

ROLLING IN THE (WATERS OF THE) DEEP

ROLLING IN THE (WATERS OF THE) DEEP:
PURIFICATION AND WATER IMAGERY IN
EARLY JEWISH LITERATURE

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Purification and Water Imagery in Early Jewish Literature

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ABSTRACT:

Scholars such as Jonathan Klawans have distinguished between two types of impurity described in priestly texts: ritual and moral. The former, which denotes bodily pollution, occurs as a result of natural human processes (i.e., birth, death, genital discharge) and can render one temporarily unfit for temple worship, though it bears no clear ethical implications. Conversely, moral impurity refers to the more permanent defilement brought about by ethical transgressions (i.e., murder, apostasy, adultery), and has the capacity to stain the land of Israel itself, in addition to threatening the sanctity of the temple. However, this separation between ritual and moral dimensions of pollution are not absolute, as even Klawans allows that these categories are rather “pliable” (and to a certain extent, intertwined.)

This thesis explores the concept of purity (both ritual and moral) in early Jewish literature, through a detailed analysis of water and cleansing language. In particular, I emphasise conceptual links between water for a) ritual washing and b) moral cleansing or sanctification. In this way, I highlight the flexibility of scholarly purity categories, demonstrating how purification can often be understood “holistically,” as encompassing both ritual and moral dimensions. I also illustrate how water seems to embody liminal tensions, oscillating between thresholds of purity and pollution, as well as primordial chaos and cosmic order. The thesis is divided into two major sections: Part One focuses on representations of water in the Hebrew Bible, whereas Part Two examines non-canonical texts from the Second Temple period.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

1QH ^a	Hodayot
1QS	Rule of the Community
AB	Anchor Bible
AcBib	Academia Biblica
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zietschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CD	Cairo Damascus Document
CDCH	<i>The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by David J.A. Clines. Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2009.
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
DSSSE	<i>Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition</i> . Edited by Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal for the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
MT	Masoretic Text, specifically the Leningrad Codex
<i>Numen</i>	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983.
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>

<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TTS	Treatise of the Two Spirits
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

0.1. INTRODUCTION:

Water, cleansing, and ritual immersion in ancient Judaism are often examined in light of Christian baptism, since the later Christian sacrament seems to bear some relation to its Jewish precedents.¹ It is true that ancient Jewish views of water may indeed help delineate the historical development of Christian baptismal practices, but apprehending how early Jewish texts represent water also provides critical insight into specifically *Jewish* beliefs in antiquity. Discussions of water in early Jewish literature frequently focus on legal biblical texts, where water serves as an integral cleansing agent for ritual defilement. Yet in spite of water's literal capacity for purification, water terminology is also employed in non-ritual depictions of cleansing, which would also seem to indicate its symbolic power as metaphor.

Water-related metaphors often draw on Priestly purification terminology (as attested in Leviticus and Numbers), extending this purity language beyond its specific ritualistic *Sitz im Leben*. In order to properly apprehend water and cleansing imagery, this thesis evaluates Israelite and early Jewish conceptions of pollution. Using Jonathan Klawans's purity typology as a starting point,² I emphasise the points of intersection between "ritual" and "moral" types of purification and pollution, and how ritual and moral dimensions of purity can be seen to reinforce one another. Specifically, I highlight how the observance of purification rituals, collectively a central component of Mosaic law, can also serve as a

¹ E.g., Jonathan D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, AcBib 23 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1. Lawrence acknowledges that his monograph is part of an examination of the connections between ritual bathing and baptism; Hermann Lichtenberger, "Baths and Baptism," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85-89.

² Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21-31. See section 1.1 for more on Klawans.

precondition for moral sanctification, particularly within Second Temple period writings. I contend that this interrelationship between (seemingly disparate) aspects of purification can help account for the prevalence of water-related metaphors, which employ ritual language of purification to denote moral sanctification.

Where applicable, this thesis also draws on the concept of liminality as a theoretical lens, from which I attempt to situate the fluidity of seemingly traditional purity categories within broader cultural conceptions of water, creation, and covenant renewal. The term “liminal” is derived from the Latin term *limen*, meaning threshold, and refers to anything “occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.”³ The condition of liminality by definition implies a degree of ambiguity, as liminal entities often operate “betwixt and between”⁴ standard, bifurcated categories. As will be illustrated, water can frequently be seen to embody liminal tensions, as it helps to facilitate conditional change, between the thresholds of pollution and purification, as well as that of primordial chaos and cosmic order. While liminality is traditionally characterised as the marginal phase of any rite of passage, I draw on this concept more broadly, as an interpretive tool for understanding the inherent ambiguity, not solely of an intermediate juncture of a rite of passage, but also of the fluctuating movement between different (structural) extremes of order and disorder. This broader interpretation of anthropological terminology is not unwarranted, as scholars working in several academic disciplines have similarly adopted the notion of liminality,

³ Liminal,” Oxford Dictionaries, accessed June 10, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/liminal>.

⁴ Victor Turner, “Liminality and Communitas,” in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 95.

transforming it beyond its strict, ritual context.⁵ Liminality's cross-disciplinary appeal would thus seem to attest to its value and versatility as an interpretive framework, by which to address water's dual characteristics of marginality and potentiality.

The first section of this thesis focuses on key scriptural depictions of (1) purification and (2) creation in relation to water, as well as (3) later prophetic renderings of Priestly water terminology as a metaphor for restoration. The second section turns to relevant non-biblical compositions from the Second Temple period, such as Jubilees and 1 Enoch, as well as CD, 1QS, and 1QH^a, tracing the trajectory of cleansing imagery and terminology. While this thesis takes for granted a degree of coherence within the base Priestly configuration of purity, I also strive to differentiate between subsequent texts, and their respective authors, communities, and beliefs, examining purity and water constructs from a primarily diachronic perspective.

⁵ This framework of liminality has been utilised by scholars across diverse fields, including medicine and health, sociology, and religious studies. e.g. Miles Little et al., "Liminality: A Major Category in the Experience of Cancer Illness," *Soc. Sci. Med.* 47, no. 10 (1998): 1484-1494; Jennifer Howard-Grenville et al., "Liminality as Cultural Process for Cultural Change," *Organization Science* 22, no. 2 (2011): 522-539; Jason Prior and Carole M. Cusack, "Ritual, Liminality and Transformation: Secular Spirituality in Sydney's Gay Bathhouses," *Australian Geographer* 39, no. 3 (2008): 271-281; Hart et al., "Holding Firm: Power, Push-Back, and Opportunities in Navigating the Liminal Space of Critical Qualitative Health Research," *Qualitative Health Research* (forthcoming, 2017): 1-10; Claire A. Evans and Peter Keavern, "Liminality in preregistration mental health nurse education: A review of the literature," *Nurse Education in Practice* 15 (2015): 1-6; Leo G. Perdue, "Liminality as a Social Setting for Wisdom Instructions," *ZAW* 93, no. 1 (1981): 114-126; Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, "Gnosticism: A Study in Liminal Symbolism," *Numen* 31, no. 1 (1984): 106-128. See also Ehud Ben Zvi, "Thinking of Water in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah: An Exploration," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, BZAW 461, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 10-28; Marti Nissinen, "Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers: Water and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, 29-48 (cited also in sections 1.2 and 5.3); Richard Whitekettle, "Leviticus 12 and the Israelite Woman: Ritual Process, Liminality and the Womb," *ZAW* 107 (1995): 393-408.

PART ONE: BIBLICAL TEXTS

1. PURITY AND WATER FOR RITUAL CLEANSING

1.1. Ritual and Moral Purification in Leviticus and Priestly biblical material

In order to ascertain how later scriptural texts respond to and manipulate standard cleansing terminology, it is first important to outline the broader framework of purity and pollution, as well as the primary role water plays within ritual law. I recognise that privileging “biblical” (i.e., canonical Hebrew Bible) texts over “scriptural” writings is problematic, and I strive to avoid falling victim to the “tyranny of canonical assumption.”⁶ At the same time it is important to acknowledge the major role of (canonical) Torah in shaping consciousness, practice, and belief, as indeed, the Pentateuchal legal material greatly informs the emergent Jewish tradition. In particular, the purity system established in Leviticus and Numbers is fundamental to our understanding of water as a cleansing agent, as well as the potency of ritual, water-based imagery in later non-ritual contexts. The main scriptural source text for emergent Jewish purity law is Leviticus, the third book of Torah, which focuses on the cultic religion of ancient Israel.⁷ Although disputed, Leviticus is generally viewed as a post-exilic,

⁶ The term “scripture” refers more generally to sacred writings, encompassing texts both within and outside of the Hebrew canon. The term “scripture” thus functions as a kind of course correction from the “tyranny of canonical assumption,” replacing the common (anachronistic) designation of “Bible” and “biblical” texts in antiquity, which incorrectly calls to mind a stable canon that did not come into being until centuries later. While the designation “biblical” texts implies a direct literary correspondence to the MT, the notion of scripture denotes only the sacred status of a text, without necessarily tying it to any specific corpus. For more on the scriptural-biblical distinction, see Robert A. Kraft, “Para-mania: Beside, Before, and Beyond Biblical Studies,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 10-18; Molly M. Zahn, “Talking About Rewritten Texts: Some Reflections on Terminology,” in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, BZAW 419, ed. Hanne von Weissenberg et al. [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011], 93-119.

