

## The Quest for a Philosophical YHWH (Part 2): Philosophical Criticism as Exegetical Methodology

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### Abstract

*This is the second article in the series designated 'The quest for a philosophical YHWH'. In the first article, the main focus was on pioneering the possibility of philosophical-critical analysis by justifying the plea for the utilisation of philosophy of religion as auxiliary discipline in biblical studies. In this article, the primary concern lies with providing some introductory thoughts on the exegetical component of philosophical-critical analysis, i.e. philosophical-criticism a new form of biblical criticism. In this type of exegesis the practitioner attempts the identification, abstraction and reconstruction of the ontological, metaphysical, moral, theological, epistemological and other assumptions in the biblical discourse so as to examine and discuss the philosophical questions these assumptions give rise to in their relation to one or more of the loci on the agenda of philosophy of religion.*

### A INTRODUCTION

In the previous article in this series (*The quest for a philosophical YHWH [part 1]*- see Gericke 2005:579-602), the reader was introduced to the possibility of utilising *philosophy of religion* as an auxiliary discipline in Old Testament studies. That paper began with a discussion of the history, nature, scope and aims of *philosophy of religion* and an attempt was made to justify its possible inclusion in biblical studies (cf. also Gericke 2003:11-27; 2004:30-34). Subsequent hermeneutic and heuristic considerations were incorporated in order to demonstrate why such an innovation could indeed be considered both viable and compensatory.

The discussion in *Part 1* led inexorably to the introduction of a few neologisms in meta-theoretical discourse. The first of these – '*philosophical-critical analysis*' (PCA) – was coined as an umbrella term to designate, generally, the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible from the perspective of loci on the agenda in *philosophy of religion*. Under this rubric a distinction was made between *two types* of PCA, i.e. 1) *philosophical criticism* - a form of biblical criticism involving the operation of PCA on the level of exegesis; and 2) *philosophy of Old Testament religion* - a larger-scale type of PCA analogous to Old Testament theology

As promised, in the present article (*The quest for a philosophical YHWH [Part 2]*), the focus will be specifically and exclusively on *philosophical criticism*, i.e. *philosophical-critical analysis* on the level of exegesis. The objective is to provide the reader with some thoughts on a variety of basic theoretical and practical aspects pertaining to what could become the latest addition to the ever-growing family of biblical criticism. Part 3 in the series (the final article in this series) will be devoted entirely to a discussion of the theory and practice of the second type of *philosophical-critical analysis*, i.e. *philosophy of Old Testament religion*.

## **B THE ABSENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL-CRITICISM IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS**

As noted in the previous article, in contemporary Old Testament exegesis there are many types of biblical criticism. Included in this extended family are approaches such as source criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, form criticism, narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, social-scientific criticism, sociological criticism, feminist criticism, canonical criticism, psychological criticism, etc (Gericke 2005:581). Yet despite this almost inordinate variety of approaches to the reading of Old Testament texts, no dictionary of biblical exegesis lists an approach called '*philosophical criticism*' (cf. also Knierim 1995:212).

The absence of a philosophical approach to the exegetical analysis of the religious discourse of the Old Testament is equally apparent when one considers what subjects are missing from (or on the margins of) the enormous variety of auxiliary disciplines operative in biblical criticism. Particularly familiar among these auxiliary disciplines are subjects like linguistics, history, literary criticism, sociology, psychology, anthropology, archaeology, etc.). In fact, there is almost no subject among the social sciences that has not been tapped at some point or another for the perspective it might provide on the discourse of the Old Testament texts. Even so, the discipline of philosophy (in general), and the sub-discipline of *philosophy of religion* in particular, are probably not exactly the first that come to mind in discussions of interdisciplinary research in Old Testament scholarship (Gericke 2004:32; cf. Barr 1999:36).

Of course, the uncritical use of philosophy in pre-Enlightenment biblical interpretation-cum-dogmatics has played no small role in the justification of anti-philosophical sentiment among biblical scholars. Thus, as Barr (1999:36) correctly observes, in general, exegetes tend to steer away from philosophical questions generated by their readings. Yet whether the texts are approached historically, from a literary perspective or sociologically, philosophical issues always hover in the background and related questions are generated willy-nilly (see Knierim 1995:214).

