

# Deep Structure

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You cannot understand a landscape, Claude Levi Strauss famously wrote in *Tristes Tropiques*, unless you know what lies beneath the surface. Deep structures explain the features we can see. Similarly, casual readers of the Bible cannot grasp its meaning unless they know the deep structure.

What lies beneath the Torah? In Heschel's phrase, it is the chronicle of God and humanity's search for one another. Each hides and each seeks: Adam cowers behind a bush and Jonah literally runs from God. In seeking, the Psalmist cries out for God, the Priest constructs a tabernacle to offer up to God. The Divine dynamic is also complex: God is revealed on Mount Sinai. But of course you can only reveal what was in some sense hidden. So *Hester Panim* — the hiding of God's face — is part of the same deep structure of Torah as human hiding.

The Torah is a love story, full of feints, misunderstandings, reunions, anger, rejoicing, lovers lost and lovers found. It spans centuries and, for the human side, different personalities. There are calm moments of wedded bliss and stormy times of estrangement. But through it all Israel and God try to find the way to each other's heart. As we do to this day.