



# The Old Testament Roots of Celtic Mythology

Foundations of Druidism  
in the Bible

*"The religion of the Britons appears  
to have been very much the same  
as.....the Patriarchal religion."*

*Canon Samuel Lyons, 'Our British Ancestors' (p58)*

# **The Old Testament Roots of Celtic Mythology**

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**T**HE MYTHOLOGY OF DRUIDISM is said to have been brought to England in ancient times by Hu Gadarn Hysicion, who came from the east with a party of colonists and built Stonehenge. Who were these Eastern colonists? Historians tell us that Phoenician-speaking peoples colonized the British Isles in early times. The Israelites, a seafaring people, spoke a Phoenician dialect, and the early history of these two peoples is intertwined. The Bible speaks of Israelites sending "*ships to Tarshish,*" or Spain, and Solomon's navy sailed with the Phoenicians on their trade and colonizing expeditions. (2 Chron. 9:21; Isa. 60:9) Phoenician speaking peoples, including Israelites, colonized Spain and Britain in ancient times, mining ores such as silver, iron, tin, and lead, as we document in our tract, "**ANCIENT HEBREW SEA MIGRATIONS**" The Druidic religion of early Britain should therefore exhibit signs of both Hebrew and Phoenician origins.

### HEBREW RELIGION

Celtic scholar, John Daniel, in his book, "*THE DRUIDIC IDEA OF GOD,*" lists the Druidic terms for the Deity and their meaning:

<b>CELI</b>	<b>THE INVISIBLE ONE</b>
<b>IOR</b>	<b>THE ETERNAL</b>
<b>DUW</b>	<b>COMMONLY TRANSLATED 'GOD' LIT. HE WHO WILLS</b>
<b>RHEEN</b>	<b>ALL-PERVADING SPIRIT</b>
<b>PERYL</b>	<b>AUTHOR OF EXISTENCE</b>
<b>DOFYDD</b>	<b>GOVERNOR</b>
<b>DEON</b>	<b>DISTRIBUTOR</b>
<b>YR HEN DDIHENYDD</b>	<b>ETERNALLY ANCIENT ONE, OR "ANCIENT OF DAYS"</b>

Mr. Daniels remarks, "*Nobody can fail to see in these terms a similarity to the common phraseology of the Christian Church... There is such perfect consonance between these [Celtic] appellations of the Deity and those of Biblical theology, that it is strange anyone should so fail to see it...*" (p.4, compare Dan.7: 9,13,22, etc.) Daniels also points out that the Celtic name for the Deity was **IAO**, pronounced, "**Yah-o,**" which is virtually identical to the Hebrew name for God, "**Yah**" or "**Yahu.**"

In early alphabets, letters represented ideas. In Hebrew, *aleph*, the first letter, stood for an ox; *bet* symbolised a house, *gimel* was a camel, *dalet* a door, and so on. Similarly, in Celtic the letter "I" stood for 'the future.' "A" represented 'the present', and "O" stood for 'the past'. (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17) Thus, the Druidic name for God, "**IAO**," literally meant "*the Everliving*," a being in existence past, present, and future. This is the exact definition given by scholars for the name of the Hebrew God, "Yahu" or "Yahweh" In fact, the Ferrar Fenton Bible consistently translates the name of God as "the Everliving." The identity of the Celtic and Hebrew Deities is obvious, for *"there can hardly be a question that the three letters were originally no other name than IAO, the Latinized form... of the Hebrew [Yah or Yahu]; and that such was the rendering of that name, we have the authority of several ancient writers. Diodorus Siculus says it was related amongst the Jews, that Moses attributed the framing of the laws to the God called IAO; and Theodoret states that God was by the Jews called IAO."* (*ibid.*, p.12)

In addition, the Druidic "IAO" was called the "**UNUTTERABLE NAME**." again identical to the Hebrew, "Yah." Daniels states, *"So to the Druids there was a secret name for the Deity, which was unutterable ("Aflafar") to all but the most privileged of their order, and was symbolised by the three Bardic characters representing the vowels L40."* (*ibid.*, p. 11) With such close resemblance's between the Celtic and the Hebrew Deity, it is not surprising that England was converted without the shedding of a single drop of blood. There is no record of martyrdom for any early Christian missionary, and it has been truly said that Druidism was only accepting a fuller, better revelation through the adoption of Christianity!