⁷ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 22; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-2.

composite work, consisting of two distinct priestly strands: the Priestly source (P) and the Holiness Code (H).⁸ The first sixteen chapters of Leviticus are widely viewed as P material, while chapters 17-26 are assigned to H.⁹ Beyond Leviticus, other priestly strands in the Hebrew Bible are attributed to one of these two priestly traditions; Numbers 19, for example, which deals with corpse impurity, is commonly recognised as a P text.¹⁰ Although both P and H expound upon the general theme of pollution and impurity, P is ultimately more concerned with instances of ritual defilement, and the necessary rites for purification, whereas H is centred on issues of holiness and moral sanctification.

While the term “ritual pollution” does not appear within Leviticus (or indeed, any scriptural texts), this designation is helpful for differentiating between different forms of impurity described in the Pentateuchal literature. Jonathan Klawans defines ritual pollution (in contrast to moral pollution) as a contagious, impermanent type of defilement, which occurs as the result of natural sources, such as childbirth (Lev 12:1-8), scale disease (Lev 13:1-14:32), genital discharges (Lev 15:1-33), exposure to the carcasses of impure animals (11:1-47) and to human corpses (Num 19:10-22), though it can also come about as a by-product of purificatory procedures (e.g. Lev 16:28, Num 19:8).¹¹ Such ritual forms of

⁸ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 21-22; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1. While some scholars have posited a pre-exilic date for P (i.e., Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 22; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1), a post-exilic date is now more standard (a point that is also addressed in chapter 3). For more on source critical discussions of P, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, “An Assessment of the Alleged Pre-Exilic Date of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch,” *ZAW* 108 (1996): 495-518; Jonathan D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, *AcBib* 23 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 40-41.

⁹ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 21-22; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1.

¹⁰ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 22.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 23.

pollution do not carry any connotations of sin or wrongdoing, and are not associated with demonic forces, but they are nonetheless polluting to others, and can render one temporarily unfit to worship at the Temple (the hub of cultic activity). Thus, we find a degree of separation in ritual pollution, as the contagious nature of these impurities necessitates the temporary (ritual) exclusion of the polluted parties, so as to limit the capacity for further contamination.¹² Klawans emphasises that ritual purity is regained through the passage of time, as well as through ritual ablutionary means (i.e., through sacrifices, sprinklings, washings, and bathing).¹³

In contrast to ritual forms of pollution, moral pollution does bear permanent ethical (as opposed to ritual) implications, and cannot typically be expiated by ritual means. Klawans identifies moral impurity as the polluting result of immoral acts, which defile the sinner on

¹² Milgrom identifies the “evisceration of demonic” elements, and the Israelite tendency towards monotheism, as central to understanding the ritual purity system, wherein pollution is brought about by humans (versus demonic activities). Specifically, “the pagans secured the perpetual aid of a benevolent deity by building him a temple-residence in which he was housed, fed, and worshiped in exchange for his protective care. Above all, his temple had to be inoculated by apotropaic rites – utilizing magic drawn from the metadivine realm – against incursions by malevolent forces from the supernal and infernal worlds. The Priestly theologians make use of the same imagery, except that the demons are replaced by humans. Humans can drive God out of the sanctuary by polluting it with their moral and ritual sin. All that the priests can do is periodically purge the sanctuary of its impurities and [in the case of moral sin] influence the people to atone for their wrongs.” Moreover, “the retention of impurity’s dynamic (but not demonic) power in regard to sancta served a theological function,” as “the sanctuary symbolised the presence of God; impurity represented the wrongdoing of persons. If persons unremittently polluted the sanctuary they forced God out of his sanctuary and out of their lives.” See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 43. It is important, however, to acknowledge Milgrom’s apologetic perspective, which privileges Israelite religion (as proto-Judaism) over and against its broader ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context, in following Yehezkel Kaufman (cf. *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960]). More recently, scholars have problematised Milgrom’s “demonic” designation for Mesopotamian traditions, and the assumption of monotheistic “demythologisation.” Isabel Cranz, for example, posits that “Priestly forms of impurity contain no explicit demonic element because demons are simply not relevant in context of the sanctuary and its maintenance;” the appearance of demons would thus depend more upon the social context of pollution than a unified, monotheistic system (86). See Cranz, “Priests, Pollution and the Demonic: Evaluating Impurity in the Hebrew Bible in Light of Assyro-Babylonian Texts,” *JANER* 14 (2014): 68–86.

¹³ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 22-23.

ethical grounds, and can ultimately corrupt the land itself.¹⁴ Examples of moral impurity include sexual sins (Lev 18:24-30), idolatry (Lev 19:31, 20:1-3), and bloodshed (e.g. Num 35:22-24), all three of which are frequently characterised negatively as **תועבות**, or “abominations.”¹⁵ While moral impurity does not produce ritual defilement or contact contagion *per se*, it can still implicate the sanctuary, threatening its defining quality: sanctity or holiness.¹⁶ Moreover, moral impurity provides much more of an existential threat to the long-term viability of the Israelite community than ritual pollution, given the relative permanence of this kind of defilement (it cannot be ameliorated through standard purificatory rites),¹⁷ and the potential consequences for the land’s safety. According to Klawans, the text of Leviticus posits that an accretion of moral pollution can effect a

¹⁴ Ibid, 26-31. While I identify the categories of ritual and moral impurity with Klawans, he was not the first to distinguish between different pollution types. In 1905, David Z. Hoffman similarly differentiated between **טומאות הקדשות** (pollution of the holy; i.e., moral pollution) and **טומאות הגויות** (pollution of the body; i.e., ritual pollution). See Hoffman, *Das Buch Leviticus übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1905), 303-305. Tikva Frymer-Kensky has also distinguished between pollution that can and cannot be eradicated through ritual, the latter of which can lead to “catastrophic retribution” on an individual level, and on a communal basis, could also cause “the pollution of the land and the nation of Israel” (399). See Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel,” in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol M. Meyers and M. O’Connor (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399-414.

¹⁵ Ibid, 26. Note: all biblical translations in this thesis are drawn from the NRSV.

¹⁶ E.g. Lev 20:3 – I myself will set my face against them, and will cut them off from the people, because they have given of their offspring to Molech, defiling my sanctuary (**טמא את־מקדשי**) and profaning my holy name (**ולחלל את־שם קדשי**). Here, the text presents a key instance of moral pollution (apostasy, in the form of child sacrifice to a rival Ammonite deity) as literally defiling the temple. Although moral sins are not contagious, and do not place the sancta at immediate cultic risk, it seems moral pollution (if unaccounted for via priestly channels of atonement) still affects the sanctity of the Temple – as well as the land more generally, as is demonstrated below.

¹⁷ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 26. The only methods to mitigate the impact of moral impurity are atonement and punishment (even to the point of exile, as in Lev 18:29).

“noncontagious degradation,”¹⁸ causing the land to physically vomit out (i.e., exile) the inhabitants of Israel: **ולא־תִקֵּעַ הָאָרֶץ אֶתְכֶם בְּטִמְאַכֶּם אֹתָהּ** (Lev 18:28).

Although on the one hand, Klawans emphasises the differences between ritual and moral forms of pollution, on the other hand, he acknowledges the points of intersection between them. For Klawans, the separation between ritual and moral dimensions of impurity is not absolute; these categories are both “parallel and pliable,” and quite often interwoven.¹⁹ The Levitical rituals for the Day of Atonement provide an especially clear case of moral-ritual overlapping, where the first of two goats is ritually slaughtered to make atonement (**לְכַפֵּר**) for the sanctuary. Such atonement is deemed necessary once annually, so as to cleanse all of the “uncleannesses (**מִטְמָאוֹת**) of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins (**וּמִפְשְׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם**)” (Lev 16:16). The second goat is then conferred “all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins” (**אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם** – Lev 16:22). These rites reflect a striking example of the convergence between ritual and moral forms of purification, as moral atonement is effected through explicitly ritual means.

The intersection between ritual and moral impurity is further evident within the context of covenantal theodicy, as both ritual and moral forms of defilement require specific *halakhic* (legal) solutions, as commanded by God. While ritual defilements do not seem to cause land

¹⁸ Ibid, 30.

¹⁹ Ibid, 23.

degradation in the same way that moral iniquities do,²⁰ they still seem to impinge upon holiness, as the failure to observe God's commandments (מצות) can constitute a dereliction of covenantal duties, which in turn leads to a decline in sanctity. Indeed, these collective מצות (comprising ritual and moral purity law) provide a formula for Israelite covenantal obedience, itself the prerequisite for God's sanctification of the land:

Thus you shall keep my commandments (ושמרתם מצותי) and observe them: I am the LORD. You shall not profane my holy name (ולא תחללו את-שם קדשי), that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel (ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל): I am the LORD; I sanctify you (אני יהוה מקדשכם), I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God, I am the LORD (Lev 22:31-33).

While the above passage is found at the end of a chapter that deals with primarily ritual concerns, involving sacred donations and burnt offerings, the language of sanctification (קדשה) reflects the degree to which ritual pollution has an impact on holiness.

This focus on covenant indicates the national character of Priestly purity law (and Israelite theology on the whole), as indeed, moral and ritual sources of pollution apply singularly to the people of Israel, who bear a unique responsibility as God's chosen people to sanctify him and consistently maintain the holiness of both his sanctuary as well as his city.²¹ By framing purity law in terms of covenantal theodicy, the Priestly writer identifies YHWH's continued presence and protection of Israel as contingent upon their observance of his מצות, thus portraying sanctification as a two-sided process. In this way, both ritual and moral

²⁰ E.g., Lev 18:24-29 warns that the land will vomit Israel out for defiling it, as it previously vomited the nation before them: ולא-תקיע הארץ אתכם בטמאכם אתה כאשר קאה את-הגוי אשר לפניכם (v.28). This language is not found in Lev 22, or in the context of ritual impurity.