Traces of this marginalising of philosophical discourse can be seen in the way many works on biblical criticism contain some or other reference to key concepts in philosophical jargon. Most well-read biblical scholars have heard and know the meaning of terms like ‘rationalism’, ‘idealism’, ‘romanticism’, ‘positivism’, ‘Marxism’, ‘structuralism’, ‘feminism’, ‘deconstruction’, ‘post-modernism’, etc.? In addition, a variety of issues ultimately derived from philosophical sub-disciplines like epistemology, ethics, hermeneutics, philosophy of science, philosophy of history, philosophy of language, and social philosophy seems to have proved to be irresistible to most biblical exegetes engaging in meta-commentary (Barr 2000:61).

Yet despite the return of an (c)overt recognition of the value of recourse to philosophy in biblical studies, the establishment appears to have overlooked the possibility of adding an approach called *philosophical* criticism to the ever-growing family of approaches in biblical criticism. Moreover, no one seems to have toyed with the idea that utilising *philosophy of religion* as a primary auxiliary discipline – as part of an independent and officially recognised form of biblical criticism (*philosophical* criticism) – might actually prove to be both interesting and worthwhile.

In the previous article, this oversight was identified and the hermeneutical justification for its rectification was provided. In what follows below, I shall attempt to pioneer the new approach by spelling out the details of its operations and thus providing an answer to the question: ‘*What is philosophical criticism?*’

## **C WHAT IS PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM?**

### **1 A definition of philosophical criticism**

Philosophical criticism is (to be) a type of biblical criticism analogous to other approaches like narrative criticism, social-scientific criticism, feminist-criticism, historical-criticism, etc. It may then be seen as an exegetical methodology exclusively concerned with reading the biblical texts from the perspective of loci on the agenda of the subject known as *philosophy of religion*. Basically, philosophical criticism will therefore involve engaging in philosophy of religion whilst limiting the discourse to be analysed to a particular passage in the biblical text. As such, philosophical criticism will represent the exegetical component in ‘philosophical-critical analysis’ – the general term for the utilization of *philosophy of religion* in biblical interpretation. Thus, philosophical criticism may be conceived of as being a precursor to a ‘philosophy of Old Testament religion’, i.e. philosophical-critical analysis of the biblical texts on a larger scale.

## 2 Objectives in philosophical criticism

As a highly specialised form of biblical criticism, philosophical criticism will be aimed at providing a *philosophical* perspective on the *religious* beliefs, practices and phenomena of which we read in particular Old Testament texts. In other words, the objective is neither the construction of a normative philosophy of religion, nor a coherent system of metaphysics or dogma. Rather, it is the identification and discussion – from the perspective of one or more of the loci on the agenda of *philosophy of religion* – of the *philosophical problems* generated by the ontological, metaphysical, theological, epistemological, moral and other *claims and assumptions* in the discourse of a particular scriptural passage.

## 3 Assumptions of philosophical-critical exegesis

The following can be said to be some of the assumptions of philosophical criticism as exegetical methodology:

- a The biblical texts are *not philosophy* with regard to either genre or content.
- b Even so, these texts do contain the *discourse* of particular religious *traditions*.
- c As such the discourse witnesses to a variety of *religious beliefs, practices and phenomena in Old Testament Yahwism(s)*.
- d These religious beliefs, practices and phenomena – which can be both implicit or explicit in the discourse – provide access to *ontological, metaphysical, moral, epistemological and theological assumptions and beliefs* in Old Testament Yahwism(s)
- e It is possible to *identify, abstract and reconstruct* these assumptions and beliefs.
- f These religious assumptions and beliefs (and their implications) may give rise to *philosophical questions or problems*.
- g Since these *philosophical* questions and problems have thus been derived from considering *religious* beliefs, practices and phenomena, they fall within the scope of the discipline known as *philosophy of religion*
- h The *issues of interest on the agenda of philosophy of religion* can be adopted and adapted to provide adequate classification and categorisation of these philosophical-religious questions and problems and can provide

functional and interesting perspectives from which they can be approached.

- 9 As this practice of *philosophy of religion* will be exclusively focussed on the religious discourse of the *Old Testament*, scholars whose area of expertise is this body of texts, and who are interested in the auxiliary subject, may legitimately concern themselves with this form of exegesis.