The Druidic priests, like the Levitical priests of the Bible, were exempt from military service. The Druidic and Levitical priests were both divided into three classes. Even the Druidic ceremonial robes remind one of the Mosaic priests, with their breastplates of gold and jewels. The Druidic rituals, like the Old Testament Levitical, included the sacrifice of sheep, oxen, and goats, but no idol worship.

In the Bible, the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 31 verse 21 instructed scattered Israel to *"set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps,"* and thus we find a trail of unhewn stone monuments, called dolmens and cromlechs, leading from Palestine (**Gen. 35:14**, etc.) across Europe, arid into the British Isles, where they were used in worship by the Druidic priests. In England, according to Isabel Hill Elder's book, "**CELT, DRUID, AND CULDEE**" each stone monument was called a "Sion" in the ancient Celtic language.

## A DRUIDIC JEWEL



**This jewel, supposed to have been the breastplate of an archdruid, was found near the neck of a skeleton, on opening a barrow at Kingston, Barham Downs, near Canterbury. It is made of gold, encrusted with garnets and turquoises and measures 35 Inches In diameter.**

The similarity between this and the Hebrew word "Zion", meaning a stone fortress, is striking. Truly, these are additional witnesses to the identity of the House of Israel in the world today.

## BAAL WOSHIP

But the religious customs of the Covenant people became corrupted with the religion of the Phoenician Canaanites. The Prophet Elijah's challenge of the Hebrew priests of Baal is one of the most moving Bible accounts. (I Ki.18:18-40) The Bible indicates that at one time the majority of Hebrew priests and people followed the rituals of Baal worship. Noted 19th century antiquarian, Sir William Betham, made an exhaustive study of the ancient Celtic peoples, and states in his book, *THE GAELAND CIMBRI*, "Baal... has the precise meaning in Gaelic as in Phoenician — the lord of heaven." (p. 226) Many customs hearken back to Palestine, as well; "even the cakes which the idolatrous Jews, in imitation of the Phoenicians, made in honour of the queen of heaven are still the most popular cake in Ireland under the old name of the barnbrack, or speckled cake." (p. 236) Ancient customs and rituals are persistent among mankind, and therefore provide tangible

evidence of a people's origins, even where no written proof survives. Betham comments, "Thus we see at this day, fires lighted up in Ireland, on the eve of the summer solstice and the equinoxes, to the Phoenician god, Baal, and even called Baal's fire, baaltinnes, though the object of veneration be forgotten..." (p. 222-223)



In addition, archeological proof points to a Hebrew-Phoenician origin of the Britons and Irish. Betham relates, "On an altar-stone, dug up near Kirby Thore, in Westmorland, is this inscription:"

**“DEO BEL ATUCADRO LIB[ERUM]VOTUM. FECIT**

The text translates as follows: "To the god Baal, the fiend of man, lolus made his free vow."

Numerous other stone altars to Phoenician gods, which have been discovered in Britain, Ireland, and Gaul, are discussed and translated in Betham's work. Some of the principal finds include altar-stones found in Northumbria and other parts of Britain. He states that these ancient monuments to "Baal, by the ancient British... are unanswerable evidences of the identity of the people of the two islands [i.e., Britain and Ireland] and Gaul, which the most unwilling and incredulous caviler at etymologies, can scarcely refuse to receive as conclusive. It proves more, for it shows an identity of the deities of the Celtæ and the [Hebrew]-Phoenicians..." (p. 228-229)

Numerous other parallels exist between Celtic and Hebrew Canaanite worship, including mystic well-worship, worship of sacred stones, and the veneration of the autumnal equinoxes. In fact, both the Canaanites and Celts practiced autumnal sacrifices to Baal; which the Celts called, "Baal-tinnes," as previously mentioned.