²¹ Indeed, the entire book of Leviticus is directed to the people of Israel (unless more specifically directed to the priesthood), as indicated in the following passages: Lev 1:1; 4:1; 7:38; 11:1; 2:1; 15:2; 17:10, 18; 18:2; 19:2; 20:1-2; 22:31; 23:2-3, 23, 33, 44; 24:2, 23; 25:2; 27:2, 34.

pollution can have grave national consequences if not properly mitigated through official priestly purificatory channels.²²

Although it may be tempting to read Klawans's bifurcation between ritual and moral purity types as absolute, it is important to consider purity more holistically: as two (often integrated) components of a broader set of covenantal requirements. Ritual and moral washing may have different immediate aims in mind, but the ultimate *telos* for both is the attainment and maintenance of holiness. Moral purification is perhaps more explicitly focused towards the attainment (and maintenance) of holiness, with an emphasis on sanctification, whereas ritual processes are geared more directly towards purification. However, it is clear that adherence to cultic (purificatory) law also serves indirectly to ensure the continued *holiness* of the sancta, so as to facilitate God's sanctification of the land. In the words of Thomas Kazen, "When morality is understood in a broad sense...it embraces ritual concerns such as purity,"²³ and I posit that this is especially true in light of Israelite conceptions of covenant and Torah. In this way, we shall see how this notion of moral sanctification also comes to inform ritually-derived purification imagery.

²² Again, note that ritual pollution is much easier to nullify by means of cleansing and sacrificial rites, as opposed to moral pollution, which can only be ameliorated by means of atonement or punishment (including exile).

²³ Thomas Kazen, *Issues of Impurity in Early Judaism*, ConBOT 45 [Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2010], 16.

1.2. Different Types of Washing with Water in the Pentateuch

In general, water is used for the purpose of ritual ablution, frequently serving as an integral component of purification, which helps to remove ritual impurity, and to limit its contagious capabilities.²⁴ Although water's ablutionary role is largely confined to the P material, ritual washing for P is not a single, uniform process, and different forms of impurity require different types of expiatory rites and sacrifices. In particular, there are several water cleansing methods in P, which are important to examine, as not only do they help in apprehending how later texts recycle and reinterpret priestly practices, but they provide insight into the function of water more broadly.

Jonathan D. Lawrence identifies three main contexts for ritual washing, which provide a framework for evaluating water and cleansing language in other biblical texts: *general*, *priestly*, and *communal washing* (in the case of *theophanic* events).²⁵ The first of Lawrence's three contexts for washing is the most general, and is directed primarily towards neutralising the ritual sources of pollution laid out in Lev 11-15. According to Lawrence, general cleansing practices always involve a combination of (some of) the following elements: a) washing the body, b) washing the clothes or other objects, c) waiting until sunset, d) offering a sacrifice, and e) examination by a priest.²⁶ Lawrence highlights a pattern of ritual washing terminology common within P texts: the combination of רחץ (bathe), כבס (wash objects),

²⁴ It may seem quite obvious to us now, given the ubiquity of water for everyday hygiene, but it is also worth noting that water's capacity for purification was an important aspect of several ANE religions, frequently serving as a symbol of life, involved in temple ceremonies and key rites of passage. For more on this, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 957-967; Nissinen, "Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers," 29-48.

²⁵ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 26-35.

²⁶ Ibid, 27. Note that element (e) (namely, examination by a priest) only occurs re: צרעת.

and טהר (be clean). According to Lawrence, the combination of these verbs forms a common refrain within Lev 11-15, as in vv. 14:8, 9; and 15:13.²⁷ For example, Lev 15 outlines the ritual requirements for the זב (a man who has an abnormal genital discharge),²⁸ indicating that anyone coming into contact with the defiled person must wash their clothes (בגדיו יכבס) and bathe in water (ורחץ במים), remaining unclean until evening (וטמא עד-).²⁹ Similarly, the זב must wash his clothes (וכבס בגדיו) and rinse his body in “living water” (ורחץ בשרו במי חיים וטהר), though he must first observe a lengthier waiting period of seven days, and offer a sacrificial offering of two turtledoves or pigeons on the eighth day (15:13-14). In this way, Lev 15 reflects the forceful threat of ritual contagion, as impurity can

²⁷ Ibid, 26-29. It is worth noting that, while Lawrence claims that these words are uniquely associated by P, these terms also appear in conjunction with one another once in H material (Lev 17:15). See also Num 19:19, an additional P strand. However, I maintain that Lawrence’s washing types still provide a helpful heuristic model for apprehending various types of washing depicted in biblical texts.

²⁸ Abnormal genital discharges, as described in the זב regulations, would seem to refer primarily (but not exclusively) to gonorrheal disease, and indeed this designation is confirmed by Josephus (*Ant.* 3.261; *War* 5.273; 6.462). The term זב, while descriptive, is identified as a nominal formation, and is thus used as a noun to refer to anyone experiencing this particular type of defilement. Abnormal discharge is distinct from seminal emissions (שכבת־זרע), which are less serious, requiring only bathing one’s body (i.e., רחץ) and waiting until evening (cf. Lev 15:16-18). The differences between זרע and זב emissions are further distinguished by the rabbis, who claim: “Discharge comes from a limp penis, and semen from an erection. Discharge is watery like the white of a crushed egg, and semen is viscous like the white of an egg which is not crushed” (t. Zabim 2:4), and that “the discharge of a zab resembles the dough water of barley” (b. Nid. 3:5b). For more on this, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 907 (rabbinic translations taken from Milgrom). The feminine form of the word, זבה, is used in Lev 15:19-25 to describe women experiencing irregular discharges of blood.

²⁹ Anyone/thing coming into contact with the זב during his period of impurity includes bedding (Lev 15:4), as well as anyone who touches his bed (15:5), anyone who sits anywhere the זב has sat (15:6), anyone who touches the זב directly (15:7), anyone spat upon by the זב (15:8), and any saddles used by the זב are unclean (15:9). Anytime a person comes into contact with the defiled party (whether directly or indirectly), they are rendered unclean (יטמא), and must wash their clothes (כבס) and their bodies (רחץ).

implicate people and objects both directly and indirectly if not properly quarantined,³⁰ but it also underscores the importance of water within the purification process. Specifically, the ritual washing prescribed in Lev 15:13 (i.e., כבס בגדיו ורחץ בשרו ממים חיים) clearly indicates the efficacy of ablution for the removal of impurity, as the verse ultimately concludes that the זב is clean (וטהר).

Such general ablutions remove impurity to the extent that it cannot contaminate common (profane) space, but Milgrom posits that ritual pollution often still poses a threat to the perceived holiness of the sanctuary (the site of God's presence) even after cleansing – hence the need for a (brief) waiting time prior to re-engagement with the sacred.³¹ Indeed, even though the זב is technically *clean* after bathing and washing his clothes, he is still required to come to the sancta with a sacrificial offering of two turtledoves or pigeons (Lev 15:14), indicating that the purificatory process is not immediately concluded at the point of immersion. Similarly, for less grave sources of ritual pollution, such as seminal discharges, the affected parties remain impure until sundown, even after washing (Lev 15:16). This intermediate stage of deferred purity is integral to preventing any contamination of the sancta, thereby guaranteeing its ritual stability through the exclusion of potentially destabilising elements or persons.

While general washing is required for all Israelites (at least within a Priestly framework), the other two contexts for washing (priestly and communal/theophanic) are far less

³⁰ Indeed, Milgrom contends in a discussion of צרעת (scale disease) that the reason self-ablution (רחץ) comes after laundering (כבס) is so that the subject does not become re-infected by their still-impure clothing. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 840-841.

³¹ Ibid, 982-983.

common. Priestly washing refers to situations and practices that pertain solely to the priesthood.³² One example of this phenomenon occurs in Exod 29-30, which describe the consecration and service of Aaron and his sons in detail. Prior to the consecration and their entrance into the “tent of meeting” (אהל מועד), the sons of Aaron are required to bathe in water: ורחצת אתם במים (Exod 29:4). Exodus 30 describes the priests’ ritualised sluicing before serving in the tabernacle, which includes the washing of their hands and feet: ורחצו אהרון ובניו ממנו את־ידיהם ואת־רגליהם (Exod 30:19). As with the general washing, which applies to all Israelites, this priestly form of washing initially appears to be directed towards ritual cleansing and the eradication of any potential pollutants that could impinge upon the sacrality of the sanctuary, and is accompanied by sacrifice. However, general washing does not typically dictate washing of hands and feet specifically, whereas this passage explicitly states that the performance of these (seemingly supplementary) cleansing measures constitutes a matter of life or death for priests:

When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to make an offering by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die (ירחצו־מים ולא ימתו). They shall wash their hands and feet, so that they may not die: it shall be a perpetual ordinance for them, for him and for his descendants throughout their generations (Exod 30:20-21).

Lawrence identifies these passages as instances of extra priestly washing, since priests would have presumably been subject to the more general cleansing practices as well.³³ The threat of death does not reflect merely an intensification of purity demands however, as the failure to observe even general washing rituals is consistently framed as a grave offence, with serious

³² Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 30.

³³ Ibid.

consequences.³⁴ Instead, the additional rites, and the specificity of the demands for the descendants of Aaron (and not descendants of Israel more broadly), would seem to indicate a disparity between the degree of purity expected of the general population, and the more rigorous demands mandated for priest. It is notable that the vocabulary here is somewhat different than in Leviticus, as the above passages from Exodus 28-30 do not directly associate washing (רחץ) with purity (טהרה) – perhaps because priestly purity would already have been assumed as the default.³⁵ However, the passage does employ the *pi'el* infinitive construct form לקדש (i.e., to sanctify/make holy) to signify priestly consecration (as in Exod 28:3, 29:1), and P uses this verb to describe Aaron's consecration and ritual anointment (Lev 8:12). The consecration described here, although similar to general washing, thus reflects not merely a heightened form of purification, but in fact, a special form of holiness, mandated for the priestly line.³⁶

³⁴ The imperative to observe general washing practices, and cleanse even seemingly “mild” forms of impurity is evident in the following passage, which concludes an extended treatise of genital discharges: “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst” (Lev 15:31).