#### **4 Issues of interest in philosophical criticism**

In this section we take a closer look at the kind of issues of concern for the exegete engaged in *philosophical criticism* or philosophy of religion on the level of exegesis. Not all of these issues will be completely applicable *en bloc* in the context of all Old Testament texts and the philosophical-critical exegete will have to decide which are most relevant in any particular inquiry. In most cases, a philosophical critical reading of the text will involve looking at the material from the perspective of only one of these topics. Which one it will ultimately be depend both on what is implied by the contents of a particular passage as a potential philosophical problem and what happens to be of personal interest to the exegete.

As can be expected, these issues of interest in philosophical criticism will be derived from the agenda of philosophy of religion (see Abraham 1985; Pailin 1986; but cf Cupitt 2001:44-48). These include those concerned with: the nature of religion; the nature of religious language; the concept of revelation; the nature and attributes of the divine; arguments for and against the existence of the deity; the problem of evil and theodicy; religious experience; the relation between religion and history; the relation between religion and morality; the relation between religion and science; the relation between religion and culture; religious epistemology; religious phenomena (miracles, paranormal phenomena, prayer, etc.); religious concepts (sin, sacrifice, truth, etc.); post-mortem existence, religious pluralism; etc.

#### **5 Methodology in philosophical criticism (steps in the exegetical process)**

Talking about philosophical criticism in the abstract is all fine and well, but how will it operate in practice? In this section as well as in the one to follow, we shall look at the way the Old Testament exegete may go about doing *philosophy of religion*. What follows below may be seen as a hypothetical and rather stereotypical reconstruction of steps in the exegetical process, and should therefore be considered as being a rough guide rather than a chronologically sacrosanct recipe):

- a *Choice*: a text is *chosen*.

- b *Identification*: The analysis is initiated by seeking to *identify* the implicit ontological, metaphysical, theological, epistemological, ethical and other claims, assumptions and beliefs (and their related implications) present in the text.
- c *Abstraction*: These claims, assumptions and implications are now abstracted from the discourse.
- d *Reconstruction*: Following the abstraction of the data, it is time to *reconstruct* the assumptions, beliefs and implications in propositional form.
- e *Recognition*: In this step, the exegete attempts to recognize any *philosophical* dilemmas or questions prompted or hinted at by these propositions.
- f *Discernment*: The exegete should now attempt to *discern* which (one or more) of the loci on *the agenda of philosophy of religion* the problems and questions generated by (one or more) of the propositions can be related to.
- g *Decision*: The exegete now *decides* on the particular proposition(s) and the specific issue(s) on the agenda now identified that he or she wants to discuss in the present research.
- h *Discussion*: At last the exegete can begin to *discuss* in-depth the nature and contents of a specific *philosophical* problem(s) identified in discourse of a particular Old Testament passage.

Of course, in actual practice exegetical creativity cannot be reduced to conform to a homogenous or dogmatic recipe that simply unfolds chronologically and coherently every time in exactly the same manner. The steps outlined above are therefore to be understood as one possible example – a rough guide or a useful albeit optional checklist – rather than a normative prescriptive rule of law as to how the process of exegesis must in every circumstance and on every occasion take place.

Such an outline of the proposed methodological procedure also simply represents but the attempt to make the exegetical process ordered and controlled so that the interpreter's engagement with the text and the methodology can have some structure. Otherwise the tendency to eisegete or misread a text by constructing pseudo-problems not reflective of what the rhetoric of the particular passage actually contains, may be overwhelming. The exegete should therefore be sensitive so as not to transpose perspectives and theories to the biblical context that may distort the contents and its assumptions. Negligence on this matter will end up creating pseudo-problems and pseudo-solutions.

Remember, however, that ultimately, the objective of this exegetical agenda is neither the discovery of final answers to the philosophical problems, nor the construction and propagation of any particular ideology. Rather, the identification, reconstruction, and articulation of the problems and a discussion of the issues involved constitute the main priority of philosophical exegesis.

## **6 What philosophical criticism is not**

In view of what was written in Part 1 (the first article in this series) on the nature and objectives of philosophical-critical analysis, and, in order to avoid misunderstanding and the misuse of the method, a few negatively stated notes on the nature and goal of this exegetical approach are in order.

In this regard, philosophical criticism is not – by no means – to be equated with dogmatic exegesis or any other form of philosophical or theological interpretation that approaches the Old Testament as though it were a ready-made body of coherent, normative, and systematic philosophical-theological propositions and proof-texts. Moreover, the aim of this approach is not – in no way – to construct a substantive ontological dogmatic ideology or to read the texts as though they contained one. It is a critical form of exegesis and its practitioners would do well to take cognisance of the findings of other historical, social-scientific and literary-critical types of biblical interpretation (contra Carroll 1991:passim).