## AVEN

Aven was another of the deities of the Phoenician Canaanites, and temples to this god were called, 'Beth-Aven,' or 'house of Aven.' The idolatrous Israelites also had adopted worship of this false god, as we see in Hosea 4:15-17: "...come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to BETHAVEN. nor swear, the Lord liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer ... Ephraim is joined to idols..." Israelite worship of this god was so pervasive, that the prophet Isaiah used the word, "Aven," to signify an idol in general: "...he that bur-neth incense, as if he blessed an IDOL." (Hebrew, "AVEN") All idols are vanity, and aven itself came to have a secondary meaning of vanity. Since this so-called god was no god at all, the idolaters were literally worshipping nothing! The Apostle Paul picks up on this theme in First Corinthians 4:8 "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other god but One."

There are five rivers Avon in Britain, of which three pass through Gloucestershire, where Celtic worship of this god was centered. In the same English district is an old town named Avening. The 'ing' suffix means the place of, so Avening is the place of Aven. Historian Samuel Lysons, in "OUR BRITISH ANCESTORS" says, "The worship at Beth-Aven, in Canaan, and that of Avening in Gloucestershire, and that of Aven, Heliopolis, or Baal bec, were all identical. The stone altars, the high place, the calves' bones discovered there, mark the similarity." (P.123)

## MOLOCH AND CHIUN

The Canaanite god and goddess, Moloch and Chiun, are mentioned in connection with Israel's worship by the prophet Amos (5:25). "But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity..."

At Windmill Hill, near Avebury, Wiltshire, England, there are evidences of Druidical worship, but no windmill. 'Win' is the Celtic word for 'eye,' and 'Win-Melk' is the 'eye of Moloch.' Dr. Maurice, in "Indian Antiquities" says, "the Druids worshipped the sun under the title of Moloch, so we are

certain that worship was derived to them from their Eastern ancestors." The British towns Melch-bourne in Bedfordshire, and Melc-combe in Dorset; both retain evidence of the worship of Moloch in early times.

Similarly, the goddess Chiun was worshipped by the idolatrous Canaanites and the Israelites who followed their custom. Chiun was the moon goddess, and was considered so important that she was called the queen of heaven. In fact, it is from this word, Chiun, that we derive our English word, queen. The Prophet Jeremiah mentions worship of this goddess several times. He laments Israel's worship of her, saying, "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the QUEEN OF HEAVEN and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." (7:18; compare 44:17-25) The goddess Chiun had her adherents in Britain also, as seen in the name of the famous king, Cuno-bel-inus, whose name combines the worship of both Chiun and Bel. Similarly, Chiun is seen in the early British names Cunedag, Cingetorix, Conan, and Maglo-cunus.

### **SUN WORSHIP: AL**

#### **Prehistoric Briton monument to Bel at Logie in Don Valley neat Newton Stone with Hitt-Phoenician inscription and Solar symbols**



The Hebrew word, AI, signifies the sun, and is equivalent to the Phoenician Hal, Greek Halios, Babylonian II, and Celto-British Heaul Mallet's "NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES," (vol. 2, p.68) states, "All Celtic nations have been accustomed to the worship of the sun ... It was a custom that everywhere prevailed in ancient times to celebrate a feast at the winter solstice, by which men testified their joy at seeing this great luminary return again to this part of the heavens. This was the greatest solemnity of the year. They called it, in many places, Yole or Yuul, from the word Hiaul, which even at this day signifies the sun in the languages of the Bas-Bretagne and Cornwall." Christmas is still called Yule. A



Christmas holiday beer, Ale, may be from the same root. Holly and Holy come from the word, heaul, meaning 'to hallow, to deem sacred,' with roots to the Hebrew, 'El,' God. The inscription and Solar symbols German words, 'heilig' and 'ale' mean 'to swear, to call on the name of God.' The words 'all,' 'whole,' and 'heal,' may be related to this.

