

## II

### THE MEMORIAL AS A LITURGICAL TERM

THE WORD *ἀνάμνησις*, *anamnesis*, used by Paul and Luke in recording Christ's command to celebrate the Eucharist, is to be directly related to the Jewish liturgy and in particular to the paschal meal. The Hebrew word *zikkaron* found in the paschal liturgy, which I have translated "memorial", is translated in the Greek Septuagint version of the Bible by *μνημόσυνον* (Ex. 12: 14; 13: 9). In Leviticus another word of the Hebrew liturgical vocabulary, *azkarah*, sacrificial memorial (Lev. 2: 2), is translated by the same word *μνημόσυνον*, *mnemosunon*, although elsewhere in the same book it is rendered *ἀνάμνησις*, *anamnesis* (24: 7). These texts, so important for an understanding of the memorial in the Jewish liturgy, will be considered below. What is to be noted here is the corresponding significance, in the Greek of the Septuagint, of the two words *ἀνάμνησις* and *μνημόσυνον*, *anamnesis* and *mnemosunon*, which I shall translate on all occasions by the one word "memorial".<sup>1</sup> It is also to be emphasized that in the Septuagint *zikkaron* and *azkarah* are so related that each may be translated by *μνημόσυνον*. These factors are of significance for the interpretation of the liturgical passages in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, apart from the eucharistic passages (Lk. 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 24, 25), the Epistle to the Hebrews (10: 3) alone makes use of the word *ἀνάμνησις*; while the corresponding term,<sup>2</sup> *μνημόσυνον*, is to be found in the account of the anointing at Bethany (Matt. 26: 13; Mk. 14: 9) and in that of the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10: 4), and on each occasion it is in the form *εἰς μνημόσυνον*, "as a memorial", which echoes the Old Testament

<sup>1</sup> That *ἀνάμνησις* and *μνημόσυνον* have the same meaning is shown by the fact that the sounding of the trumpets to announce solemn feasts and especially the new moons, which is called a *zikkaron*, a memorial, in Leviticus (23: 24) and in Numbers (10: 10) is translated in the former as *μνημόσυνον σαλπίγγων*, memorial of the trumpets, and in the latter as *ἀνάμνησις ἐναντι τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν*, memorial before your God.

<sup>2</sup> "The analogy to this (*εἰς ἀνάμνησιν*) in the Gospels is *εἰς μνημόσυνον*," Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 161-2.

liturgy and Christ's command at the Last Supper: "Do this as my memorial."<sup>1</sup>

These New Testament passages will be considered later, but first the meaning of memorial in the Old Testament must be understood.

It could be asked: why undertake an investigation of the Jewish tradition which is so peripheral for us? Why examine a liturgy which is based upon bloody sacrifices? Can our understanding of the Eucharist be illuminated by a sacrificial system of which the Epistle to the Hebrews says that it is only a shadow of the reality now accomplished by Christ? Since the unique and perfect sacrifice, offered once for all, have we any need of the liturgical and sacrificial expressions of the Old Covenant to enable us to understand the Eucharist?

The distinction between the worship of the Church and that of the Temple or Synagogue, since Christ instituted the Eucharist and offered the perfect sacrifice of the cross, will be considered in due course; yet it cannot be denied that Jesus, in fulfilling the Law and the Prophets and in founding a community and a new cultus, wished to preserve a continuity between Israel and the Church. The commandments of the Law have not been abolished but fulfilled; the people of God is spread over the face of the earth, but it is the same Chosen People; the primitive Church took root in the Synagogue. Moreover, when Christ instituted the new cultus, the Eucharist, He did so within the framework of the Jewish paschal liturgy; He did not scorn the ancient rite; on the contrary, because it was contained in the ancient revelation, He found in it the symbols and the words necessary to make His memorial understood and to communicate His body and blood. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you that I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Lk. 22: 15, 16). Christ did not neglect the ancient liturgy; on the contrary, He earnestly desired to celebrate it. If He modified it at the Last Supper, that was not in order to suppress it or to make of it something totally different. Indeed, it is to be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. From the Passover, by the way of the Eucharist, to the Messianic Banquet, there is a continuity, an analogy, a unity, even if the rite becomes externally modified and the reality which it signifies is made explicit. First there is the Lamb, the effective sign of the deliverance; then there are the bread and the wine, the effective signs of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, the Redeemer, crucified.

<sup>1</sup> I am avoiding the ambiguous translation: "Do this in remembrance of me."