However, this type of exegesis is not satisfied merely with descriptive analysis but, through rational enquiry is also at liberty to ask evaluative questions otherwise often avoided (except of course in exceptional cases of theological exegesis, ideological criticism or in *sachkritiek*). Evaluative questions following descriptive analysis include, e.g. “does this text make sense?” and “Is it true?” (cf. Clines 1995:passim; Brueggemann 1997:71).

## **D PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM IN PRACTICE**

### **1 An abstract of an example of philosophical-criticism: A philosophical-critical reading of Isaiah 41: 21-24**

As there is no room in this article for a detailed and in-depth exegesis of a particular text and all that this involves, the following exegetical abstract of what can be expected is provided:

a *Choice:*

The text selected was Isaiah 41: 21-24

b *Identification/abstraction/reconstruction:*

Claims: This text claims that YHWH is the only god because, since the other gods are not really divine as they cannot influence reality for good or evil neither can they reveal what the future holds;

Assumptions: YHWH exists; a deity is an entity able to affect reality for good or evil; a deity knows the future, etc.

c *Recognition/Discernment:*

The following are some of the *philosophical problems* that have been identified and that represent an adoption and adaptation from some of the loci in *philosophy of religion*. Included in this particular *recognition and discernment*, are the loci known as, *the relation between religion and morality, the problem of evil, and the nature and attributes of deity and arguments for and against the existence of the deity*:

- i Does the passage reflect the problematic of the so-called “divine-command theory” and Plato’s Eutyphro’s dilemma? I.e. does it assume that what is called ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is such objectively and intrinsically or are these relative to what the YHWH considers it to be in his own eyes?
- ii How does this passage bear on questions and theories on the so-called problem of evil?
- iii What are the attributes of deity assumed in this passage and are any of the popular theodicies applicable to its theological, moral and ontological assumptions?
- iv What does the belief that the deity knows the future imply about the relation between the divine and time?
- v What kind of ontology and metaphysics is assumed to be operative in the insistence that a real deity is able to tell what will happen in the future? What philosophical questions do such a world-view give rise to?
- vi Does the passage assume that YHWH knows the future because it already exists as unchangeable fact and that the deity knows what this is?

If so, how can YHWH himself be said to have free will? For if YHWH knows exactly what he will choose to do on any particular future occasion he will be unable to choose to do anything else. Moreover, if this is the case, does the text also imply that humans do not have free will?

Secondly, if YHWH is assumed to know the future because it is inevitable and fixed, does this mean he is not omnipotent? For if a future state of affairs is inevitable then deity will be unable to change it and cannot



therefore be considered as being omnipotent. In other words, is YHWH's precognition compatible with his supposed omnipotence?

- vii Alternatively, could the author be assuming that the future is indeterminate but that YHWH knows the future because he is cognisant of its own desires whilst having absolute power enables it to orchestrate any desired outcome?

If this is what is meant, does the text once again imply that *humans* do not have free will? For if YHWH knows what he will cause or allow humans to do, they do not really have a choice of doing anything other than what YHWH desires. Yet if he does not know what humans will do in any given future scenario, how can he be sure what the details of the desired outcomes will be?

- viii Given these questions, is it possible to reconstruct any arguments for or against the existence of YHWH from the contents of this text? I.e. if YHWH is assumed to be both omnipotent and precognisant, and such attributes are logically not juxtaposable, it follows that a being possessing both cannot exist. Or if the text assumes that the future can be known or that there are other gods for YHWH to talk to, it follows that any assumed monotheist and probabilist metaphysics cannot accommodate the deity depicted in this particular discourse.

The next part of the exegetical process may involve a discussion of one or more of these questions with reference to what may be ascertained from a close reading of the passage in Isaiah 41 itself. As in all critical exegesis, one cannot simply enlist texts from other biblical books to argue for any dogmatic or theological 'truth'. Rather, the aim is to discover and discuss what the particular passage implies with regard to what the author might have assumed (or what his discourse logically entails) with regard to possible answers to these questions. If the entailed answer happens to be different from what the author himself appears to assume, maybe because there are internal contradictions in the passage (and the text therefore deconstructs itself) then this should be acknowledged. So should the possibility that the particular texts do not contain any implied answers to the questions the exegete reconstructs from its assumptions. In this case, the putting of the question and the discussion of possibilities and their respective implications and possible answers should suffice.

