritual resourcefulness, but the practical, innovative, and knowledgeable aspects of his character.

2.5 Conclusion
Given the reticence of the biblical narratives in Exodus, a full-length portrait of Moses is not available. His thoughts, senses, emotions and abilities, though, are perceived through the action and dialogue in the narratives, where Moses becomes less opaque to the reader. Certain character traits, however, are more predominant than others, and persist throughout the book. The most obvious traits are, on the one hand, his commitment to his people, revealed in his passionate sense of justice, demonstrated by outbursts of anger and a violent temperament, compared to, on the other hand, his rational, reasonable and cautious behaviour in his encounters with Yahweh. This is what is at the heart of his humanity.

While Moses is presented as a flat character, and sometimes as an agent, he is never quite a fully rounded character, for the whole truth about Moses is never revealed. However, enough is given to construct a little more than a miniature portrait of the strong and effective leader Moses.

An enhanced portrait of Moses emerges when he is viewed through his charismatic actions, where he reveals his "extraordinary" and "superhuman" qualities. But first, it will be necessary to differentiate and distinguish Weber's three types of authority, namely, legal authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority. This is the task of the chapter that follows.
CHAPTER 3
WEBER’S THREE TYPES OF AUTHORITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to examine Max Weber’s sociological analysis of forms of domination based on his fundamental concept of the organisation of authority, namely, legal authority, traditional authority and charismatic authority. I will, however, explain why it is I speak of Moses’ charismatic leadership and not charismatic authority, beginning with some clarification of the concept of charisma.

3.2 The concept of charisma

The concept of charisma, “gift of grace”, was taken from the vocabulary of early Christianity and used by Weber (1968:216) mainly in the category of religious leadership. The term, charisma, however, in Malamat’s (1996:300) words, has become “infused with secular content”, and for Burns (1978:244) it is “cheapened” and “overburdened.” In popular parlance, the word charisma is frequently used to describe the attractiveness and popularity of preachers and politicians, pop stars and athletes alike. Ascribed to every kind of person who displays personal attractiveness, the meaning of charisma has strayed from its original intended meaning.

Charismatic leadership, in the religious realm, is intricately linked to Weber’s sociological analysis of forms of domination based on his fundamental concept of the organisation of authority. Weber (1968:215, 1112) credits Rudolf Sohm, who worked out the sociological character of charismatic domination, but developed his theory with regard to ecclesiastical authority in the early Christian church. Weber (:1112) describes Sohm’s treatment of the concept of charisma as “one-
sided,” offering a more universal and generalized understanding of authority to be applied impartially to all persons who fit into any one of the particular categories he had created.

3.3 Weber’s three types of authority

Weber (1968:215) advanced three basic types of authority, namely legal authority, traditional authority and charismatic authority. He refers to these types of authority as ideal or pure types. According to Parsons, in his introduction to Weber (1966:13), “the ideal type as Weber used it … does not describe an individual course of action;” it describes a typical one “under a generalized rubric …”. Parsons (:13) further notes that “it contains … all the necessary properties or features of a concrete act or complex of action.” These phenomena are universal, although they are most visible in the religious sphere (Weber 1968:1112).

By differentiating and distinguishing the three types of authority, the concept of charismatic authority will be illuminated, followed by an explanation of my choice, for the purposes of this paper, of the term leadership with regard to Moses as the bearer of charisma, as opposed to the term authority.

3.3.1 Legal authority

Weber’s (1968:215, 220) first type of authority is called legal authority, which he often refers to as bureaucratic authority in his discussions. The basis of this type of authority lies in its “set of impersonal principles” where “obedience is not owed to a person” (Blau 1963:308). Obedience, explains Weber (1968:215), is when the person obeying takes the content of the command to be the “basis of action for its own sake.” Of course, for the individuals concerned – that is, those persons who are officials in the legal order – obedience to a legally established impersonal
order applies only to an office. Outside the office, the individuals are treated as private individuals (:220). The structure of the organization of legal authority is bureaucratic in the form of an administrative staff which is hierarchical, with higher and lower levels of authority (:218). Officials are chosen on the basis of technical qualifications, and hence appointed not elected (:220). Remuneration is in the form of money which is fixed with a right to terminate the appointment (:220).

3.3.2 Traditional authority

Weber’s (1968:226) second type of authority, traditional authority, is based on age-old rule and powers. Obedience, therefore, is not to a legally established impersonal order as in legal authority, “but to the person who occupies a position of authority by tradition or who has been chosen for it by the traditional master” (:226).

Weber (:231) provides a sub-classification of the two different kinds of authority, namely, gerontocracy and patriarchalism as “the most elementary types of traditional domination where the master has no personal administrative staff.”

Characteristic of a gerontocracy is the form of government by old people, usually the oldest in years. Patriarchalism grows out of the “master’s authority over his household” (:1006). Weber calls this type of domination pre-bureaucratic, “which is based … not on an obedience to abstract norms but to a person,” and to the reverence for customs, ancient and sacred, which have always existed. In this form of authority, “there can be no such thing as new legislation” (Weber 1966:60). Indeed, there cannot be, which makes for an inflexible system of authority, and one that is not easily adaptable to change.

While legal authority and traditional authority are antagonistic in many respects, they share common features like stability and an everyday character (:1111); in
other words, they become permanent social systems, turning themselves into institutions “to meet ongoing routine demands.” In this respect,” Weber (:1111) says, “bureaucracy is merely the rational counterpart of patriarchalism.”

### 3.3.3 Charismatic authority

Weber’s (1968:241) third type of authority, charismatic authority, stands in direct opposition to the two types of authority mentioned above, legal and traditional. It is this opposition to the established norms and practices found in traditional and legal authorities that Weber (:1115) calls “revolutionary.”

#### 3.3.3.1 Charismatic authority as revolutionary

Weber (1966:361) refers to legal authority and traditional authority as “forms of everyday routine control of action”, while charismatic authority is the direct antithesis of those forms of authority. Weber (:361) uses antithesis of charisma to mean, “on the one hand, … the extraordinary and temporary as opposed to the everyday and routine; on the other hand, the sacred as opposed to the profane.” In other words, as Shils (1968:387) puts it: “the legitimacy of the norms enunciated by charismatic authority lies outside the norms practised in the existing society” and is bolstered by direct contact with divine powers. This kind of authority “knows no abstract laws and regulations and no formal adjudication” (Weber 1968:1115). According to Weber (:1115), “its 'objective' law flows from the highly personal experience of divine grace and god-like heroic strength and rejects all external order solely for the sake of glorifying genuine prophetic and heroic ethos.” The external order refers to legal rule, as well as traditional authority and its notions of sanctity. These forms of established order are overturned, and in their place a system of authority, claiming to be legitimated by the direct experience of divine grace, is created. As Weber (:1117) puts it, “instead of reverence for customs that
are ancient and hence sacred, it enforces the inner subjection to the unprecedented and absolutely unique and therefore Divine.”

3.3.3.2 The nature of charismatic authority

It is this reference to “inner subjection to the unprecedented and absolutely unique,” that Weber (1968:241) applied the term charisma to mean “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.” Weber (:241) explains that these qualities are not accessible to the ordinary person, “but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a ‘leader’”. The charismatic leader, then, possesses “specific gifts of body and mind” that are considered supernatural and all extraordinary needs arising out of moments of distress whether “psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political”, cause him to exercise his powers without compensation or specific training (:1111). The prerequisite condition for the claim to charisma rests, firstly, in a situation of distress which is usually outside the everyday or routine structures. Second, and most important, is the recognition of charisma by the followers to establish the power and authenticity of the leader (:1115). The charismatic leader is not appointed by the consent of the followers, in the form of an election; rather, it is their “duty” to recognize his charisma (:1113). A failure to recognize the leader would result in a collapse of the claim (:1113). “Psychologically this recognition is a matter of complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality, arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope” (Weber 1966:359).
3.3.3.3 Charismatic authority as unstable

While charismatic authority displays unique powers, it is, however, naturally unstable (:1114). Weber (:1114) explains that the charismatic leader does not derive his authority from an established order and custom but he gains and retains his authority “solely by proving his powers in practice.” Kalberg (1994:124) refers to this instability as a “fragility” of charismatic leadership because of the need for the “‘superhuman’ personality to repeatedly demonstrate unusual powers and a right to rule.” The faithful followers will only see the leader as their “god-sent master” if he proves himself with miracles and heroic deeds (Weber 1968:1114).

