

what person being his counselor has instructed him?” Other passages assert YHWH’s ability to monitor everyone’s actions, activating the SOCIAL MONITORING domain (Ps 33:13–15): “From heaven YHWH looks down [*hibbîṭ*], / he sees all humanity [*rā’ā ’et-kol-bānê hā’ādām*]. / From where he sits enthroned / he gazes upon all who dwell on earth [*hišgîḥa ’el kol-yōšābê hā’āreš*]. / The one who fashions all their hearts / observes all their works [*mēbîn ’el-kol-ma’āsêhem*].” Still other texts escalate this rhetoric, asserting YHWH’s ability not only to observe actions, but to perceive the very thoughts and intentions of humanity (Ps 139:1–4): “O YHWH, you have searched me [*hāqartānî*] and you know me. / You know my sitting down and my getting up, / you discern my thoughts from afar [*bantâ lārê’î mērāḥôq*]. / You measure out my journey and my lying down, / and you are familiar with all my ways. / For before a word is on my tongue, / look, O YHWH, you know all of it [*yāda ’tā kulāh*].”

One of the primary purposes of this access to strategic information was to benefit humanity by informing their decision-making. In the biblical literature, the verbs *drš*, “inquire, search, seek” (Gen 25:22; 1 Kgs 22:5–8; Ezek 20:1–3), and *š’l*, “ask” (Judg 18:5; 20:18; 1 Sam 22:13, 15; Isa 7:11–12) are used to refer to the accessing that information.²⁷ There were a variety of means available to inquire regarding YHWH’s will, with some sanctioned by the authorities responsible for the biblical texts and some prohibited (although there was diachronic and synchronic variation on this). The previous chapter focused on some of the means of divination considered to be illicit by biblical authors and editors, but there were multiple cultic objects and agents that could be considered appropriate media for facilitating YHWH’s full access to strategic information. In Num 27:21, for instance, Moses is instructed to have Aaron represent the concerns of the community before the high priest Eleazar, who would inquire (*š’l*) by means of the *’urîm*, “Urim,” in the deity’s presence (*lipnê YHWH*). Judges 20:27 suggests the ark of the covenant facilitated an inquiry (*š’l*) to YHWH. For Saul, it was YHWH’s refusal to answer his inquiries through the Urim (1 Sam 28:6) or through dreams or prophets that compelled him to seek out the necromancer of En-dor.²⁸ This convention of inquiring of YHWH seems to have conceptually broadened in some texts to a more generic notion of “seeking” (*drš*) YHWH for purposes of communion or increased righteousness (Isa 55:6; 58:2;

²⁷ In many places, no method of inquiry is specified. For instance, in Judg 1:1–2, the author simply states that the Israelites asked (*wayyiš’ālû*) YHWH, and YHWH responded (*wayyô’mer YHWH*). The inquiry takes place after the death of Joshua, and they are asking who will function in Joshua’s place, so the author may have needed to show the Israelites receiving divine guidance without acknowledging that they had no authorized means of doing so.

²⁸ Num 12:6 is an example of a connection between prophets and dreams.