## **2 Examples of other hypothetical agendas for philosophical criticism**

Of course, since the loci typical in philosophy of religion represent many topics and subtopics and since both the Old Testament texts and the philosophical questions it could give rise to are virtually infinite, many types of discussions of virtually all Old Testament texts are possible. The following are

merely a few examples of such possibilities and are couched in the rhetoric of the titles of journal articles:

- 1 Literal, metaphorical, non-cognitive or what? The nature of religious language in Psalm 18
- 2 A philosophical-critical perspective on the relation between science and religion with special reference to the creation account in Genesis 1
- 3 Fundamental assumptions about the nature of deity in Genesis 2-3: a philosophical-critical assessment
- 4 The problem of divine foreknowledge and free will in Genesis 15
- 5 Eutyphro's dilemma revisited: the relation between God and moral standards in Genesis 18
- 6 The relation between YHWH and time: Notes on the rhetoric of implied temporality in Isaiah 43:13.
- 7 Malachi 1:11-12 and the argument from projection against the existence of YHWH
- 8 Deconstructing the problem of evil: monistic tendencies in Exodus 4:11
- 9 Jeremiah and the false prophets: a philosophical-critical perspective on the justification of religious experience in Jeremiah 23
- 10 Philosophical-critical questions regarding the motif of theomorphism in Gen 1:26-27
- 11 The ontological status of YHWH in Job 38-42: a non-realist perspective
- 12 Philosophical questions regarding the perceived relation between religion and history in Exodus 15
- 13 The nature of divine goodness: perspectives and problems in Psalm 136
- 14 Some philosophical-critical issues regarding the nature of divine revelation in Deuteronomy 4. Etc.

As should be clear from these examples, the only limits to the kind of questions to be asked and the texts to which these could be put may well lie not so much in methodological restrictions but rather in the imagination and creativity of the exegete him/herself. And though part of the discussion may overlap with what has been said in other disciplines (theological exegesis, ideology criticism, etc.), the overall interpretation of the individual text from a philosophi-

cal-critical perspective will provide a unique reading of the text in question.

### **3 Possible hindrances to optimal efficiency in the practice of philosophical criticism**

There may also be several variables or factors that could prove limiting in the actual practice of philosophical criticism by the exegete:

- 1 The interpreter has a deficient knowledge of the nature, contents and purpose of the philosophy of religion
- 2 The interpreter tries to read the Old Testament texts as though it contained ready-made philosophical discourse.
- 3 The interpreter confuses philosophy of religion with philosophical thinking in general, with philosophical theology or with dogmatics or apologetics.
- 4 The interpreter misunderstands the nature, content and purpose of philosophical criticism
- 5 The interpreter lacks the creativity and logical skills to perceive the relevance of Old Testament texts for one or more of the loci in philosophy of religion
- 6 The interpreter is not aware of all the possible issues that can be of interest to philosophers of religion
- 7 The interpreter assumes that only texts that are explicit, systematic and almost philosophical with direct and explicit bearing on some issue in the philosophy of religion can be relevant for philosophical critical analysis
- 8 The interpreter fails to see the implicit or indirect manner in which the discourse of a particular text contains discourse and ideas that could have some bearing on one or more issues of interest for the philosophy of religion
- 9 The interpreter fails to adapt the question framing from the Judaeo-Christian tradition philosophy of religion in order to deal with the specific nature of the Old Testament discourse in a hermeneutical legitimate manner
- 10 The interpreter reads into the text more than is warranted by contents of context
- 11 The interpreter commits informal fallacies in the process of reconstructing a particular assumption or entailment in the text or in the articulation of the particular philosophical problem identified

- 12 The interpreter is constrained by expectations provided by his/her own theological ideology and personal expectations of what the text could or could not possibly mean.
- 13 The interpreter views the contents of the text as more or less complex than it actually is. Etc.

These are but some examples of what might go awry when someone attempts to utilise philosophical criticism for the purposes of analysing an Old Testament text. There may be more but these diversions should be sufficient to give an idea of what might short circuit the exegetical process.