Because the powers of a charismatic leader are superhuman and supernatural they are also momentary, which means they can run out. While these qualities are extraordinary and unique, they are limited powers as demonstrated by Jesus on the cross when he felt “forsaken by his God” (Mark 15:34), (:1114). If the leader feels “deserted by his god or his magical or heroic powers [and] above all, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers,” his charismatic authority, naturally, will disappear (:242). This, says Weber (1966:360), “is the genuine charismatic meaning of the ‘gift of grace’.”

3.4 Why charismatic leadership and not charismatic authority

Authority in legal and traditional forms of domination is not vested in a single person, for while legal authority is based on a set of impersonal principles (Blau 1963:308), traditional authority, too, is in the form of rules “bound to the precedents handed down from the past” (Weber 1968:243). In the context of authority, the bearer of charisma is always an individual leader deriving his impetus from direct contact with unprecedented ultimate powers that become a source of legitimacy.
It is therefore appropriate that my hypothesis speaks of Moses’ charismatic leadership, and not his charismatic authority.

3.5 Conclusion

I have differentiated and distinguished the main points of Weber’s three types of authority, namely, legal, traditional and charismatic, and what has emerged is that charismatic authority stands in direct opposition to the other two types of authority. The basis for charismatic leadership does not lie in a set of impersonal principles or precedents in the form of customs, but in a presumed connection with the unprecedented and therefore divine powers. It is its rejection of a rule-based order, either in the form of traditional or legal authority, that makes charismatic authority revolutionary, for the charismatic leader intervenes in a situation of distress, where the needs are extraordinary and not at all of an everyday, routine nature, and aspires to establish a system of authority by creating a new order as well as breaking the old order.

This chapter presented a broad overview in general terms, illuminating charismatic authority. The following chapter explores in detail the specific characteristics of the charismatic leader, Moses.
4.1 Introduction

Moses assumes leadership in a particular time in Israel’s history and in a specific context, overturns the established order, and in its place, creates a system of authority in the form of mono-Yahwism. He does all this claiming to be legitimated by the direct experience of divine grace. What kind of leader is Moses to exhibit such a revolutionary force, and what kind of person is he? He is the kind of person that is “extraordinary” and “superhuman”, with a strong personality whose leadership is described as charismatic. Moreover, this kind of leadership can only develop within a particular social context whose validity is confirmed by its followers.

This chapter, then, will attempt to show:
- a specific social context as the source for the charismatic leader’s emergence and operation;
- an indispensable requisite for the emergence of charismatic leadership consists in the ability of the followers to recognize their leader. Moses authenticates himself to his followers using signs and an appropriate message;
- full charismatic leadership is developed in Moses because of his ability to alleviate suffering and define for the Hebrews their national goals, socially and religiously, thereby creating a new order; and
- the factors that drive the charismatic leader.
- I will, however, begin by looking at Moses’ exposure at birth in the form of a foundling motif found in the story of heroes in antiquity.
4.2 Foundling motif

Weber defines charisma as:

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set
apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural,
superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These
are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as
of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual
concerned is treated as a leader.

(Weber 1966: 358-9)

In his definition of charisma, Weber refers to "...a certain quality of an individual
personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men ...". Moses, it
would appear, was set apart from the very start of his life, as revealed in his less
than ordinary foundling story.

The story of Moses' birth, exposure and subsequent rescue and adoption (Ex 2: 1-
10), need not be repeated here as it is all too familiar from the biblical narrative,
and thanks to Cecil B. de Mille’s film, The Ten Commandments (1956) and of
course, more recently, S. Spielberg’s animated Prince of Egypt. On a literary level,
it would appear that the narrator of the Exodus “wished to assign to the figure of
Moses an unusual birth story appropriate to his position in the Exodus tradition”
and therefore employed “an ancient and popular literary device”, in the form of a
birth exposure (Lewis 1976: 386-7).

Whether or not one accepts the view that the account of baby Moses in a basket
on the river was later added to the biblical story “on the grounds that such a person
of destiny must have a remarkable beginning” (Beegle 1972:53), it nevertheless
provides a charming introduction to our charismatic leader’s biography. However,
it does more than charm as it provides a powerful mythical underpinning to the
charismatic leader’s life, and endows the leader with an auspicious beginning.
The idea of the foundling motif concerning Moses’ birth, exposure and rescue has parallels with the earliest known Babylonian legend around King Sargon of Akkad (Coats 1988:46). Coats quotes the following inscription:

Sargon, the mighty king, king of Agade, am I.
My mother was a changeling, my father I knew not.
The brother[s] of my father loved the hills.
The city is Azupirnu, which is situated on the banks of the Euphrates.
My changeling mother conceived me, in secret she bore me.
She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she sealed my lid.
She cast me into the river which rose not (over) me.
The river bore me up and carried me to Akki, the drawer of water.
Akki, the drawer of water, lifted me out as he dipped his e[w]er.
Akki, the drawer of water, [took me] as his son (and) reared me.
Akki, the drawer of water, appointed me as his gardener.
While I was a gardener, Ishtar granted me (her) love,
And for four and […] years I exercised kingship… .

(Coats 1988:46)

While this narrative reflects some parallels with the Moses birth story, it also shows dissimilarities. Firstly, both tales show exposure of the infants although Moses appears to be an older infant when he is exposed. Yet, the social basis for their exposures is different. While the reason for Sargon’s exposure might lie in the fact that he was illegitimate, the reason for Moses’ exposure was to protect him from genocide. Sargon knows nothing of his father and little of his mother, while Moses knows that he is born into the Levi tribe (Ex 2:1). The reason for these differences, explains Lewis (1976:387), is that “ancient Near Eastern motifs” that were borrowed by the Hebrews, were always “adapted to reflect the spirit of Hebrew civilization”. Possibly then, “details of the tale were changed to soften the harshness of the exposure and bring it in line with Israel’s moral sensibilities”
Nevertheless, the parallels between the two exposure narratives are apparent. More important, however, is the unordinariness of the birth story, which authenticates the leader, and sets him apart for the role he will play in the future.

The irony of the rescue story (Ex 2:5-10) is that Moses is adopted by the very courts that issued the orders of Hebrew male-baby genocide, which probably foreshadows his inevitable entry into leadership. The rescue story also reinforces Weber's definition of a charismatic leader being "set apart from ordinary men", where Moses is removed from the ordinary course of the River Nile and placed within the ruling caste in the pharaoh’s court. The Bible is silent concerning Moses’ upbringing in the court except for a single line in the New Testament, Acts 7:22: “He was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became a great man in words and deeds”. Enrlich (2001:54-55) points out that postbiblical sources in many midrashic traditions offer information to fill the gaps regarding Moses’ childhood, upbringing, education, and character development, conveyed in the form of tales or fables. If Moses was immersed in Egyptian culture and learning, then it gave him “bicultural knowledge and facility as an Egyptian and as an Israelite” (Gottwald 1985:194). Indeed, this is quite useful for a leader who would later on have to negotiate with the pharaoh, the release of the Hebrews out of Egypt. The fact that Moses has an Egyptian name might also lend credence to the fact that he was raised in the Egyptian courts. Garsiel (1991:18) points out that Moses’ name demonstrates “how far the biblical narrator may exploit his freedom of creativity”, for Moses is not a Hebrew name. It is, however, dealt with as though it were, and a connection between the name and certain incidents is established (:18).

This raises the question about context in which the charismatic leader, Moses, emerges and operates. Moses can only be relevant within a very particular social situation that warrants his emergence as a charismatic leader.

The social conditions of the Hebrews in Egypt will establish the context for the emergence of the charismatic leader.
4.3 The social structure as the basis for charisma

The specific social context for the charismatic leader's emergence lies in the social structure of the Hebrews in Egypt. Under this heading, four points will be discussed, namely:

- Why Egypt?
- Who were the Hebrews in Egypt?
- The Hebrews' stay in Egypt; and
- A few preliminary conclusions

The Hebrews in Egypt appear to be a bleak group that experienced poverty, hardship, landlessness and instability, which resulted in a lack of cohesive unity, or even a single form of leadership. It is in this context that charismatic leadership would begin to emerge.