³⁵ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 31. According to Milgrom, “only the priest may handle the most sacred because he is like them; both have been anointed to sacred status,” and he similarly cites Exod 28, as well as Lev 8. See Milgrom, *Leviticus, 1-16*, 977.

³⁶ Here, the ritual can be seen not only to ensure a base level of purification, but to forge an ontological distinction between Aaron's seed and the rest of Israel, setting the priests apart from the community at large. This kind of priestly consecration entails a shift in ontological (as opposed to merely ritual) status, comparable to the later sanctification of gentiles in Christ (as per 1 Cor 1:2). Indeed, as Christine Hayes describes: “While Israel is, by prior designation of its seed, already holy, Gentiles are sanctified or brought to a degree of holiness through the death and resurrection of Christ. These Gentiles together with Jews form a holy community worshipping Yahweh. And yet, they occupy distinct and separate stations within that community.” See Hayes, *What's Divine about Divine Law? Early Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 147-148. Matthew Thiessen highlights the “ontological and irremediable difference between Jews and gentiles,” with the former being “holy seed (Ezra 9:2),” and the latter “profane seed;” in a similar way, it would seem that priestly consecration applies only to the priesthood, and serves to distinguish them ontologically from the populace at large, for whom general

Lawrence also identifies a third kind of washing in the Pentateuch (particularly within Yahwist [J] narrative):³⁷ “washing for theophanies,” which he defines as the necessary ritual preparations for a special (often theophanic) event.³⁸ This type of washing, which serves to further cleanse the people of Israel (seemingly to the rarefied ontological status of the priesthood) in advance of increased exposure to God’s presence, is extremely relevant for the purpose of this thesis, as it becomes frequently co-opted within poetic and prophetic renderings of cleansing (see chapter 3). An example of theophanic washing can be found in Exod 19:10-15, as God tells Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate (וקדשתם) them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes (וכבסו שמלתם) and prepare for the third day, because on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people...” (Exod 19:10-11). Consequently, Moses goes down from the mountain, in order to consecrate the people, who also wash their clothes: ויקדש ואת־העם ויכבסו שמלתם (Exod 19:14).³⁹ Again, the use of the verb קדש (in the *vayiqtol* form ויקדש) indicates that this is a special kind of washing – a holy consecration, similar to the kind described in Exod 28-30 –

purification practices are sufficient; cf. Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23-24.

³⁷ Although this thesis draws on source-critical methods, and attempts to differentiate between textual authors and perspectives, it is also important to recognise that ancient audiences likely would have understood scripture more holistically, and sought to minimise – rather than emphasise – disparities in ritual law. On the one hand, it is important to make the distinction that general and priestly washing are addressed almost exclusively by P in Leviticus, and to note that general washing is more common than priestly. (In contrast, theophanic washing is mostly found in J material, reflecting different conceptions of purity and cleansing practices. For more, see Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, esp. 33.) On the other hand, though, this kind of textual division is anachronistic, failing to take into account how these texts would have been interpreted in antiquity.

³⁸ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 33.

³⁹ The consecration of Aaron and his sons in Exod 29:4 also forbids the people (i.e., the men) from going near a woman, implying a concern for general purity pollution, vis-à-vis genital defilement.

versus a mere routine expelling of impurity.⁴⁰ This undertone of sanctification is important for understanding later renderings of ritual water and washing language, which can imply connotations of renewed *holiness*, in addition to restored purity.

1.3. Corpse Impurity: Lustration Water (מי נדה) and Living Water (מים חיים)

Although we will see that theophanic washing provides somewhat of a template for a figurative type of cleansing (namely, sanctification) within poetic and prophetic writings, much of the purity language that is co-opted in later texts stems from the general washing injunctions established by P. One set of P ritual injunctions is especially influential in the construction of water-related imagery: the instructions (תורות) concerning corpse impurity in Num 19. Corpse impurity is generally understood to be the most threatening form of ritual contamination, as the impurity of the dead could potentially defile the sanctuary if left unattended.⁴¹ The fear of the hazard posed by dead human bodies is evident in the following passage:

All who touch a corpse, the body of a human being who has died, and do not purify themselves, defile the tabernacle of the LORD; such persons shall be cut off from Israel. Since water for cleansing was not dashed on them (כי מי נדה לא־זרק עליו), they remain unclean (טמא יהיה עוד); their uncleanness is still on them (Num 19:13).

⁴⁰ It is important to note that the sequence of washing and purification is somewhat ambiguous in this passage, as v.14b indicates that washing comes after consecration, rather than serving as a component of it. While the processes of washing one's clothing and consecration (קדש and כבס) would thus seem to be related, Lawrence, argues that washing is not "the essential act of consecration," and indeed, washing does not seem to be linked as directly here as we find in the P material. See Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 32.

⁴¹ Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4a (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 457.

It is relevant to note that elsewhere, within Leviticus, excommunication is necessary only in the case of *moral* pollution, reflecting the sinful component to ethical transgressions. Corpse defilement appears to be somewhat of an outlier to Klawans's model of ritual-moral pollution, as coming into contact with corpses is not inherently "sinful." However, the potent dangers of corpse impurity constitute special circumstances, and the ritual purificatory process – as well as the punishment for failing to adhere to the associated statutes of the law – are consequently more complex. In particular, normal water is not sufficient to neutralise the ritual threat; rather, special lustration waters (מי נדה) are required, which are comprised of living (i.e., flowing/fresh-)⁴² water (מים חיים) and the ashes of a slaughtered red cow or heifer, which are to be sprinkled over the contaminated subject – whether human or an inanimate object – for the purpose of purification.⁴³ Not only does the period of uncleanness persist for seven days, but ritual washing is also required on both the third and seventh days (Num 19:12, 19), reflecting a more elaborate procedure, which also requires more specialised cleaning ingredients. Indeed, while the lustration waters (מי נדה) are still viewed as water, comprising primarily of מים חיים, this mixture is differentiated from standard water for cleansing. Moreover, both the active ritual act of sprinkling (נזה) and the passive condition of having water dashed (זרק) over oneself are distinct from typical cases of ritual washing, as these ritual acts are more associated with sacrificial blood than water for general purification rites. Indeed, the root זרק appears fifteen times within the P material, but in all other instances except Num 19:13 and 19:20, it describes the action a priest takes

⁴² Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 468.

⁴³ Ibid, 457.

with the blood of a sacrificial animal.⁴⁴ On the one hand, the association of *מי נדה* with priestly sacrificial rites seems fitting, given that one of the core ingredients in the lustration waters is the ashes of a red heifer. On the other hand, though, the ashes of an animal are not the same as blood, and the solution is predominantly water (and not just any water, as discussed, but water with a special capacity for purification).

The heightened threat of corpse defilement appears to be problematic for P, insofar as it constitutes a threat to the ritual stability of the community at large. Indeed, the corpse impurity rite as described in Num 19, and particularly the preparation of the ashes for the *מי נדה*, serves as the sole passage in priestly law to explicitly state that a priest is defiled (*טמא*) through his own performance of the ritual,⁴⁵ making manifest the severe threat posed by dead bodies. Moreover, the fact that excommunication – an extreme option usually required only in the case of deliberate *moral* offences – is presented as the necessary punishment for anyone who fails to observe these precise ritual injunctions, further indicates the acute nature of this ritual state, as standard purification methods are insufficient. Thus, while washing with water remains a key component of the purificatory process, the composition of the ritual ingredients (not just water, but *מי נדה* in particular) and the dramatic consequences for failing to purify oneself (not just temporary excommunication from the Temple, but rather permanent excommunication from the community), reflect a tangible anxiety regarding corpse pollution. In this way, the cleansing function of the *מי נדה*

⁴⁴ Cf. Lev 4:6, 17; 14:7; 16:14-15; Num 8:7.

⁴⁵ Num 19:7-8. Levine notes that the high priest is required to bathe himself at one point before undertaking burnt offerings for the rites of the Day of Atonement, and that this requirement is probably due to the priest's own defilement from earlier ritual activities, but this reasoning is not stated explicitly, and the performance of purificatory rites generally do *not* render the priest officiating the rites impure (Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 470).

to reinforce and maintain ritual boundaries is extended to the realm of *communal* purification, reflecting the stabilising capacity of water beyond merely the individual level.

1.4. Purity, Danger, and Liminality: Anthropological Perspectives

I have illustrated some of the ways in which ritual pollution is viewed in Priestly sources as a severe form of threat, which can warrant excommunication in particularly virulent cases. I have also indicated the potency of water as a ritual agent of cleansing, in helping to effect the transition from one ritual state to another. Indeed, water plays a primary role in this transitional period, where the formerly defiled subject lingers between the bounds of clean and unclean, with water serving as an instrument of purification.

I contend that this tension between purity and pollution, which the purification process attempts to resolve, can be more clearly apprehended through a structuralist anthropological framework. In particular, I maintain that the concept of liminality (indicating a transition from one stage to another) can help illuminate the stabilising role of water within Priestly ritual texts. Structuralist methodology, which is grounded in the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure and the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, emphasises the determining role of overarching rules and principles within culture.⁴⁶ Structuralist methodology explores the basic assumptions of cultures, seeking to identify patterns or structures that are replicated in a variety of specific (cultural) expressions.⁴⁷ One key type of

⁴⁶ Jeremy Carrette, “Post-Structuralism and the Study of Religion,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. John Hinnells (London: Routledge, 2010), 278.