### **E THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM**

The value of philosophical-critical exegesis can be seen to be virtually synonymous with the value of philosophical-critical analysis in general. As a result, the following may be seen as potential benefits that may be derived from utilising philosophy of religion as auxiliary discipline in Old Testament studies on the level of exegesis:

- 1 Philosophical criticism fills a gap in biblical exegesis given the complete absence of an exclusively philosophically orientated type of biblical criticism and thus enables *philosophy of religion* to play the role of a primary auxiliary discipline in Old Testament interpretation.
- 2 Philosophical criticism allows the Old Testament scholar to engage in philosophy of religion on the level of *exegesis*, thus providing a heuristic area of specialisation and expertise for philosophically inclined exegetes who desire to discuss related problems posed by the religious discourse of the biblical texts
- 3 Philosophical criticism enables the Old Testament specialist to utilise a philosophical discipline in exegesis without the hermeneutical dilemmas generated by the traditional attempts in systematic and philosophical theology to read the texts from a philosophical perspective.
- 4 Philosophical criticism allows the exegete to discuss all those philosophical questions other types of biblical criticism tend to bracket.
- 5 Philosophical criticism can complement and supplement other types of biblical criticism as part of a holistic approach to the text.
- 6 Philosophical criticism can be seen as worthwhile in its own right or as a necessary precursor to larger-scale philosophical-critical analysis, i.e. philosophy of Old Testament religion.

- 7 Philosophical critical exegesis may assist in closing the communication gap so often experienced by Old Testament scholars and their colleagues from other disciplines where philosophy is also utilised for interdisciplinary research.

These are but some of what I would consider the advantages of the establishment of an independent and officially recognised form of biblical criticism that concerns itself solely with reading the Old Testament texts from the perspective of *philosophy of religion*.

## **F THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHY OF OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION**

In the previous article it was suggested that the concept of *philosophical-critical analysis* is but an umbrella term designating two approaches concerned with reading the texts from the perspectives of *philosophy of religion* (Gericke 2005:600). The first of these approaches, it was suggested, will operate on the level of exegesis and is the methodology discussed in the present article. The second type of philosophical-critical inquiry, it was said, will be a larger-scale approach and is called *philosophy of Old Testament religion*. And the relation between these two forms of *philosophical-critical analysis* (*philosophical criticism* and *philosophy of Old Testament religion*) can be construed as being analogous to relation between theological exegesis and Old Testament theology or that between historical-critical exegesis and a *history of Israelite religion*.

In other words, analogous to the way in which theological or historical exegesis is necessary prior to Old Testament theology or history of Israelite religion, so too philosophical criticism as exegetical methodology comes before philosophy of Old Testament religion. For as the exegetical component in philosophical-critical analysis, it provides the foundations, background and corrective frame of reference of any such attempt to assess larger bodies of Old Testament literature from the perspectives of the loci on the agenda in *philosophy of religion*. In doing so, it might well assist the larger-scale approach in avoiding the pitfalls that Old Testament theology encountered when it was yet unaware of the theological pluralism in the texts and assumed that the Old Testament contained one unified and completely coherent theological framework.

Philosophical criticism will indeed make philosophers of Old Testament religion sensitive to the pluralism in the biblical discourse, the acknowledgement of which itself will give rise to additional questions pertaining to philosophical problems that only become visible once one considers the biblical traditions in conjunction by juxtaposing the findings of philosophical-critical exegeses. Thus the philosophical problems and the underlying assumptions

identified and discussed as part of philosophical criticism will both provide and shape the agenda, problems, issues, discussions, perspectives, theories and answers that will be found in *philosophy of Old Testament religion*. In other words, *philosophical criticism* represents a compulsory part of the repertoire of any hermeneutically legitimate and heuristically functional *philosophy of Old Testament religion* as it provides the foundations, the prolegomena and the very issues to be dealt with in the larger-scale approach.

## G CONCLUSION

In this article, the second in the three part series called '*The quest for a philosophical YHWH*', I have attempted to spell out the theory and practice of *philosophical criticism as exegetical methodology* and in this manner hope to pioneer it as the latest officially recognised and independent type of biblical criticism. As a form of exegesis exclusively concerned with reading individual Old Testament texts from the perspective of loci on the agenda in *philosophy of religion*, philosophical criticism represents the exegetical component in philosophical-critical analysis. In the next and final article in this series, the concern will be the second type of *philosophical-critical analysis*, i.e. the larger-scale discipline a.k.a. *philosophy of Old Testament religion*.

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