4.3.1 Why Egypt?

The Hebrews consisting of Moses' ancestors, being Jacob and his nuclear family, were former Canaanites who migrated to Egypt at the invitation of Joseph. According to Gottwald (1979:76), “the Joseph story serves to close the awkward gap between Jacob and his sons in Canaan and the Israelites in bondage in Egypt by offering an explanation of how Jacob and his family migrated to Egypt.” The ancestors of Israel were often seen as pastoral nomads because of the various references in the Bible to their movements. But their movements can be explained “as historically-caused migrations for purposes of change of residence, religious pilgrimage, strife with outsiders, securing wives ... or escaping famine ... rather than due to the regular seasonal movements of pastoral nomads” (Gottwald 1985:172).
In the case of ancestor Jacob and his family, their migration to Egypt was to escape the famine in Canaan (Gen 47:11). Bright (1972:85) reminds us of an important point that “Semitic had access to Egypt at all periods” and that “we need not, therefore, suppose that the fathers of all who came out in the Exodus entered Egypt at the same time”. In the late Bronze Age, Egypt entered her second period of stability under the pharaohs (:43), boasting once again a prosperous economy, military prowess and a prestigious culture (Browning 1996:111). Egypt then, was an appropriate place of refuge for the Jacob crowd. However, while Egypt would serve the purpose of being a haven for the Hebrews in famine, it did not allow them to secure and realize their more long-term concern of land (Gen 15:18).

4.3.2 Who were the Hebrews?

Theissen (1984:53) has suggested that the Hebrews in Egypt “were sociologically members of the category of Habiru or … had amalgamated with such groups”. However the term ‘apiru used to describe “bands and communities of escapees from Canaanite feudalism” could suggest a slanted usage, “since all references to ‘apiru in the Near East are by officials in the dominant order” and it is not clear if people accepted the term for themselves (Gottwald 1979:407).

Gottwald (:401) points out that ‘apiru and Hebrew are linguistically related although there is no certainty as to the language or the verbal root from which the socio political technical term was originally drawn. ‘Apiru are those who “stand …. outside the prevailing order, both as ‘fugitives’ or ‘refugees’ who flee from the dominant order and as ‘robbers’ or ‘rebels’ who prey upon or threaten the dominant order” (:401). Being on the outside of the prevailing order means that they were “disadvantaged … without land or possessions, who were often conscripted for forced labour [like the Hebrews in Egypt] or who spent their lives as robbers and outlaws, i.e. as people who did not belong to the established order,
separated from it or excluded from it” (Theissen 1984:53). Bright (1972:119) purports a view similar to Theissen, mentioned above, of the presence of ‘apiru in Egypt who are mentioned in "numerous texts from the fifteenth century [B.C.] onward" and later “in the documents of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties they appear repeatedly as state slaves.”

The Hebrews, when compared to the ‘apiru, seem to have a similar social and political background. However, the term ‘apiru would have been used in a pejorative way by the ruling body in their identification of those outside the status quo. Nevertheless, one should not abandon information regarding the ‘apiru as it might possibly inform one regarding the life and habits of the Hebrews. After all, they could be one and the same people.

4.3.3 The Hebrews’ stay in Egypt

The Hebrews who settled in Goshen in the Delta region of the Nile (Ex 9:26) were guests of the pharaoh. There they continued as “stockbreeders ... small gardeners and fishermen” (Gottwald 1985:224). Although they lived in Egypt for a long but limited time, 430 years (Ex 12:40), they did not own the land they lived on. The pharaoh owned all of Egypt and “all her resources [were] at the disposal of his projects” (Bright 1972:39). While the Hebrews were not given citizenship, they nevertheless adapted themselves, economically speaking, to an Egyptian way of life (Albertz 1994:45). However, the accession of the new pharaoh, discussed below, brought with it a pattern of change that altered the status of the Hebrews. They were made slaves of the state who were forced to work on building projects.

4.3.4 The Hebrews as slaves

The Hebrews became persecuted and enslaved when according to Exodus 1 verse 8, “... a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, came to power in Egypt”. It was at Joseph’s invitation that his father, ancestor Jacob, and his families,
presented themselves in Egypt with a subsequent blessing and acknowledgement from the then pharaoh. Of course, with the passing away of Joseph and Jacob and their generations, the new pharaoh was not aware of the arrangement that Joseph had made for his people concerning their residence in Egypt. Boadt (1984:161-2) suggests that this period of persecution and enslavement of the Hebrews began when the Hyksos, or foreign rulers, were defeated by Egypt in 1550 B.C. It would seem logical then, that the pharaoh of Joseph’s time was one of the earlier Hyksos kings. However, Bright (1972:85) argues that “while it is tempting to regard the Pharaoh of Joseph’s day as one of the earlier Hyksos kings – who being themselves Semites were presumably hospitable to other Semites – and to seek the Pharaoh who “knew not Joseph” among the rulers of the Empire, there is no proof for it”. The “evidence for Semitic slaves in the period between 1500 and 1400 at Serabit El Khadem, an Egyptian turquoise mine in the Sinai desert” … show “rocks covered with inscriptions written by Semitic workers in the mines” (Boadt 1984:162). While there is proof that the Hebrews did work as slaves, there is no way of finding out who the pharaoh was.

The pharaoh of Moses’ time, is open to speculation, since Egyptian annals contain no reference to Moses, and the Bible does not mention the date or the name of the pharaoh.

However, the 13th century appears to be the most accepted date for the Exodus (Boadt 1984:162; Gottwald 1985:191; Bimson 1981:30-2). Bimson (1981:31) draws attention to the fact that “the locations of Raamses at Tanis and … Pithom at Tell El Maskhouta have both been claimed to prove a 13th century date for the Exodus” mentioned in Ex 1:11. Rameses II (1290–1224) then, would serve as the likely pharaoh for the oppression of the Hebrews and the Exodus (Boadt 1984:162; Gottwald 1985:191).

Harrison (1970:576) says that the period under Rameses II was a “period of rebuilding” and “it alludes to one of the most active and brilliant eras in the whole
spectrum of Egyptian history”. This explains, perhaps, why the Hebrews were conscripted to forced labour in the Delta shore cities of Raamses and Pithom. According to Gelb, discussed in Matthews and Benjamin (1993:200), up until 1500 B.C. Egypt relied on its own people “to do the bulk of its agricultural and construction work”. It was only in the 18th Dynasty of the New Kingdom (ca 1450) that prisoners of war from Nubia and Syria Palestine were brought into Egypt as slaves (:200). So the Hebrews who stayed in the Delta area were not the only ones who were forced to slavery.

In the ancient world slavery was “a means of population control and reduction” (Ackerman 1974:83). However, the use of slavery to break the Hebrews physically and mentally in order to control them numerically had the opposite effect, and expanded their population according to Exodus 1:12. While slavery had a positive side in terms of the numerical growth, slavery per se did not allow them to annex land.

The plight of the Hebrews changed as the policy of government regarding them changed. Their mode of life from herdsmen, gardeners and fishermen who were in charge of their own affairs changed when they became forced labourers on public works under the authority of the state.

4.3.5 Conclusion

Whether or not the Hebrews were in fact the ‘apiru, there appear to be similarities in the identities of both these groups. They shared common experiences of poverty, marginalization, living-on-the-fringe of society, and a lack of cohesive unity and instability, which often brings with it landlessness and a lack of possessions. Their rejection of the dominant status quo could have made them in Weber’s (1996:65) words, a pariah people. The bands and communities may have had
some form of organization, but organization through a single form of leadership was missing. Their religion would appear to be parochial, limiting it only to the migratory household. One can only guess that the Hebrews, having spent years in Egypt, “must have eroded [their] ancient customs”), and the years of suffering would have “eliminated all aspects of worship” (Beegle 1972:67). Therefore, the establishment of Egyptian hegemony further exacerbated the lack of solidarity within the group (Ex 2:11-15), giving the Hebrews no means of responding to the oppressors.

Clearly, traditional authority, with its routine structures taking care of everyday affairs, does not possess in its mechanism the capacity to deal with unusual situations like slavery and its ensuing repercussions. Moses, a charismatically disposed person, is able to grasp the insufficiency and failure of such authority, and it is the failure of such authority in a situation of crisis that produces a person like Moses who offers a solution.