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risen and glorified; finally there is the vision of the Son of God, the Lamb "as it had been slain" in the Apocalypse.

Jesus then made use, at the Last Supper, of a liturgical language well known to the Jews, and we must understand this if we are to penetrate into the meaning of the Lord's memorial. The Evangelists and Paul have not recorded all the symbols and words used by Jesus, but only those that emphasize what is new in the traditional ritual. We have seen that Luke and Paul, who alone record the Lord's command to repeat the Eucharist, make use of the word *ἀνάμνησις*, memorial. The reality and the idea conveyed by this Greek word, as by its equivalent *μνημόσυνον*, were well known to those familiar with the Jewish religion. The memorial, *zikkaron* and *azkarah*, with their gradations of meaning that will be defined below, evoked a liturgical reality and a generally accepted idea of religious contact with the Lord. So, when the centurion Cornelius had the vision recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (10: 1 ff.), the angel of God said to him- "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial, *εἰς μνημόσυνον*, before God" (10: 4). When Cornelius described his vision to Peter, he interpreted the liturgical term "memorial" to mean a recalling of his prayers and charity before God: "Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God, *ἐμνήσθησαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ*" (10: 30, 31).

The idea that prayers and almsgiving, like sacrifices, are presented before God *as a memorial* is part of the liturgical theology of Judaism. It is found in both the Old and New Testaments as an everyday fact, and the word to designate it is the equivalent of that which Christ uttered when He said: "Do this as my memorial."

This reality of the memorial has a great importance in the Jewish liturgy and may be studied in several passages. We have already seen that the two Hebrew terms, rendered by the Greek words *ἀνάμνησις* and *μνημόσυνον* in the Septuagint, are *zikkaron* and *azkarah*, both of which are formed from the root ZKR.

The verb *zakar* means first of all "to think of something which is already known and past": "We remember fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought," declare the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness (Numb. 11: 5). Shimei, imploring the mercy of David, says to him: "Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king

went out of Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 19: 19).<sup>1</sup> The psalmist remembers the blessings of the Lord: "I will make mention of the deeds of the Lord; for I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also upon all thy work, and muse on thy doings" (Ps. 77: 11, 12).

It is also *the recalling of a duty*, that, for example, of observing the Passover: "Moses said unto the people, Remember this day" (Ex. 13: 3), and of obeying the commands of Moses: "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you" (Jos. 1: 13). God recalls the sins of men (Hos. 8: 13), and His covenant with the earth by the token of the rainbow (Gen. 9: 15, 16). Man recalls Yahweh his God in order to avoid evil and receive power: the woman of Tekoa says to the king: "I pray thee, let the king remember (or, pronounce the name of) the Lord thy God, that the avenger of blood destroy not any more, lest they destroy my son" (2 Sam. 14: 11). The equivalence of meaning and translation of the verb *zakar* is to be noted: to remember or to make mention, to pronounce the name of God. "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. For thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me" (Ps. 63: 6-8); the remembrance of God is an active force.

With the prefix "*le*", *zakar* means *to remember something in favour of someone*. So Nehemiah prays: "Remember unto me, O my God, for good, this also (his regulation of Sabbath observance), and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy" (5: 19; 13: 22). This memorial can also be performed against someone; so in Ps. 137: 7: "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (cf. Ps. 79: 8; Neh. 6: 14). The same idea of God's remembrance for or against someone is found in Ezekiel: "None of his transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (18: 22; 33: 16).<sup>2</sup>

The verb *zakar* is also found in a form which means *to recall something to someone*, and this meaning is very important for the understanding of the liturgical or sacrificial memorial (*zikkaron* or *azkarah*). "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake;

<sup>1</sup> See also Ps. 105: 5; Jer. 3: 16; 2 Kings 9: 25, etc. For further details consult W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwoerterbuch über das Alte Testament*.