⁴⁷ Jon Berquist, *Controlling Corporeality: The Body and the Household in Ancient Israel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 6.

structure is that of binary oppositions, including such basic polarities as nature and civilisation, good and bad, light and dark, etc.⁴⁸ While structuralism thus accentuates the differentiation of binary opposites, the notion of liminality recognises the temporary marginality that ensues from the process of demarcation. In this way, religious ritual can be understood as a structuralist means of enforcing patterns upon disorder, characterised by a transitory stage between the extremes of chaos and order⁴⁹ – or, in the words of Mary Douglas, purity and danger.

Mary Douglas's landmark 1966 study, *Purity and Danger*, which draws upon the structuralist tools of anthropology, frames ritual as a way of establishing order over transitional instability. Douglas's theory of purity and danger can help shed light upon the Priestly writer's preoccupation with impurity, and can also provide further insight into why the (possible) failure to adhere to ritual purificatory law is so problematic for P. According to Douglas, this basic opposition between purity and danger has helped to structure how societies form social expectations and attitudes. Disorder cannot be viewed as wholly negative; although it certainly has the capacity to "spoil" cultural patterns, Douglas claims that disorder also provides the very material for pattern, on account of its opposition to purity.⁵⁰ Indeed, if order implies restriction by means of set patterns, disorder must

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ This structuralist definition of ritual is greatly indebted to twentieth-century anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and his influential interpretation of religion in terms of culture. Viewing culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, Geertz defines religion as "1) a system of symbols which act to 2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by 3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and 4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that 5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." (Quoted in Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* 18, [1983]: 239.)

⁵⁰ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1966]), 117.

consequently represent an unlimited (albeit, latent) type of power and potentiality.⁵¹ As such, Douglas identifies disorder as a double-edged sword, which can be both destructive to existing patterns, but also has potentiality in shaping new cultural structures. Ritual, then, recognises this “potency of disorder,”⁵² by striving to enforce order and structure upon that which is transitional or liminal.

For Douglas, danger lies in transitional states, such as the space between purity and impurity; ritual thus guides this transitional process from an old to new status, along with a middle period of segregation.⁵³ This temporary segregation is central, as it signifies the casting out of unstable, dangerous elements from society, to avoid the contagious destabilising power of the uncertainty of transition.⁵⁴ At the same time, this intermediate stage, which operates between the pollution and purity,⁵⁵ is itself unstable, wavering between both sides of the purity threshold. Liminality thus refers, in a strict sense, to this state of ambiguous marginality that characterises the transitional phase of a rite of passage, which Victor Turner (prominent anthropologist and contemporary of Douglas) characterises as “structurally invisible” for the person undergoing the change.⁵⁶ For P, such shifts in ritual

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 120.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 120-121.

⁵⁵ i.e., the waiting period discussed within the above Levitical purity regulations, following ablation, but before the prescribed time interval has passed rendering one fit to worship at the sancta. See Lev 15:16-18 for seminal emissions, where the man with the emission is impure until evening, as is his female partner, and any materials consisting of cloth or skin.

⁵⁶ Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between,” 6. Turner defines the term “state” as “a more inclusive concept than status or office and refers to any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognised” (4). I regard liminality as a particular kind of transitional state, which can be positional/spatial,

condition (such as the transition from uncleanness to cleanness) are frequently facilitated through the act of ritual washing, indicating water's stabilising role within transitional processes and rites.

Building from this notion, I contend that water can therefore be seen to possess liminal qualities within the context of purificatory ritual, helping to facilitate the moment of ritual transformation, operating “betwixt and between” the preliminary state of physiological defilement and the desired goal of renewed cleanness. Indeed, water functions as a key component of the symbolic rebirth and renewal that accompanies the Priestly purification rites, as it mediates between structured order on the one hand, and what Douglas identifies as the “potency of disorder” on the other.

The washing rites for scale disease (צִרְעָתָהּ), often mistranslated as leprosy, would seem to provide an example of water's liminal potentiality, as ablutions help bridge the gap between טָמֵא (impure) and טָהוֹר (clean).⁵⁷ Leviticus 14 outlines the following ritual instructions for the מְצֹרָא (any person afflicted with scale disease), which bear similarities to the aforementioned corpse impurity rite (cf. Num 19), insofar as both require a mixture of “living water:”

temporal, etc., and which implies a threshold of any kind. Note that the concept of liminality (Fr. *liminaire*) was first introduced by Arnold van Gennep, in his classic work, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975 [1960]).

⁵⁷ It is also worth noting that the priestly concern for scale disease was not unique to Israel, as contemporaneous Hittite *sabarsubbu* rites reflect similar anxieties concerning the danger and contagion of skin diseases. See Yizhaq Feder, “Defilement, Disgust, and Disease: The Experiential Basis of Hittite and Akkadian Terms for Impurity,” *JAOS* 136 (2016): 99-116 (107-108). Feder emphasises the practical dimensions of impurity and disease, as well as the role of disgust in conceptions of pollution; a notion also advanced by Thomas Kazen (*Issues of Impurity*), 17-23.

This shall be the ritual for the leprous⁵⁸ person at the time of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest; the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination. If the disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command that two living clean birds and cedarwood and crimson yarn and hyssop be brought for the one who is to be cleansed. The priest shall command that one of the birds be slaughtered over fresh water (מים חיים) in an earthen vessel. He shall sprinkle it seven times upon the one who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease; then he shall pronounce him clean, and he shall let the living bird go into the open field (Lev 14:2-7).⁵⁹

והזה על המטהר מן-הצרעת שבע פעמים וטהרו ושלח את-הצפר החיה על-פני השדה

It is apparent that water serves a key purificatory purpose here (albeit in conjunction with the other ritual ingredients), as the מצורע is pronounced clean (וטהרו) by the priest *immediately following* this specialised ablution (14:7). Milgrom argues that this declaration of purity proves that ablution always reduces the impurity by one degree, as indeed, the מצורע is only contagious by direct contact, and not by “overhang” (the airborne power of צרעת defilement).⁶⁰ Milgrom further notes the occurrence of the verb טהר:

... at the end of the three rites that mark the stages through which the scale-diseased person passes in his rehabilitation to society and his reconciliation with his God. The initial *taber* at the end of the first day admits him to the camp,⁶¹ the second, to his tent;⁶²

⁵⁸ While I personally avoid the term leprous or leprosy, recognising its inaccuracy as an English equivalent for צרעת, I draw here on the NRSV translation, which does employ this language.

⁵⁹ Note that while there are similarities in terms of the slaughtering of an animal over מים חיים in this passage and Num 19, here it is two birds that are required, as opposed to the red heifer described in the corpse impurity rite. Both rites also need cedarwood, crimson yarn, and hyssop (cf. Num 19:6). Also, it is worth noting that the Levitical injunctions excerpted here represent but one aspect of a much more complex series of ritual directions (cf. Lev 13-14).

⁶⁰ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 844.

⁶¹ “On the seventh day... The one who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water (ורחץ במים), and he shall be clean (וטהר). After that he shall come into the camp, but shall live outside his tent seven days” (Lev 14:8).

and the third, to his God.⁶³ The first two are preceded by ablutions that, as pointed out (vv 8, 9), execute the rites of passage. The third *taber*, however, is not preceded by an ablution. It signifies the completion of the process: the healed and now purified person is henceforth a full-fledged participant in his community and its worship.⁶⁴

In the case of scale disease, I posit that water operates at the liminal (transitional) phase of the cleansing rite, as ablutions serve to bring the contaminated party from the threshold of pollution to a state of renewed purity.

While I believe that water possesses liminal qualities, I do not mean to imply that water *qua* substance is *itself* liminal. Rather, I assert that within the context of pollution, water enables a range of (liminal) motion between fixed points of cleanness and defilement. As such, I believe that the anthropological notion of liminality provides a conceptual vocabulary for navigating water's (seemingly paradoxical) function(s), as a vehicle for conditional change. Thinking of water in terms of liminality is helpful, insofar as it bypasses the standard pitfalls of binary distinction, whereby water would have to denote *either* purity or impurity, or *either* order or disorder. Liminality allows us to perceive the intersections of such binaries, and to recognise the positive (i.e., creative) dimensions of water alongside its more negative, destructive characteristics, without implying contradiction. According to Turner, liminality's paradoxical nature is permissible, because "we are not dealing with structural contradictions when we discuss liminality, but with the essentially unstructured (which is at once de-

⁶² "Then he shall wash his clothes (וּכְבַּס אֶת־בְּגָדָיו), and bathe his body in water (וּרְחַץ בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם), and he shall be clean" (וְטָהַר) (Lev 14:9).

⁶³ "...Thus the priest shall make atonement on his behalf (וּכְפַר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן) and he shall be clean" (וְטָהַר) (Lev 14:20).

⁶⁴ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 858-859.

structured and pre-structured).⁶⁵ That which is liminal therefore functions “betwixt and between” conventional social structures, simultaneously traversing various thresholds, while not necessarily conforming to any of them. For this reason, I regard liminality not merely as ambiguous or marginal, but as a dynamic condition, associated with that which is unbounded: namely, “the infinite, the limitless.”⁶⁶ On account of its dual potentiality for creation *and* destruction, liminality would seem to entail not just marginality, but also unbridled and unstructured power. By extension, water’s liminal polarity similarly denotes power and potentiality, *alongside* ambiguity.