4.4 The emergence of charismatic leadership

It is in the context of physical hardship, unrealized political aspirations, economic and anthropological impoverishment, and spiritual dryness and lack of organization, that charismatic leadership would begin to emerge. Moses’ leadership develops and takes a charismatic form for three reasons, and each of these will be discussed below:

- The suffering and intolerance experienced by the Hebrews had been carried by them for a long time, until Moses took the initiative by showing his anger and disgust towards the situation (Ex 2:11-14). In Weberian terms, Moses is the natural leader in a situation of distress (Weber 1968:1111).
- The Hebrews in distress do not choose a charismatic leader by holding an election. Rather, "… it is the duty of those subject to charismatic authority to recognize its genuineness and to act accordingly" (242).

- The life and work of the enslaved Hebrews became routine actions. Charismatic leadership seeks to transform routine actions and replace them with inspired actions (Shils 1968:387). It is the message, then, which will be the inspired action, and will replace old values with new.

4.4.1 Moses as natural leader in a situation of distress

The first reason for the emergence of charisma relates to the existing social situation in Egypt, which had been a source of dissatisfaction for many Hebrews. Although the Hebrews groaned about their slavery to God (Ex 2:23), they were unable to formulate and convey their feelings of discontentment. This period of distress and emotional strain laid the basis for the emergence of a charismatic leader.

According to Weber (1968:1111), “all extraordinary needs, i.e., those which transcend the sphere of everyday economic routines, have always been satisfied in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a charismatic basis”. Weber (1111-2) explains “that the ‘natural’ leaders in moments of distress – whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious or political – were neither appointed officeholders not ‘professionals’ in the present-day sense (i.e., persons performing against compensation, a ‘profession’ based on training and special expertise), but rather the bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered ‘supernatural’ (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them).”

In other words, bearers of charisma do not belong to traditional forms of authority, but arise out of situational exigencies and the prevailing culture. No training or expertise is required except a connection with transcendent powers. Blau
(1963:308) explains that charismatic authority usually acts as a revolutionary force, rejecting traditional values and the established order, often in reaction to a crisis.

As a charismatic leader, Moses has an acute awareness of the shortcomings of the life of the Hebrews in Egypt. He seeks to change it by discerning something new through his contact with, and inspiration from, a higher power.

4.4.1.1 Moses’ early career as a charismatic leader

Moses’ visible career as a charismatic leader begins in Exodus 2:11 when on an excursion to the Hebrews, he sees the oppression of his people. Moses acts impetuously – as one would in anger – and kills the Egyptian that murdered the Hebrew. Of course, Moses is eager to help his people but his reaction is misunderstood by another Hebrew, and “his crusading zeal changes to furtive fear and an ignominious flight out of Egypt” (Ashby 1998:15). Moses is wanted for murder.

Moses’ first charismatic claim, in Weber’s (1968:242) words, has disappeared. He is not yet recognized as a leader by his people. The question from one of the Hebrews in the fight reveals this unreadiness of the followers when he asks, “who made you our ruler and judge?” (Ex 2:14). Moses acts here on his own initiative. He is clearly not yet acting under divine supervision and inspiration: this is something that he will experience later in Midian, where he will have his inaugural encounter with his higher power, Yahweh, who is revealed in the form of the burning bush.

Moses flees to Midian, where he has his first successful negotiation on behalf of the helpless women at the well versus the shepherds (Ex 2:16-19). Moses saves the oppressed women from the shepherds, who drove the women away and used the water for their animals. Moses’ natural leadership is again displayed, albeit on
a small scale, only this time it was validated. The father of the women at the well, Jethro the priest, is hospitable to him and rewards him with one of his daughters, Zipporah, in marriage. Moses then becomes a shepherd, which Ehrlich (2001:60) says “is not an incidental detail. In the recorded wisdom of Judaeus Philo, (1971: 204-5), “… the business of a shepherd is a preparation for the office of a king to anyone who is destined to preside over that most manageable of all flocks, mankind …”. Ehrlich (2001:60) further points out that “ancient Near Eastern rulers legitimate their claim to rule by employing shepherd imagery in describing their relationship to their people.”

The act of shepherding foreshadows the events of the charismatic leader's life to come, when he will not only watch over, but rule and direct a group of people. In both situations, in Egypt and in Midian, Moses’ charisma originates in a particular social context. Moses expresses for the oppressed what the oppressed cannot express themselves. Moses’ explicit commitment to the people in distress establishes a leitmotif for Moses’ charismatic leadership. His charismatic quality appears not only in the unique commitment to his people but also in the intervention he displays for the helpless women at the well in Midian.

However, his sojourn in Midian has another purpose. Coats (1973:10) suggests that Moses’ marriage might seem relatively unimportant, but that the primary intention is to establish and account for the relationship between Moses and his Midianite father-in-law. The view that Moses inherited his belief in the god Yahweh from his Midianite father-in-law seems quite plausible to many scholars (Gottwald 1985:195, Bright 1972:124, von Rad 1968:9). The Kenite or Midianite hypothesis suggests that “YHWH was a god originally at home in the southern reaches of Transjordan, an area inhabited by the Kenites and the Midianites” (Ehrlich 2001:61). Gerhard von Rad (1968:9) says that because the Midianites worshipped Yahweh before the Israelites, it would imply that “Jethro was the host and Moses and his people were the guests.”
However, the absence of information regarding Moses’ life and influences, and the religious beliefs and practices of the Midianites, prevent us from adopting the Kenite hypothesis as a fact.

4.4.2 The recognition of a charismatic leader

The second reason for the success of charismatic leadership depends on the ability of the following to recognize their leader. To quote Weber verbatim:

It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma. This is freely given and guaranteed by what is held to be a ‘sign’ or proof, originally always a miracle, and consists in devotion to the corresponding revelation, hero worship, or absolute trust in the leader. But where charisma is genuine, it is not this which is the basis of the claim to legitimacy. The basis lies rather in the conception that it is the duty of those who have been called to a charismatic mission to recognize its quality and to act accordingly. Psychologically, this ‘recognition’ is a matter of complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality, arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope.

(Weber 1966:359)

An indispensable requisite for the emergence of charismatic leadership consists in the ability of the followers to recognize their leader. The charismatic leader’s claim can only be validated if his followers recognize his mission. The holder of charisma is not chosen by the people he represents. There is no elective process for their charismatic candidate. The charismatic leader simply appoints himself for the task that is inherent in [his] ability (Weber 1968:1112), and the followers are duty-bound to obey the leader who possesses the charismatic qualification. Initially, or at the start of charismatic action, the followers have a duty to obey their leader. Dutiful obedience will change to willing obedience as the leader embodies “the spirit and ideals of the movement” (Blau 1963:308). The question that arises is, how is Moses’ charismatic leadership recognised? Friedland (1964:21) says that “it is only when the message conveyed by charismatics to social groups is
relevant and meaningful within the social context that authority emerges.” Moses presents his followers with a relevant and meaningful message which he derives from his higher power, Yahweh, concerning their specific values.

Moses’ leadership is recognised by his followers for three reasons:

- Moses is introduced to his higher power which sets him apart and bolsters his prestige before the followers.
- Moses produces signs that authenticate his mission and provide evidence of his contact with a higher power.
- the message that he brings, bearing new context, appears meaningful and relevant to the followers.

4.4.2.1 Yahweh introduces himself to Moses

Moses’ higher power, Yahweh, introduces himself through a fire in the form of a burning bush (Ex 3:2-4). Yahweh’s introduction to Moses is a “revelational experience” where the human actor, i.e. Moses, “perceives himself as a confidante ... in action with the divine actor” (Nelson 1987:95). This is Moses’ inaugural contact with Yahweh and it is also Yahweh’s inaugural contact with Moses. This contact between Moses and Yahweh is very important. It is also a necessary contact. For it is the start of an exclusive bond between Yahweh and Moses, that will eventually develop into a bond between the Hebrews and Yahweh. Through his contact with Yahweh, Moses not only receives instructions and guidance, but also inspiration, and in Weber’s (1966:358-9) words he is set apart for the mission he has to accomplish. Moses’ charisma cannot begin to assert itself unless, as Shils (1968:387) says, it “derives its impetus immediately, intensively, and unalloyedly from direct contact with ‘ultimate’ sources of legitimacy.” It would appear then, that Moses’ contact with the ultimate power Yahweh is also a prerequisite experience for his charismatic leadership to advance. For the task of liberating a society from
bondage and the ordering and creation of a new social order, must require a leader who has power beyond the ordinary and mundane. The power and inspiration he receives from Yahweh will bolster his prestige before his followers.

