

in the Hebrew Bible even appears to construct a conceptual framework for this endowment.

Following a series of commandments in Exod 23 regarding cultic expectations upon entry into the promised land, the deity explains in verses 20 and 21, “Look, I am sending a messenger [ *’ānōkī šōlēaḥ mal’āk*] before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have established. Pay attention to him and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him, because he won’t pardon your transgressions [*lō’ yiśšā’ ləpiš’ākem*], for my name is in him [*šəmi bəqirbō*].” The passage explicitly distinguishes the deity from their messenger, but it also seems to describe the latter as having the divine prerogative to not forgive sins, which in Josh 24:19 is attributed directly to YHWH in identical terms—*lō’ yiśšā’ ləpiš’ākem*. The statement that “my name is in him” serves as an explanation for the messenger’s exercising of the deity’s prerogative (Johansson 2011).<sup>10</sup> The composer of this passage was aware of—if not responsible for—the conflated identities of YHWH and their messenger in the other passages discussed above, and they were likely providing a reflective rationalization for that conflation. Perhaps most directly in view is Judg 2:1, which narrates the story of YHWH’s leading the Israelites out of Egypt and likely had the messenger interpolated.

We may leverage the theoretical framework of communicable agency to posit that the “name” operates in Exod 23 as a conceptual vehicle for YHWH’s communicable agency. Thus, possession of the name not only allowed the messenger to be referred to as YHWH, but it endowed them with YHWH’s power and authority. They were more or less a divine image that was already sentient and animated (though confined to the texts). According to this theory, with the interpolation of the *mal’āk*—or perhaps between the initial interpolation of the *mal’āk* and the composition of this passage in Exod 23—the conflated identities of YHWH and their messenger were rationalized using the notion of the “indwelling” of YHWH’s name.<sup>11</sup> This concept is closely related to the so-called “Name Theology” of D and Dtr (discussed in the next section).

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<sup>10</sup> Sommer (2009, 42) recognizes this as well: “by stating that His name is in the angel, Yhwh indicates that the angel carries something of Yhwh’s own essence or self; it is not an entirely separate entity.” Here Sommer seems to acknowledge that loci of the self that are distinct from the “body” are indeed communicable, but this acknowledgement does not influence the application of the broader fluidity model elsewhere.

<sup>11</sup> An alternative explanation is that the notion of the name indwelling the messenger in Exod 23 inspired the later interpolations, but this would make Exod 23:20–21 prior to texts like Judg 2:1 and raises more questions about the presence of the messenger in Exod 23 than it answers. If the messenger is an interpolation in the other passages, Exod 23 is most likely an elaboration on those interpolations. The literary progression would begin with YHWH themselves leading the Israelites (Exod 13:21; 33:14–17), then an interpolated messenger (Exod 14:19; Judg 2:1), and then the rationalized messenger (Exod 23:20–21).