Van Gennep and Turner define liminality solely within a decidedly ritual sphere, and I similarly highlight water’s cleansing function in ritual processes, particularly at the liminal stage. However, within the context of this thesis, I also tend to frame liminality more broadly, in view of water’s non-linear, “interstructural”⁶⁷ character, as I contend that the liminal similarly oscillates between various (often opposing) structural thresholds. In this way, I posit that water can comprise both negative (destructive) and positive (creative) aspects, reflecting a “coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation [which] characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that which is neither

⁶⁵ Turner, “Betwixt and Between,” 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 8. The notion of structure (and liminality as embodying a kind of “anti-structure” appears prominently in Turner’s work (it is even part of the title for one of his books, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, cited above). Turner defines structure as social structure; namely, “a more or less distinctive arrangement of specialized mutually dependent institutions and the institutional organizations of positions and/or of actors which they imply” (see Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 167-168). He observes a simplification, almost to the point of elimination, of this kind of social structure within the liminal phases of ritual (168).

this nor that, and yet is both.”⁶⁸ I therefore draw on the concept of liminality as an interpretive tool for understanding the inherent ambiguity – not solely of an intermediate juncture of a rite of passage, but also of the fluctuating movement between different (structural) extremes of order and disorder. While my invocation of liminality might be regarded as a deviation from van Gennep and Turner, I assert that my approach is nonetheless rooted in Turner’s idea that liminality is “the Noy to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and, more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise.”⁶⁹ This notion of liminality as “pure possibility,” or potentiality, is central to how I understand water’s liminal capacity, and how its marginal properties – while in a sense destabilising – can also provide a degree of “liminal power.”⁷⁰

Whereas Douglas frames ritual pollution in terms of danger, with cleansing rituals as a means of enforcing order upon that which is “dangerous,” Milgrom regards Priestly fears of pollution vis-à-vis the fear of death, understanding water’s ritual function in terms of a symbolic association with blood. I maintain once more that the notion of liminality can help

⁶⁸ Turner, “Betwixt and Between,” 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 7. This seems to also recall Douglas’s work, as she similarly recognised the “potency of disorder” (see *Purity and Danger*, 118). Indeed, Turner himself cites Douglas (“Betwixt and Between,” 7.)

⁷⁰ I have already discussed the positive and negative aspects of liminality (according to Turner), with the former indicating the creative potentiality/power inherent in the liminal condition. It is worth mentioning that this notion of “liminal power” has been noted by scholars working across various social scientific disciplines; recently, Hart et al. have described how liminal spaces are “infused with a sense of power that is non-coercive and diffuse but a source of social discipline nonetheless.” See Hart et al., “Holding Firm,” 3 (cited above in introduction). Although discussed within an educational context, Evans and Kevern (“Liminality in Preregistration mental health nurse education”, 2) similarly assert: “the concept of liminality may designate the productive role of an experience of confusion,” highlighting the potentiality of the liminal condition. Such cross-disciplinary applications of liminality have informed my own employment of the concept, as I advocate liminality as a means for discussing water’s seemingly paradoxical roles and contradictory capacities: for formation *and* destruction.

illuminate water's capacity for purification, as water helps negotiate the change in ritual status, from one of symbolic death to one of life. Specifically, Milgrom attempts to link P's three major sources of impurity (genital discharges, scale disease, and corpse/carcass pollution) with death, positing that the binary opposition between life and death serves as the logical lynchpin of a unified and comprehensive priestly system of (ritual) thought.⁷¹ Asserting that the identification of impurity with death must imply that holiness stands for life, Milgrom views the lustration waters (מי נדה) of Num 19 – containing the ashes of a red cow and living water (מים חיים) – as surrogates for blood, which symbolise the victory of life forces over death.⁷² Milgrom believes, more generally, that the blood of the purification offering effectively purges the sanctuary and absorbs its impurities, providing a further victory of life over death.⁷³ In the case of צרעת, Milgrom claims that all the required elements for the corresponding purificatory rite connote life,⁷⁴ being intended to dispel scale disease – itself reflective of the forces of death.⁷⁵ Again, recognising the “liminal power” of

⁷¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 46. Milgrom argues that genital discharge (i.e., male semen and female blood) represents the life force, and its loss consequently reflects death. Concerning scale disease, Milgrom states that Priestly legists do not focus on the disease proper, concentrating on the *appearance* of disease. Milgrom claims that various types of scale disease would have likely been associated with death in antiquity, precisely because “their appearance is that of approaching death.”⁷¹ If genital discharges and scale disease were perceived as looming threats to ritual status and stability, merely on account of their *perceived* associations with death, then it would follow that corpse and carcass pollution would be even more problematic within this Priestly system.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ i.e., the “live birds” (צפרים חיות), “living water” (מים חיים), the “life blood,” as well as the bloodlike ingredients (e.g. red cedar and crimson yarn). For more, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 889.

⁷⁵ The purification process is thus “nothing but a ritual, a rite of passage, marking the transition from death to life. As the celebrant moves from the realm of impurity outside the camp, restored first to his community, then to his home, and finally to his sanctuary, he has passed from impurity to holiness, from death to life, is reinstated with his family, and is reconciled with his God” (*Leviticus 1-16*, 889).

water can help account for its function in purificatory ritual, where it operates at the threshold of impurity and cleanness, enabling a shift in ritual status, from figurative death to renewed life.

While I maintain that the concept of liminality can be useful for elucidating water's ritual functionality and capacity *qua* cleansing agent, I also recognise the fallacy of relying solely on anthropological methodology, as this can sometimes lead to oversimplification. Even Milgrom's characterisation of the Priestly symbolic system of purity, which depends upon structuralist assumptions of binary oppositions, has been criticised by scholars who are less inclined to assign an all-encompassing, holistic system to Israelite pollution. Tracy M. Lemos for example, argues that the desire for consistency is not a universal value, but rather a hallmark of modernism and Western intellectual thought more broadly,⁷⁶ advocating instead for:

...a move away from a synchronic approach in which one examines the 'biblical purity system' to a more historicized perspective assessing how different authors and different communities made use of purity constructions, and also manipulated these constructions in different contexts and as a response to different historical situations.⁷⁷

Indeed, uncritically applying anthropological theory wholesale to biblical texts, or "biblical purity constructions", can be problematic (especially given the issues inherent even in such a term as "biblical"). Nonetheless, I maintain that a more critical, nuanced application of (synchronic) anthropological concepts can serve to complement diachronic analysis, thereby

⁷⁶ T.M. Lemos, "Where There Is Dirt, Is There System? Revisiting Biblical Purity Construction," *JOT* 37 (2014): 288. Thomas Kazen has also critiqued Klawans's purity framework on account of its Western intellectual bias: "The dichotomy between morality on the one hand and convention, whether social or ritual behaviour, on the other, is only typical of modern Western thought" (*Issues of Impurity*, 16).

⁷⁷ Lemos, "Where There Is Dirt," 292.

helping to illuminate ancient views of pollution. Within this, the notion of liminality provides a conceptual vocabulary for deciphering the intermediate role water plays within purificatory (cleansing) ritual, “betwixt and between” standard designations of cleanness and defilement.

1.5. Conclusion

We have thus seen how water plays a significant role in the Priestly legal texts, serving as a key ingredient for ritual cleansing. I have explored different kinds of washing and water terminology in Leviticus and Numbers, and contrasted ritual defilements from moral instances of “sin.” In addition, I have examined Priestly cleansing rites from a vantage point of liminality, employing (and adapting) anthropological theory to better comprehend water’s capacity for balancing the “potency of disorder” brought about by ritual impurity. In the following section, I turn to more explicitly *aggadic* dimensions of water in P, and the primeval history of Gen 1-11 in particular. In so doing, I aim to highlight the liminal dimensions of Israelite and early Jewish cosmology, and the conflict between watery chaos on the one hand, and ordered creation on the other. Following a discussion on creation and water in P (ch.2), I explore the fluidity of ritual-moral distinctions, and the reapplication of Priestly water imagery in the biblical prophets (ch.3).

2. COSMIC WATERS OF CREATION: CHAOS AND LIMINALITY

2.1. The Priestly Vision of Creation (Gen 1-2:4a)

While P ritual law provides an important means for tracing of water in terms of *halakhab* (law), Priestly *aggadah* (narrative) also helps shape nascent Jewish conceptions of water and cleansing. In particular, water serves as a central component in the presentation of cosmology in the primeval history (or *Urgeschichte*)⁷⁸ of Genesis 1-11, and creation-based water imagery is also prevalent within subsequent prophetic writings. The composite primeval history consists of both P and J writings, but P is typically credited for the following narrative texts:

- The initial creation account of Gen 1:1-1-2:4a (referred to henceforth as Gen 1)
- The genealogies before and after the flood (Gen 5:1-32; 11:10-26)
- The account of the moral corruption, which serves as the reasoning behind the deluge (Gen 6:11-22)
- One of two narrative strands of the composite flood narrative (Gen 7-8)
- The new covenant given to Noah and his descendants (Gen 9:1-28)⁷⁹

The above Priestly passages are primarily concerned with establishing and correcting the cosmological order, where water plays a central role as a key source of God's creation. In particular, water can be seen as a liminal force, assisting in both the maintenance of cosmic order, as well as its undoing. In this chapter, I similarly attempt to demonstrate how water occupies a liminal position between the opposing forces of stability and chaos, with a

⁷⁸ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 8. Also, my abbreviation of Gen 1:1-2:4a to Gen 1 is influenced by Mark S. Smith, who does so in his book, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

⁷⁹ Ibid, 6.

capacity for either. The intrinsic fluidity of water thus underscores its significance within the conceptual framework of Priestly creation, as a constructive *and* destructive agent.