Yahweh introduces himself as the god of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Albright (1994:168) explains this as a “bridge between Abraham and Moses.” It also reveals Moses’ own religious consciousness. As Albright (:168) says, “it was Moses’ acceptance of the old faith in the god of the fathers that led him to identify Yahweh with the ‘god of the fathers’ as well as with Shaddai”. Two points emerge from this identification of Yahweh with the ‘god of the fathers’. Firstly, it clarifies the position of men and gods in a particular society. Smith (1969: 31) articulates a view that explains this point when he says, “... a man was born into a fixed relation to certain gods as surely as he was born into relation to his fellow men...”.

Secondly, the idea expressed by Lemche (1998:20) of “… one blood, … common descent, with an apical ancestor, Israel, alias Jacob”, who is the son of Isaac, who is the son of Abraham, who are said to be Moses’ ancestral family, further entrenches the notion of tradition and continuity concerning god and man. Smith’s (1969:2) view on positive religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that they are unable to “start with a tabula rasa … as if religion were beginning for the first time”. He explains that “the new system must be in contact all along the line with the older ideas and practices which it finds in possession. A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that already exist in its audience, and it cannot reach these without taking account of the traditional forms in which all religious feeling is embodied…” (:2). Moses’ contact with the “older ideas and practises” is apparent by the link he creates between Yahweh and the god of the fathers. Moses uses this link, as instructed by Yahweh himself (Ex 3:15), to introduce him to the Hebrews in Egypt. While Yahweh is seemingly a new god, his tenuous association with that which is well-known makes him acceptable.
About “the religious and cultic ties of these pre-Mosaic ancestors of Israel, the historian of religion can say roughly this. Certain memories were preserved of the fact that they had not always been worshippers of Yahweh but that this self-revelation only entered their life at a definite point in time (Ex iii. iff., v. iff.)”, (von Rad:1968-6). For the gods of the Hebrew ancestors in Canaan were “various El-deities like El Elyon (Gen 14:18), El Shaddai (Gen 17:1) or the god of Beth-el (Gen 35:7)” (Theissen 1984:51). It would appear then, that the introduction of Yahweh to Moses marks a particular point in Hebrew history; the singularising of a particular god, Yahweh, in a particular context of oppression, namely, the Hebrews as slaves in Egypt, to fulfil a particular function of liberation, and the formation of a new society under the charismatic leadership of a particular candidate, Moses.

Moses' charismatic creativity generates something new. Something new could possibly be what Weber (1968:243) calls a new obligation, which would mean establishing a new order, as well as breaking with the old, as part of charismatic activity. It is not at all being suggested that Yahweh is new. On the contrary, as was revealed earlier, (in 1.5), the idea that Yahweh was the god of the Midianites (Bright 1972:124, Gottwald 1985:195) appears plausible and it was in Midianite territory that Moses first experiences Yahweh. So Yahweh is not new. Moses' formulation of the new order, proffering Yahweh as the only god, and not continuous with the idea of one god among many, is new. However, because charismatically endowed persons possess in their make-up a susceptibility to making contact with the supernatural world (discussed in 4.5), Moses, as someone who is charismatically disposed, participates in that world in which Yahweh is his own, subjective, and inner experience. It is this experience that would empower and authenticate Moses' charismatic endeavour. It is this experience, also, that would be the source of Moses' plan. Yahweh, therefore, is critical, if not indispensable, to Moses' charismatic creativity but, Moses' strong and visible charismatic personality dominates.
It is clear that Moses now knows who his higher power is, and having been inspired and convinced himself, he now has the task of convincing his people.
4.4.2.2 Signs that elicit recognition

After his introduction, Yahweh rehearses the suffering of the Hebrews in Egypt to Moses, makes known his commitment to their cause, then promises land to the Hebrews outside Egypt, and commissions Moses to negotiate with the pharaoh their release (Ex 3:7-17). While Moses is assured by Yahweh that his people will obey him (Ex 3:18), Moses tries to convince Yahweh that he is not the right person for the task (Ex 4:10). The trouble is, this emergent charismatic leader is afraid that his followers to be might not recognize and validate him as the one who will liberate them from oppression (Ex 4:1). Recognition is a crucial element for the success of his mission, and Moses, therefore, rightly clarifies it with his higher power. The leader is assured of Yahweh’s full support, and is given three signs (Ex 4:3-9), which will become important symbols that will inspire faith in the Hebrews and authenticate their leader before them.

Before discussing Moses’ use of these signs, one must consider whether he uses them as a magician, or as one inspired by God.

Wach (1944:336) makes an interesting point saying that:

[It is]… often difficult to differentiate between religion and magic. The acts in themselves may not be different; but the attitude and purpose behind them are. Neither the historian nor the sociologist as such is able to decide in an individual case whether a certain person acts as a 'magician' or as a 'man of God'. This implies a religious (theological) judgement, and the psychological reaction of awe on the part of the onlookers does not help in the distinction.

(Wach 1944:336)

Indeed, Wach’s observation calls for a bigger discussion than can be afforded here on how much magic is “tinged and alloyed with religion” (Frazer 1993:48). It would also prove difficult to ascertain whether Moses was a magician or man of
God in light of the fact that Moses is commissioned by God to perform these signs. Perhaps he is both.

The first sign, Moses turning his stick into a snake, is the reversal of the snake-charmer’s act of turning a snake into a stick. The ancient art of snake-charming was used by the Egyptians to show the charmer’s special relationship with the deity (Houtman 1993:391-2). The Hebrews having lived in Egypt for a long time were probably familiar with this practice, and of course Moses as well, having been raised in the Egyptian courts. Moses uses this sign to prove he has received power from a higher source, and therefore solicits recognition from the people as their leader.

The second sign of healing, apparently not practised in Egypt (Ashby 1998:25), would demonstrate Moses’ “possession of power” and his connection with higher powers (Houtman 1993:398). Like the first two signs, the third sign of changing water into blood, also shows the divine connection of the demonstrator of the sign, and gives credence to his abilities. As Weber (1968:1114) would say, Moses derives his authority and “retains it … solely by proving his powers in practice.”

The first sign of Moses’ success with his people is registered by the deference that is accorded to him (Shils 1968:386). The last few words in Exodus 4:31: “... they bowed down and worshipped”, records the deference accorded to their god who has come to them through their leader, Moses. This act probably denotes what Weber means when he says “a special affinity emerges between charisma and tradition” (Bendix 1966:304). Moses succeeds in securing a following who regard his authority as sacred and who are bound to him in “religious reverence and duty” (:304). The charismatic leader’s ordination takes place when he is recognized by his following and “the mere fact of recognizing the personal mission of a charismatic master, establishes his power” (Weber: 1968:1115).
Signs, however, are only initially used to titillate the followers. Something more substantial is needed to sustain their devotion. Moses has a message in the form of a plan to free his fellow people from suffering.

4.4.3 The message as a prerequisite for success

The third reason for the emergence of charisma lies in the message that the charismatic leader presents to the group. Moses succeeded in getting the attention and devotion of his followers as discussed above. However, “willing obedience to his commands” can only emerge if Moses makes pronouncements that “embody the spirit and ideals of the movement” (Blau 1963:308).

As a charismatically disposed person, Moses is aware of the needs of his people: their suffering in Egypt, their lack of group religious consciousness and their anthropological poverty (impoverishment of their dignity, and economic poverty, through a lack of territorial possession and income) which led to their disfranchisement.

Moses disrupts the traditional, static and conflict-riddled system, and replaces it with a new system of values and authority. This is what Moses proclaims:

- the escape of the Hebrews from Egypt (Ex 13:17-15:21),
- a monotheism, with Yahweh as the deity designate (Ex 6:6-7) and,
- a new form of righteousness and social justice in the form of a covenant with Yahweh, articulated in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20).
4.4.3.1 Movement of the Hebrews out of Egypt

For Moses to have his authority recognized and retained, he would need to have an appropriate message and a relevant plan of action. Moses is au fait with the social context and the needs of the social group. He therefore knows that his goals can only be realized if the Hebrews move out of Egypt. How else could the promise of land for the Hebrews, and his proclamation of Yahweh as deity, be fulfilled? Territorial possession is not an option for slaves. Moses’ pronouncement of Yahweh as national god of the Hebrews could only be celebrated and experienced outside Egypt for it to be successful and realized. While the Egyptians “could flourish without postulating one basic truth” (Frankfort 1948:3), for the Hebrews to organize themselves nationally, culturally and religiously, one god and a central dogma is essential. This is what Moses decides for them, and hence to achieve the realization of land and their unification under Yahweh, plans and executes his followers’ escape from Egypt.