<sup>2</sup> This idea of God's remembrance is frequent in biblical prayers: "The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us. . . . Remember the word unto thy servant" (Pss. 115: 12; 119: 49).

and I will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance; let us plead together: set thou forth thy cause, that thou mayest be justified" (Is. 43: 25, 26). The two different modes and meanings of *zakar* are to be noted here. God remembers, and someone can recall something to Him. Elsewhere Isaiah says further: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers (i.e. who stimulate His memory), take ye no rest" (62: 6). The prophet is here speaking of intercessory angels<sup>1</sup> to whom is confided the task of recalling before God the re-establishment of Jerusalem that He might make it "a praise in the earth" (62: 7). These watchmen are certainly angels: in Aramaic also the angels are sometimes designated by a word meaning watchful, vigilant, watchmen. This image is employed by Nebuchadnezzar in his account of his dream to Daniel: "behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven . . . the sentence is by the decree of the watchers" (Dan. 4: 13, 17). There is therefore the idea that spiritual beings can intercede or recall before God the needs of Jerusalem. This idea of a memorial presented by the angels will concern us later.<sup>2</sup>

On the altar the name of God is recalled and it is stated in the Book of the Covenant that "in every place where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee" (Ex. 20: 24, RV margin). From this the meaning arises "to utter a name" and in particular that of God; it is a confession of faith, a thanksgiving and an intercession all at the same time. "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the peoples give thee thanks for ever and ever" (Ps. 45: 17). "And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto the Lord, proclaim his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted" (Is. 12: 4, RV margin). "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us . . . O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of (recall) thy name" (Is. 26: 12, 13).

From this idea of invocation, of making mention, of the memorial

<sup>1</sup> The expression can also be rendered "herald" (*maskir*). These watchful guards, these intercessory angels, are also like royal heralds. The word is in fact used to designate this function of the royal heralds (2 Sam. 8: 16).

<sup>2</sup> Although the name (*ir*) given to the angels, the Watchers, in Daniel is a technical term of Jewish apocalyptic and is different from the one used in Isaiah, the idea is the same: to designate spiritual beings a term is employed that expresses vigilant watching. The Septuagint translates the word by *φύλακες*, which designates the planetary gods in the astral religions. The reference is to invisible spiritual beings.

of the name of God, the word comes naturally to bear a *sacrificial meaning*. So God, condemning the cultic syncretism of His people by the mouth of Isaiah, says: "he that maketh a memorial of frankincense (*mazkir lebonah*) (is) as he that blesseth an idol" (66: 3; R.V margin). We have here an allusion to the memorial of incense which will be considered below and which is intended to attract the attention of Yahweh. It is in this sense also that the headings of Pss. 38 and 70 are to be understood: "A Psalm of David, to make memorial." There is no indication of what it means to make a memorial by singing these psalms. Perhaps they were songs to accompany a memorial of incense (Lev. 2: 2) or songs of penitence (especially Ps. 38) to recall one's sins before God. Further consideration will have to be given to these Psalms, since the expression "to make memorial" (*le-hazkir*) has been translated in the Septuagint by *εις ἀνάμνησιν*, the term employed in the accounts of the Last Supper. In 1 Chronicles (16: 4): David "appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord and to celebrate and to make the memorial (*le-hazkir*) of the Lord, the God of Israel" (see Ecclesiasticus, 50: 16).

The verb *zakar*, as we have seen, occupies an important place in the cultic language of Judaism. Its different meanings may be summarized thus: to think of something known and past, a material something, a sin or the blessings of God; to recall a duty: in reference to God, to recall man's sin, the covenant, love and fidelity; in reference to man, to recall God or to invoke Him; to recall something in favour of someone or against him; to recall something to someone (e.g. the needs of the people to God); utter a name (that of God); and finally, to recall before or remind God by means of a sacrifice and especially the memorial of incense.

From this root and from this verb we have three derived words to study in order to understand the liturgical memorial which gives a clue to the profound meaning of the celebration of the Eucharist. These words are the *zikkaron* and the *azkarah*, the liturgical and sacrificial memorial, and also the *zeker*, which is translated in the Septuagint by the word *μνημόσυνον*, synonym of *ἀνάμνησις*, the word used at the Last Supper. The term *zeker*, as we shall see, has, unlike *zikkaron* and *azkarah*, no primary liturgical importance; it signifies the *memory* of a reality in thought or word and hence often the name of a person.

The detailed examination of these key-words may at first seem forbidding, but it only postpones a little the joy of contemplating the spiritual riches of the cultus in the Old Testament and supports a hope

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of a better and more intelligent celebration of the Eucharist which is the Lord's memorial.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 1945, pp. 161, 243, interprets *ἀνάμνησις* to mean "memorial before God", and he cites some Old Testament passages. Reference should also be made to the discussion of the meaning of the word by W. M. F. Scott, H. Balmforth and S. Bedale in *Theology*, LVI, 1953.

SAMPLE