The ambivalent character of water is apparent in Gen 1, where P presents creation not as a divine act *ex nihilo*, but rather as a consolidation and ordering of what is initially “formless void” (תהו ובהו):

והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על־פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים:
The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while
a wind from God swept over the face of the waters (Gen 1:2).

The תהו ובהו implies an initial bareness, in which the earth is both “unproductive and uninhabited.”⁸⁰ Yet within this state of barrenness, there is nonetheless some form of תהום (translated above as “deep”). The תהום here is generally understood as cosmic abyssal water,⁸¹ which envelops the earth prior to God’s ordering of the cosmos. The rest of Gen 1:1-2:4a outlines the consequent ordering and delineation of this initial undefined, hazy state of תהו ובהו, as God performs a series of divisions (root: בדל), effectively forming key cosmic oppositions between light from darkness (1:4), sea from skies (and the earth in between, 1:6-10), and the sun from the moon (along with the stars, 1:16-1:18). God views all of these acts of binary differentiation as good (כִּי־טוֹב), which suggests that the initial state of non-distinction is bad. The enigmatic designation of תהו ובהו thus appears to designate not

⁸⁰ David Toshio Tsumara. *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 42. Alternate translations include “void and vacuum” (Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010], 50), and the particularly apt “chaos shmaos,” which Neil Gillman attributes to Yohanan Muffs of the Jewish Theological Seminary (see Gillman, *Doing Jewish Theology: God, Torah, and Israel in Modern Judaism* [Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2008], 57).

⁸¹ Nahum M. Sarna, ed. *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), 6.

merely a lack of cohesion or form, but an initial state of chaos: a liminal state, “betwixt and between” standard world order. As with pollution in the ritual texts, the amorphous condition of the cosmos – and by extension, the cosmic waters of the deep (תהום) – is not only ambiguous, but in fact problematic. As such, the cosmos’s status pre-creation reflects a liminal state, “betwixt and between” conventional understanding, which is itself dangerous, and must be stabilised and maintained through the divine establishment of order.

2.2. *Chaoskampf*: Water in Genesis and Ancient Near East Cosmogony

This reading of creation as an ordering of watery chaos is not innovative within the discipline of Pentateuchal scholarship, but is rather a refinement of nineteenth century studies of *Chaoskampf*, which sought to locate the primeval history of Genesis within its broader ancient Near East mythic context. *Chaoskampf* refers to the motif of a primeval battle, which takes place between a warrior god and the monstrous forms of chaos.⁸² This trope is common to ancient Near Eastern creation myth, and seems to have been adapted by P in Gen 1:1-2:4a, appearing in various forms throughout the Hebrew Bible as well.⁸³ This is not to say that water functions exclusively as a destructive agent of chaos; as discussed in section 1.4 above, disorder contains the dual capacity to spoil cultural patterns, while also providing the very material *for* pattern.⁸⁴ As such, chaos cannot be regarded as entirely negative, but instead reflects an unlimited (if latent) form of liminal potentiality – for

⁸² Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew Chaoskampf Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE*, LSTS 60 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1966]), 117.

creation *and* destruction. While analogous Mesopotamian applications of the *Chaoskampf* motif depict the *actualisation* of water’s potentiality for chaos (in the form of monstrous beasts), the Priestly cosmogony positions water’s capacity for chaos somewhat more hypothetically.

The notion of *Chaoskampf* was advanced by Hermann Gunkel, in his classic 1895 work, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*,⁸⁵ and this concept has greatly shaped Genesis scholarship in the ensuing 120 years.⁸⁶ Gunkel designates both the Babylonian and Israelite cosmologies as examples of etiological myth, framing creation as a divine stilling of the primordial waters of chaos, and the subsequent division of the waters above and below the sun.⁸⁷ Gunkel outlines several overlapping elements between the Babylonian Marduk-Ti’amat myth (i.e., the *Enuma Elish*), arguing that the Babylonian myth was adapted by Israel, and co-opted into the Yahwistic tradition. In this way, Gunkel characterises the Marduk-Ti’amat myth and the cosmology of Gen 1 as the same myth, received and interpreted in two divergent recensional families.⁸⁸ One of the key lynchpins of Gunkel’s theory is water, as he claims that the primordial ocean in both myths is personified as a fertile being, with the

⁸⁵ Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Cultural Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 5. Although Gunkel did not use the term *Chaoskampf* himself, his work argued that the Priestly account of creation in Gen 1 was not a “free construction of the author,” but in fact depends upon prior Babylonian traditions. For a discussion of the term *Chaoskampf* (and its absence in Gunkel’s work, see: Peter Machinist, “Foreword,” in Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Cultural Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 287 (cf. note 26).

⁸⁷ Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, 17-18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

Babylonian form of the monster, Ti'amat, corresponding to the Hebrew technical form for the primordial sea, תהום.⁸⁹

Gunkel's association between תהום and earlier mythical depictions of Tiamat is still accepted by some contemporary scholars,⁹⁰ but water's capacity for destruction seems somewhat subdued within the Priestly narrative, as water occupies a more *transitional* (as opposed to purely *destructive*) position. Although the pre-creation state of the cosmos is characterised by haphazard water that must be brought to order, Genesis does not explicitly portray water as threatening or uncooperative, as vv. 6-10 depict water readily following God's commands. Thus, while Gunkel's identification of תהום with Tiamat certainly seems possible, given that the Hebrew term is treated as a proper name, appearing without the definite article, and is sometimes personified in other texts,⁹¹ water's destructive capacity in Gen 1 is less clear. Whereas Tiamat is herself viewed as "the female dragonsque personification of the primordial salt-water ocean, representing the aggressive forces of primitive chaos that contended against the god of creativity,"⁹² the waters of תהום are described simply as תהו ובהו (a formless void), reflecting ambiguity, and not a full-fledged source of danger. Specifically, "God does not fight the 'Deep' (*tehom*) as in Psalm 74. Instead

⁸⁹ Ibid, 76.

⁹⁰ E.g. Sarna, *Genesis*, 6.

⁹¹ Examples of personification include Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13, where תהום "couches below", and Hab 3:10, where the deep roars loudly in panic in fear of God's wrath. For more on this phenomenon, see Sarna, *Genesis*, 6).

⁹² Sarna, *Genesis*, 6.

the waters in Genesis 1:2 simply become part of God’s good order.”⁹³ As such, the power of תהום/Tiamat has been limited, from a potent form of cosmic chaos, to a merely latent capacity for chaos or disarray, in the form of non-distinction. This shift, from a personified Tiamat to the impersonal תהום, seems indicative of a priestly tendency to minimise mythological or “non-kosher” dimensions of such loaded (polytheistic) language.⁹⁴ It would consequently appear that the pre-creation cosmological condition of תהוֹוֹבָהוּ no longer represents a clearly personified threat of danger, which must be actively overcome and conquered by a superior god, but instead, only the *threat* of potential (unstructured) chaos.

Although aspects of Gunkel’s theory have since been challenged (and indeed, refuted by some scholars),⁹⁵ it nonetheless seems evident that the ordering of primordial waters and

⁹³ Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*: Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010, 108.

Cf. Ps 74:12-17 – Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the earth. You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons (תנינים) in the water. You crushed the heads of Leviathan (לוייתן); you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness...

⁹⁴ Another apparent instance of demythologisation of non-Israelite figures occurs in Gen 1:21, at the mention of “the great sea monsters” (התנינים הגדלים), as indeed, the Hebrew term תנין also appears in Ugaritic myth, “along with Leviathan, as the name of a primeval dragon-god who assisted Yam (Sea) in an elemental battle against [the fertility god] Baal.”⁹⁴ Again, Smith claims that: “the *tanninim* are also part of God’s good creation; they are not the enemies that they are in Psalm 74 and in older divine battle stories” (*The Priestly Vision*, 108). Moreover, while Sarna acknowledges that fragments of this Ugaritic myth surface in biblical poetic texts, where the forces of evil are figuratively identified with תנין (Dragon) – i.e., the embodiment of the chaos God defeated in the *Chaoskampf* – he contends that the Priestly author here emphasises the secondary creation of the sea monsters, late in the cosmogonic process, thereby stripping them of divinity.⁹⁴ As such, while Gen 1:21 clearly draws upon Mesopotamian motifs of sea monsters and the divine battle of the *Chaoskampf*, the priestly narrator would seem to “demythologise” the mythic aspects of Mesopotamian narrative. For more on this, see Sarna, *Genesis*, 10; Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 53. I do not mean to imply that Genesis reflects monotheism full-stop: Gen 3:22 appears to recognize the existence of other god-like beings at the very least. There is nonetheless a movement towards de-emphasis of other divine beings, aside from God (i.e., YHWH).

⁹⁵ E.g., John Day recognises that the Hebrew תהום is not derived from the name Ti’amat, and that “the deep” is not a divine personality in Genesis, and he corrects Gunkel’s attribution of Babylonian sources for the outline of Genesis, highlighting instead the Canaanite forebears for the Priestly cosmology, but he does not question the demythologisation of Mesopotamian myth more generally (50-51). More recently, David Toshio Tsumura has argued that it is not merely improbable, but phonologically

the separation of the “waters of the deep” (whether personified threats to God’s power as in Mesopotamian myth, or more impassive threats to cosmological order as in Gen 1), reflect a deliberate stabilisation by YHWH of undifferentiated, and potentially chaotic, matter. The threat to cosmic stability would thus seem to lie in the liminal potential of the waters of the deep, which represent a threshold wherein (potentially chaotic) cosmic abyssal waters have not yet been differentiated and buttressed by YHWH. Indeed, within P’s cosmogonic account, the governing principles of the universe have not yet been settled, and the primordial bedlam has not yet been stifled. Yet while water is the primary source of cosmic chaos, it also serves as the central element for God’s order, and the *Chaoskampf* motif reflects a divine ordering of chaos.