Through a series of negotiations with the pharaoh, Moses is eventually able to secure the release of the Hebrews from Egypt. “That Moses should be able to gain ready access to the pharaoh, particularly since Tanis-Avaris was located in the north east Delta region, is not at all surprising in view of the way in which people were able to present petitions freely to Rameses II, as recorded in Papyrus Anastasi III” (Harrison 1970:577). Rameses II, you will recall, was the pharaoh of the Exodus. Moses as charismatic leader, and Yahweh, as “director and producer” together with, in Ashby’s (1998:63) words, “the whole cosmic panoply. i.e., “water, fire, cloud, [and] the plagues”, were according to Ehrlich (2001:73) “calculated to break the will-power of both pharaoh and the Egyptians in resisting the divine desires.” In his, what Ehrlich (:73-4) calls persuasion and demonstration, and “as intermediary between human and divine”, Moses displays an impressive tour de force of leadership, power, and courage.
There is a tendency to think that the Hebrews left Egypt en masse. Albright (1994:154) explains why they could not have left at once saying that “flight into the desert meant starvation for many, and single persons who could not stand life in Egypt could easily find refuge among their kindred in the hill-country of Palestine, where many of the old Hebrew clans still preserved a quasi-ethnic entity: eg., Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, and probably others.”

Nevertheless, a group of people who left Egypt are, by Gottwald (1979:40), called, the proto-Israelite Yahweh community of the Moses group. In the Mosaic age, which he distinguished with the Israelite Yahweh community in Canaan. The proto-Israelites, explains Gottwald (:40), refers to "Israel in the desert … a wandering people," while the Israelites in Canaan are in the settled land. Those two Israels are “essentially different historical and sociocultural communities” (:40). However, as Gottwald (:40) explains, “the Mosaic age is not a separate autonomous phase in the history of Israel, although it is a separate autonomous phase in the history of Yahwism which contributed basic beliefs and practices to the later Yahwism of united Israel”.

The discussion that follows, looks at Moses’ mono-Yahwism, which was first introduced to the proto-Israelites in the desert. Moses’ creation, articulation, and practice of mono-Yahwism in its seed form, would later form the Yahwism of the larger community of Israel in Canaan.

### 4.4.3.2 Moses and mono-Yahwism

The second aspect of the new system of values that Moses proclaimed was his mono-Yahwism. The religion of early Israel, i.e. before the Exodus, was characterized by individual and clan-based elements of God. In the traditions of the fathers “it was the right of every independent man to choose his personal god” (Fohrer 1973:39), which was then adopted by the family and clan. The chief gods
were believed to have been Shaddai, El and Baal (Albright 1957:243-9). It is difficult to discern what the faith of the Hebrews in Egypt was. According to Beegle (1972:67), it might be that “... the suffering of the people had eliminated all aspects of worship.” He is, however, doubtful about this claim for he later adds that “... persecution usually results in strengthening the faith of the committed” (:67).

Therefore, we can assume that in Egypt the Hebrews continued the faith of their ancestors. Moses introduces his fellow Hebrews to Yahweh, whom he encountered during his shepherding in Midian, as the deity who will lead them out of oppression to a new land.

The Hebrews in Egypt had their own household gods, food, shelter, and a routine and predictable life. They were willing to give up certainties to join their leader for something they were not certain of only because the promise of land and freedom was delivered by a leader of such charisma that “they turn[ed] away from established rules and submit[ted] to the unprecedented order that the leader proclaim[ed]” (Bendix 1966:300).

The Hebrews and the issue of land appear vague. They were aware of this need to own land for more than 400 years but of course did nothing to go out and get it. The problem was that they had disparate gods, and they were of varied origins, i.e. if we assume that the Hebrews might be the ‘apiru. How do you get them together to make a radical move out of Egypt?

Moses emerges as a leader who challenges established practice by going to “the root of the matter “ (:300). To get land they would have to take radical steps which meant

- giving up their household gods,
- taking Yahweh as a new god who comes from somewhere else (although he is revealed to Moses as the god of the ancestors),
- accepting their ancestral promise of land - not just a scrub but a lush territory.

Each of these will be discussed below.

4.4.3.2.a) Giving up household gods

It would appear that the “older Hebrew tribes seem to have accepted Yahwism almost immediately, but the actual process of discarding pagan practices required generations” (Albright 1942:112). The giving up of household gods is a necessary development in the reintegrating of a society. Household gods were disparate gods, fragmenting society, especially since each household would choose its own god. Clearly, Moses brings a new expression of faith in an age where the existing faith, in the form of household gods, appeared unsatisfactory.

4.4.3.2.b) Taking Yahweh as a new god

Gottwald (1979:614) has explained that the conception of Yahweh was seen as “different from and opposed to the gods of the land (in his identity as Yahweh over against the Canaanite Baal), but at the same time he was paradoxically regarded as continuous with certain deities … (in his identity as El).” One can add that this paradox is also revealed in the link that is created between Yahweh and the ancestral gods (discussed above in 4.4.2.1) which is seen as a continuous line of apical ancestry thereby tenuously connecting new with old. Moses departs with traditions of the past by ushering in a new god, but couches the new god in the language of traditional principles and forms which already exist, and which are familiar. Moses’ departure from old and time-honoured tradition is subtle and gradual without making the new religion sound totally new.
Smith (1969:29) reminds us that “religion did not exist for the saving of souls but for the preservation and welfare of society…”. Yahweh is ushered in, in the history of Israel, precisely at the point when “Israel” in Egypt was in need. Lemche (1998:89) recognizes this too in his comment that had the Israelites in Egypt “not been liberated … in time by the intervention of the God of their fathers …”, Egypt “would have turned out to become their grave.” Moses is able to preserve the Hebrews by removing them from the oppressors and forming them into a new nation with a new god.

4.4.3.2.c) The promise of land

The promise of land in Genesis 15 is more specifically articulated by Yahweh in Exodus 3:8 as “… a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites…”. To a people who have been miserable in their oppression, or to a nomadic people, this would have been “a blissful prospect” (Ashby 1998:21). According to Ashby (:21), milk indicates good grazing land for cattle, and honey was the only natural sweetness available at the time. Yahweh proffers Canaan as the “land flowing with milk and honey” to the landless Hebrews.

Moses challenges the established order by persuading the Hebrews to take radical steps in giving up their household gods, and taking Yahweh as their new god through whom the realization of land becomes possible.

Moses succeeded in unifying the people by giving them a group religious consciousness, with Yahweh being the deity designate. Once the unifying force of his “charismatic claim ceases to exist, and in the absence of an equally qualified successor, some other factor is needed to keep the group unified. This is realized with the acceptance of a legal system by his followers, articulated by Moses during the height of his charismatic career.
4.4.3.3 The Law

The third aspect with reference to the new system of values and authority that Moses proclaimed is a new form of social justice and covenant with Yahweh god as articulated in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3-20:17) given at Sinai. These commandments constitute the founding principles, which form the basis for much of the ethical, theological and legal systems in the Hebrew Bible. This new code of behaviour for the new society, outside of oppressive Egypt, proffering “Yahweh alone,” may have appeared revolutionary and different from anything known at the time, but it may also have been far better for the recipients than to have perished in Egypt.

There is often a connection made between Moses’ mono-Yahwism and Akhenaten’s (C.1350 B.C.E.) Atenism, and to see Atenism as ancestral to Hebrew monotheism. On the surface, they would both appear to be purporting a mono-god. However, Theissen (1985:71) has shown the functional differences between these forms of monotheisms. He calls Akhenaten’s “monotheistic revolution … a coup d’ e’tat ‘from above’ (:71). Theissen (:71). explains that the establishment of Aten as the only God was in order that Akhenaten could “establish his own central position against all rival powers.” Theissen (:71) contrasts biblical monotheism with Atenism, claiming that it is ‘from below,’ meaning that the “only God of the Bible is a God of those who escaped, of fugitives and exiles, the deported and prisoners of war.” In other words, Theissen roots the emergence of one god, in Hebrew monotheism, in the situational exigencies of the proto-Israelites and in their complex origins. Moses’ monotheism establishes power among the powerless, while Akhenaten’s monotheism, for someone who was already powerful, was to bolster his prestige.