The Hebrew name for the sun appears in many places in Britain with names beginning with 'Al,' 'Ail,' 'Ayl,' 'Hal,' 'Hayl,' and the like. There are many examples, including Albury, Albourne, Alcester, Alby, Althorp, Alton, Allington, Allerton, Alford, Allenby, Alsop, and dozens more.

### **AUN OR ON**

In Genesis 41:45 we read, "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to WIFE ASENATH the DAUGHTER OF POTIPHERAH PRIEST OF ON. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt." Again in Genesis 46:20, we are told, "And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which ASENATH THE DAUGHTER OF POTIPHERAH PRIEST OF ON bare unto him." (compare 41:50) The word, On, signifies the sun, and is derived from the Hebrew Aun, Assyrian Anu, Babylonian Aunu, Celto-British On, and the Greek On. The ancient Celtic poet, Taliesin, is quoted in "DAVIES' BRITISH DRUIDS," as saying, "Even the sovereign On, the ancient, the generous feeder." (p.527) Historian George Rawlinson states, "Aunu signified 'the god,' and was no doubt in use among the primitive Babylonians from the very earliest times." (Herodotus, Essay x, vol. 1, p. 591) Who was this "Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah the priest Of On," whom the Biblical patriarch Joseph married? It is popular teaching today to say because Asenath dwelled in Egypt, that therefore Joseph married a non Israelite. But the fact that her family were sun-worshippers worshipping On, the Semitic sun-god, is proof positive of a Semitic identity.

It is from this word, On, that we derive the Latin, annus, meaning a year, from the annual solar revolution, and the English, annual. Samuel Lysons states, "That Aven and On were the same, is shown by the Greek translation of Beth-aven as 'the house of On.' Heliopolis, Egypt was at different periods called Ain, Aven, and On... Possibly our word Evening,

Dutch Avond, and German Abend, may represent Aven, as the declining sun." (ibid., P. 238-239)

British place-names showing early sun-worship include Ansley, Anston, Anslow, Ancoats, Ancaster (Caer An), Ancroft, Anford, Anwick, Avon, Avening, Arran, and many others. Concerning this last location, a circle of Druidic stones with a cromlech in the center at Arran indicates sun worship.

### **FURTHER EVIDENCES**

British antiquarian, Aylett Sammes, writing in 1676, noted that "the customs, religion, idols, offices, and dignities of the ancient Britons are all clearly Phoenician." John Pinkerton, in his "ENQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND" (1789), also stated that Druidism was directly descended from the Phoenicians, while British antiquarian William Stukely, in the book, "STONEHENGE," believed that it had the marks of Israelite worship and culture.

Stukely pointed out Old Testament references to oaks, which gave these trees symbolic or mystical attributes. Abraham's altar of sacrifice was prepared by the oak of Moreh. "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain (lit: "oak") of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." (Gen. 12:6-7 We are further told in Hosea 4:13."They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks..."The importance of worship under oaks in Druidism is well known. Modern Celtic scholar, John King, in his book, "THE CELTIC DRUIDS' YEAR" adds, "The Hebrew word for oak also means oath, and there is evidence that the oak signified a burial place. The golden calf or bull worshipped as an idol by the Israelites has its counterpart in the Druidical image of the god Hu Gadarn, or Hu the Mighty, who, like Noah, survived the deluge and first brought the skill of ploughing to mankind. Dibbuchs, demons and lesser deities, some of which might seem to correlate to Celtic spiritual figures, have been pushed into

the background by contemporary Judaism." (p. 26) Thus the Hebrew connection is little-known but factual.

Perhaps we can do no better in summing up our study than to quote the venerable Sir William. Betham: "The connection of this [Hebrew Canaanite] worship with the historical traditions of the Pagan Irish is so evident, and so extensive, that it ... strongly illustrates the [Biblical] account of the progress of population from the plains of Sennaar [i.e., in the Middle-East] to the western extremities of Europe..." (p. 242) This is obvious, for no one but God's people exhibited the peculiar mix of true and false religion seen in the early Celts.

## **The End**



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