Wilson’s (1969:34) take on Akhenaton’s Atenism is more nuanced. His observation reveals that “there were two gods central to the faith and not one. Akhen-Aton and his family worshipped the Aton and everybody else worshipped Akh-
en-Aton as a god” (:34). Akhenaton’s Atenism, then, would appear to be indulgent and exclusive compared to Moses’ mono-Yahwism which, although it reflects the bias of its creator, is intended for the welfare of the whole Mosaic group.

Albright (1994:172), however, has suggested that the “general character” of Mosaic law “reminds one of the Egyptian Negative Confession or Book of the Dead...”. These confessions were apparently very “popular during the centuries immediately preceding and following the time of Moses. The Egyptian statements are couched as protestations of innocence, e.g.: I have not committed murder … I have not treated anyone unjustly … I have not had homosexual relations, I have not defiled myself …” (:172). While the Decalogue consists of similar prohibitions and commands, they were meant for people of this life and this world, while the Negative Confession was intended for the judging of the dead in the Nether World (:172).

Albright (1994:165-6) informs us that “Moses was probably born during the middle decades of the 14th century B.C., not long after the collapse of the Aten revolution.” It is quite possible then, that Moses could have been influenced by Atenism. However, it seems that Moses was influenced not only by the Egyptians, but by the other cultures and values he was in contact with. Yahweh is poached from the Midianites, is revealed as the god of his ancestors – being continuous with Canaanite piety – and presented with a set of principles which echo the Egyptian religious code for the afterlife. Moses’ Canaanite ancestral culture, together with his upbringing in Egyptian courts and stay in Midian, reflect the eclectic cultural background that he was immersed in. All this, combined with his charismatic endowment, could have made an impact on his formulation and creation of mono-Yahwism.

Whether or not Moses borrows the idea of monotheism from the Egyptians and models his Ten Commandments on the Negative Confession, is not important. What is important is that a form is taken over and reconfigured and reconstructed
in the form of mono-Yahwism, which becomes a formula which expresses that which the Mosaic group has been consciously or unconsciously longing for. Moses' Yahwism reflects the creative genius inherent in his charisma.

The law, then, provides a unifying set of values, which binds people together in a social order, and in the case of the Ten Commandments, is dominated by the primary injunction to worship and obey, not only to a god, but the only god, Yahweh. The first commandment: “Thou shall have no other gods before me”, becomes the anchoring point on which Mosaic Yahwism is built. This prohibition appears revolutionary in the sense that it excludes all the inherited values of the old Canaanite social system and whatever other values that were part of inculturation in Egypt. The intolerance for pagan gods and practices must have made mono-Yahwism initially a difficult faith to follow especially since the right of every man to select his own god would cease to exist, and in its place Yahweh was to become a fait accompli.

Moses had sown seeds of monotheistic thought in Ancient Israel in the form of mono-Yahwism, and through a historical process, this would six centuries later, reflect a “fully developed monotheism” called “ethical monotheism” (Gnuse 1997:129). The language of William Tremmel, quoted in Gnuse (1997:133) is useful in seeing the difference between the mono-Yahwism of Moses and later ethical monotheism. He speaks of a “consummate religion” where “… the concept of universe has been accomplished and God is no longer attached to a specific place, or limited power” (:133). This is when mono-Yahwism would reach universal proportions, no more in just a particular place but always for a particular people, with the same law.
4.5 The importance of charisma in Moses' achievements

Moses has a very particular personality, the characteristics of which accord to a marked degree with Weber's framework of charismatic leadership. It is also because of these characteristics that Moses achieves what he does.

Weber enumerates a number of characteristics shared by charismatic leaders, and Moses can be shown to possess enough of them to qualify as a charismatic leader.

In the creation of Israelite religion (or laying the basis thereof), Moses demonstrates specific qualities of a charismatic leader. To start with, his charismatic biography opens with an auspicious beginning in the form of a foundling motif. The unordinariness of this birth story, in Weber's words, "sets him apart" for the role he later plays. While the birth story is not in itself a characteristic of Moses, its very unordinariness engenders for the followers and readers alike a sense of inevitable greatness of the person concerned. And the fact that the account of the birth story, was only later added to the biblical story, (as has been suggested in 4.2) implies that Moses achieved great things, and therefore the writer of Exodus attached to his biography a great beginning.

An indispensable prerequisite for the realization of charisma, and its consequences, lies in the charismatic's experience of the Divine. A characteristic trait of charismatic leaders is their propensity to make contact with the supernatural world. Moses, as was revealed above in 4.4.2.1, has in his charismatic make-up the predisposition to make contact with the supernatural world, revealed in his experience of Yahweh-god. This is Moses' own, subjective and inner experience of The Divine that would not only inspire his charismatic career (as seen again and again in his mediations and intercessions with Yahweh), but bolster his prestige before his followers.
It is with his followers that Moses reveals his characteristic extraordinariness. Moses proposes an extraordinary and audacious course of action to his followers, namely, their movement out of Egypt, and they believe him and subject themselves to his vision. Because of his charisma, and their despair and hope, they have faith that he can achieve this great undertaking. The beginning of faith among the followers comes after Moses’ encounter with The Divine, and is achieved by the magic he performs as proof of his superhuman powers. Moses’ extraordinariness is also revealed in his encounters with the pharaoh. For someone who is inarticulate, only his extraordinariness would allow him to take on the state of Egypt and then to plan and execute the movement of the Hebrews. Apart from his spiritual endowment, Moses demonstrates the experience, shrewdness, resourcefulness, knowledge, and wisdom of an extraordinary person in his negotiations with the pharaoh, his intercessions, mediations and conferences with Yahweh, and in the manner in which he handles his following.

Moses’ extraordinariness is also attested to by his cognisance of the socio-cultural context of the Hebrews. Moses’ plan for their release, and his relevant message of mono-Yahwism, is designed for the freedom of a particular people in a particular context.

The fact that Moses breaks with the old and sets up something new is part of the revolutionary nature of charisma. His formulation of mono-Yahwism is a good example of this.

Moses possesses those attributes of charismatic leadership that are articulated by Weber, and these characteristics are instrumental in helping him achieve what he does.
4.6 Factors that drive the charismatic person

The question that remains is, what drives the charismatic person to create and order human action, and what impels their followers to so utterly subject themselves to the leader's authority - an authority which includes a new system of belief? Weber (1968:216) says that charisma exists because only people endowed with the “gift of grace” can assert their leadership, and will be recognised for it. He also seems to say that charismatic leaders are generated in oppressive and distressful socio-cultural contexts. However, it seems necessary for the charismatic leader to first be in possession of this innate “gift of grace” before launching his charismatic career. As seen earlier in this chapter, awe, deference and obedience for the bearer of charisma can only be accorded if the bearer is in possession of “extraordinary” and “superhuman”, qualities, and who, by virtue of his charisma, is predisposed to making contact with the supernatural world.

Shils (1969:386) suggests that “the propensity to seek contact with transcendent powers and to impute charisma is rooted in the neural constitution of the human organism.” The intensity with which it is experienced, and the strength of its motivation, is also influenced by situational exigencies, and by the prevailing culture. Shils appears to be saying that it is not that God communicates with a particular individual, but that it’s the individual who is in a position, by virtue of the gifts he possesses, to be in communication with God. The location of charisma in the anatomy appears to be linked to Weber’s preoccupation with the psychological aspects of charisma. However, this is an area that falls outside the scope of this work, and which is in any case outside my field.

Wach (1944:344) in contrast to Shils, has suggested that “religious authority… is not always due to an extraordinary psycho-physiological constitution. Great spiritual, intellectual, and moral gifts may help to gain respect and reverence for a “man of God” from his fellow men …. A predisposition to respond readily to stimuli and a susceptibility to supernatural influences, however, are not necessarily...
abnormally developed. The *homo-religious* is easily credited with having contacts with another world.”

Wach and Shils appear to be saying different things. While Shils locates the ability to “impute charisma” in the “neural constitution” of the human being, Wach seems to think that charisma is derived from innate gifts. Wach, however, does not deny that man, especially religious man, has the ability to have contact with other worlds. Nevertheless, it would appear that both Shils and Wach seem to say that it is innate to a person whether it is in the form of a gift or in the neural constitution. Neither of them is suggesting that charisma can be attained through professional training. That would contradict the meaning of “gift of grace”.

### 4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the social context, which Weber acknowledged as the basis for the emergence, operation, and validation of charismatic leadership, of the Hebrews in Egypt by looking beyond the pages of Exodus. In discovering that the Hebrews were of the same sociological category as *‘apiru*, it shed light on the habits, lifestyle, and constitution of the Hebrews, thereby presenting a fuller and more comprehensive picture of their plight. This picture, revealing their bleakness politically, socially, economically, religiously, and geographically, would reflect on their need for freedom and security, whether they were aware of it consciously or unconsciously. It is in this kind of context, in accordance with the tenets of this kind of leadership, that charismatic leadership would rise and flourish.

However, as discussed in 4.4, charismatic leadership cannot begin to assert itself unless it has a following. In analysing the leader and his followers, the reciprocal nature of charismatic leadership emerged: the leader with his plan on the one hand, and the followers wanting certain objectives fulfilled, on the other. While charisma evokes a sense of awe and obedience from the part of the followers, this
comes only through the leader’s contact with the supernatural world. Moses confirms his susceptibility to making contact with the supernatural world in his experience with Yahweh (4.4.2.1). He uses magic to initially woo his followers and show proof of his supernatural experience, but his formulation of an appropriate and relevant message as part of his plan for their freedom and security is what sustains their awe for him. In keeping with the characteristic trait of charismatic leaders, Moses breaks with the old and time-honoured customs, and replaces them with the new, proffering one god, Yahweh, a new geographic destination, and also a central dogma and social code outlined in the Ten Commandments. Through his endeavours, Moses demonstrates his revolutionary, extraordinary, and superhuman qualities, present only in individuals who possess charisma, that influenced the beginnings of a national Israelite religion.
CHAPTER 5
FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis with which this thesis began was that the charismatic personality of Moses influenced the initial stages of a national Israelite religion. This work was successful in showing that Moses:
- had the traits of a charismatic personality; and
- through the effect of his charismatic personality, influenced the beginnings of a national Israelite religion.

The methodology employed to reach these conclusions was that of the socio-religious approach, within which Max Weber's paradigm of charismatic leadership provided the necessary tools for my analysis. By applying this interpretative framework, I was able to analyse the person Moses, and the events in which he was involved - as portrayed in the book of Exodus - to show what charismatic traits Moses possessed, and how, in a particular social milieu, these were instrumental in allowing him to instigate the beginnings of national Israelite religion.

Before establishing Moses in his socio-cultural context, where his charisma is manifested, it seemed vital, given Moses' centrality to Israelite religion, to explore, briefly, the debate on whether he was a real person in history or not (1.5.1), and to formulate some thoughts on his personality (discussed in chapter 3).

Having claimed that the beginnings of Israelite religion were influenced by the charismatic personality of Moses, was also to have assumed that such a person was real in history. The task of trying to prove Moses' historicity, using the various debates outlined by some scholars of the Hebrew Bible (Bright, Auerbach, Noth, Erlich), proved futile, given the lack of external sources. Neither Moses' existence in history, nor his absence, could be proved. However, something as extraordinary as the creation of the beginnings of national Israelite religion presupposes an
extraordinary individual behind it. For if Moses did not accomplish this, then someone as charismatically endowed as Moses would have had to have done it. I therefore proceeded with the assumption that he did exist.

Since there is no independently verifiable information concerning Moses, the only recourse was to the Hebrew Bible, from which a description of Moses' character could be gleaned. In chapter 2, using the narrative literature in the book of Exodus, and the application of literary principles proposed by Bar-Efrat (1989), Berlin (1994), and Fokkelman (1999), I was able to construct little more than a miniature portrait of Moses. While this exercise was interesting, it was also frustrating, because the dearth of information regarding Moses meant that a fully rounded character portrait of him could not be formed. Perhaps enough is given to know, on the one hand, his passionate sense of justice, shown in outbursts of anger and a violent temperament, and, on the other hand, his rational, reasonable, and cautious behaviour. These character traits appear to be at the heart of his humanity.

Chapter 4 examines the two main components of charismatic leadership, namely, 1) the social context within which Moses emerges, operates, and is validated; and 2) the personality of the leader vis-à-vis his followers. The socio-religious model used in this inquiry was that of Max Weber's interpretative framework of charismatic leadership in the religious realm. This framework would suggest a dual approach: for while there is a social basis for the emergence and operation of charismatic leadership, Weber also presents, in tandem, the psychological side dealing with the personality of the leader endowed with God-given gifts. Although this study does not delve into psychology to explain and analyse charisma, it is quite clear that Moses' personality played a big role in his success. His strong and perhaps autocratic personality is seen in his negotiations with the pharaoh (Ex 5-Ex 10), when he leads the Hebrews into the desert (Ex 13:17-15:21), and in his firmness with his followers (Ex 32:26-28). However, a strong personality alone would have meant nothing without a specific social context to operate in.
The insights provided by Gottwald and Theissen (in 4.3.2) in establishing the fact that the Hebrews were of the category of 'apiru, was useful in identifying and analysing the sociological composition of the Hebrews. The 'apiru were groups of people without political, social, and religious clout, as seen with the Hebrews in Egypt. Moses rises in their marginalized context with his strong personality, powerful and meaningful message, and shows proof of his contact with his higher power through the use of magic. Moses is accepted fully by his needy followers, shown by the fact that they were prepared to go to the desert with him and participate in his plans. Through their acceptance of him, the old order with its customs and values collapses, and in its place a completely new order is created. The strongest element in this new order is the replacement of many gods with one god, Yahweh, that would forever change the social, political, theological, and geographic constitution of the Hebrew people. For even if Moses' idea of one god is rapidly adopted, or evolves slowly (as discussed in 1.3.1) through a process that is as complex as it is arcane, to become national Israelite religion, one thing remains clear: Moses with his charismatic personality is central to the process - even if only at the initial stages.

While the phenomenon of charismatic leadership, outlined by Weber, shows that people who are charismatically endowed possess a susceptibility to making contact with the supernatural world, this challenges the traditional, biblical view. The biblical understanding that Yahweh makes contact with Moses (see 4.4.2.1), would place Yahweh in a different position, having all authority, and Moses then would appear as a mere functionary. This conflict of thought often came up between this methodological presupposition, on the one hand, and the "it is written..." in the Hebrew Bible, on the other.

Whether the predisposition to making contact with the supernatural world, as part of the charismatic leader's endowment, arises in the neuro-constitution of the brain, or whether this is a God-given gift, is not fully resolved in this thesis. This aspect of charisma reflects Weber's preoccupation with the psychological nature
of the subject, which, apart from not being the focus of this paper, was outside my area of training.

The precise contributions of Yahweh and Moses will continue to be a matter of debate, since there is no conclusive proof on this issue. Both parties had to be present for the formation of the new Israelite religion, but the centrality of Moses to the process remains. Clearly, though, without the force of Moses' charismatic personality, even Yahweh would have to go about his plan in a different way.

5.1 Recommendations for further research

This work has mainly explored the charismatic leadership of Moses. An area that falls outside its scope, and which is only given a mention here, is the subject of the relationship between magic, religion and charisma.

The question arises as to whether one can make a real distinction between magic and religion. Two elements need to be considered here regarding charismatic leadership:
- can the charismatic leader afford not to be a magician?
- for the followers, does the distinction really matter; in other words, are the two not effectively synonymous?
5.2 Larger significance of this work

In using Weber’s paradigm of charismatic leadership, and in particular his formulation of the social context that is conducive to charismatic emergence, the complex and many layered textures of Hebrew society were revealed. This kind of social analysis is significant because it causes one to interact with the text in a way that allows one to see what’s behind it, and therefore possibly discover more than one would by simply taking the biblical text at face value.

Another significant point that emerged from this thesis is that in the hidebound and traditional set-up of the Hebrews, where ancient and sacred customs were revered and preserved, only the force of charismatic leadership could break the mould, thereby creating a paradigm shift that would forever change Israel’s religious landscape.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