2.3. Water’s Liminal Capacit(ies) for Destruction and Re-Creation

Whereas the Priestly vision of creation emphasises the “positive” dimensions of water’s creative potential, the Priestly flood narrative illustrates water’s equivalent capacity for destruction (albeit under God’s supervision). Again, the notion of liminality can help account for the purported contradiction between water’s positive (creative) dimensions and

impossible to conclude that תהוֹם was borrowed from Tiamat, claiming rather that the Hebrew *tehom* (“ocean”) – together with the Ugaritic *tbm*, the Akkadian *tiamtu*, the Arabic *tibamat*, and the Eblaite *ti-a-ma-tum* – reflects no more than a common Semitic term *tibam* (cf. Tsumara, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,” in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4*, edited by Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumara, [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 27-57 [31]; see also Tsumara, *The Earth and the Waters*, 45-52). In any case, the text-critical task of tracing the development of mythic tropes and concepts is certainly fraught, and further complicated by the fact that our extant texts represent but one recension of both textual and oral traditions. Indeed, part of the difficulty in identifying the initial mythic source(s) of the cosmology presented in Gen 1 arises from the fact that modern notions of texts, traditions, and adaptation do not correspond with ancient conceptions of authoritative cosmology.

its (negative) propensity for chaos. Indeed, I find Turner’s description of liminality as encompassing “the Nay to all positive structural assertions,” but also “the source of them,” and “a realm of pure possibility”⁹⁶ to be especially apt in assessing water’s function(s) within cosmogonic myth – as a force of primordial marginality, but also of cosmic order, anarchy, and re-orientation.

Water’s liminal capacity, not only for creation, but also for destruction, is apparent in Gen 7:11, where the Priestly author portrays the flood as an undoing of cosmic order, as follows: “on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth (נקבעו כל־מענית תהום), and the windows of the heavens were opened.” In this passage, the great deep once again refers to the cosmic abyssal water of Gen 1:2, while the floodgates of the sky denote “openings in the expanse of the heavens through which water from the celestial part of the cosmic ocean can escape onto the earth.”⁹⁷ If creation consisted of the separation and distinction of waters, and the divine limitation of water’s potentiality for cosmic disorder, P’s diluvial account reinstates (and indeed, *amplifies*) the cosmic disorder of the pre-creation state, where the waters of the deep are permitted by YHWH to prevail, this time as an explicitly destructive force. Within Gen 7, the “potency of disorder”⁹⁸ of the תהום is channelled by YHWH, reflecting once more his mastery of water’s potential threat. Yet while the deluge

⁹⁶ Turner, “Betwixt and Between,” 7. This would also seem to recall Douglas’s work, who similarly recognised the “potency of disorder” (see *Purity and Danger*, 118). Indeed, Turner himself cites Douglas (“Betwixt and Between,” 7.)

⁹⁷ Sarna, *Genesis*, 55.

⁹⁸ The destructive power of floodwater is evident in Gen 7:21, where P describes how “all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings; everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.” Here, creation is effectively undone, as the life that had been formed by God is extinguished.

leads to an undoing of cosmic order, it also provides the impetus for a cosmic renaissance, further illustrating water's dual propensity for creation as well as destruction. Indeed, Gen 8:17-19 describes the repopulation of the earth with "every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth," hearkening back to God's acts of creation in Gen 1. Additionally, the command in Gen 9:1 directed towards Noah and his sons, imploring them to be fruitful and multiply (פרו ורבו ומלאו את-הארץ), reiterates God's earlier instructions to humankind (cf. Gen 1:28), indicating once more the clean slate for creation.

Again, water's liminal potentiality is apparent, representing the mediation of both creative and destructive powers, serving as both cosmic foil and solution. To draw on Mary Douglas once more, "Granted that disorder spoils pattern, it also provides the material of pattern."⁹⁹ Perhaps nowhere else is this more evident than in the Flood narrative, where the waters of the deep (the material foundation for the created world, which separate the sea from the sky) also serve as the key to "un-creation," as well as "re-creation."¹⁰⁰ In this way, the defining characteristic of water is neither chaos nor stability, but in fact, the potentiality for both. We know that water is fluid, by definition and in essence, thus bearing no discernible shape until it has been placed in a container. In a similar fashion, it can be either dangerous or benign, depending on whether or not it has been ordered and separated. The

⁹⁹ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 117.

¹⁰⁰ Here, I stress that regarding water as *solely* representing chaos would be incomplete: Blenkinsopp describes water as both "a source of the greatest danger," as well as "the source of abundant fertility and growth, part of the life-sustaining order together with the heavenly bodies and the succession of day and night which dictate the life cycles of animals and human beings" (Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation*, 42). Christoph Levin further identifies the secure provision of "available and controllable" water as the chief characteristic of a well-balanced and maintained cosmos." See Levin, "Introduction," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, BZAW 461, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014), 1.

lack of divinely established boundaries and separation suggests chaos, but water's capacity for orderliness and life (as actualised by YHWH) indicates its versatility, operating liminally "betwixt and between" the opposing poles of order and disarray.

I therefore believe that drawing on the notion of liminality can enhance our understanding of water within these biblical passages, and provide a conceptual vocabulary by which to address water's "instructural" character. In particular, water can be seen to illustrate an oscillating motion *between* different structural extremes of order and chaos. Drawing on the concept of liminality permits us to move beyond mere binary distinction, and to perceive water more fluidly, not as representative of *either* creation *or* destruction, but of the "pure possibility" for both, *sans* contradiction. Even if the תהום waters no longer represent an antagonistic primordial sea monster *per se*, the parallel creation and flood narratives nonetheless indicate the importance of water as the key to both the formation and destruction of the earth, and the facilitation of new life, within ancient Israel and throughout the ancient Mediterranean.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ The flood narrative(s) in Genesis also has Mesopotamian antecedents, particularly in the Epic of Gilgamesh (XI) and the myth of Atrahasis. As such, Noah's story represents merely one rendition of what was actually a more pervasive cosmological motif in Mesopotamia, and through Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean, from at least the third millennium BCE. Blenkinsopp describes how this cross-cultural mythic phenomenon of chaos-out-of-chaos (*Chaoskampf*) is further reflected in Hellenistic culture, as Hesiod's *Theogony* describes the primordial Chaos deity, and the Attic myth of Deucalion similarly attests to a primeval deluge. For more on this, see Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation*, 13-14.

2.4. Creation and Flood as Sanctification of the Earth

While I have thus far sought to isolate water's function in purificatory ritual from its liminal capacity for creation and destruction in Gen 1, it is also important to recognise the commonalities between *halakhic* and *aggadic* representations of water. Genesis 1 and Leviticus, being priestly compositions, seem to reflect an integrated view of water's (liminal) functionality: as a means for ritual ablutions on the one hand, and as a vehicle for both cosmic order and anarchy on the other. I therefore suggest that P's cosmogonic account is informed by his ritualistic outlook, as the ordering of God's creation bears similarities to the priestly maintenance of the sancta.

In particular, this priestly tendency towards ritualisation and the orientation of sacred (cultic) time can be observed in the seven-day organisational structure for creation.¹⁰² According to Mark S. Smith, the seven-day marking of time of festivals, which can similarly be observed in priestly calendars,¹⁰³ likely informed the priestly development of the seven-day creation narrative, and the establishment of the Sabbath.¹⁰⁴ Smith thus identifies an

¹⁰² Mark S. Smith describes how the number seven frequently denotes completion of fullness, in biblical as well as Ugaritic literature, forming a "widespread cultural convention" across the Ancient Near East. Within the Hebrew Bible alone: "seven days is the length of the journey in Genesis 31:23. It applies also to the time of...Samson's wedding feast Judges 14:12-15 and to the period of Job's lamentation in Job 2:13. It is the number of times the psalmist praises God in Psalm 119:164 and the number of persons to whom the generous soul is to make donations in Ecclesiastes 11:2. Seven days was traditional for other religious periods in both Ugaritic and biblical literature. It was on the seventh day of Danil's rite in the temple that Baal interceded for him and El blessed him...just as it was on the seventh day that God called Moses on the cloud-covered mountain (Exodus 24:16)." See Smith, *The Priestly Vision*, 87-88.

¹⁰³ Cf. the priestly calendar in Lev 23:3, 7-8, 36; as well as in Num 29, where seven days of offerings are marked (vv. 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, and 32).

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *The Priestly Vision*, 88.

analogous Ugaritic ritual¹⁰⁵ where the seventh day marks the end of cultic obligations, at which point “no specific activity is required,” comparing it to Gen 2:2, which similarly marks the seventh day as the last in a series of days, and as being free of obligations.¹⁰⁶ As such, Smith claims, “both [the Sabbath and the Ugaritic ritual] point to the idea of the seventh day as distinctive from the other days involved,” commonly conveying a shift to inactivity following six days of relative exertion. Smith emphasises the orderly nature of creation in Gen 1:1-2:4a, as each day follows a standard pattern,¹⁰⁷ leading to a ritual-esque correspondence among all the days, indicating the Priestly vision of “a world created to the rhythm of ritual repetition.”¹⁰⁸

The ritualistic undertones of the Priestly creation narrative are further apparent in the text’s usage of the verb להבדיל, which Smith identifies as a “hallmark priestly term” to denote the division of space and time.¹⁰⁹ Specifically, he contends that creation’s structure, and its separation into distinctive realms, foreshadows the priestly separation between animals that are permissible and forbidden (i.e., *kosher* and *treyf* within contemporary

¹⁰⁵ Cf. RS 24.266 (a text that describes a series of rites that take place twice in the month of *Ibalutu*, corresponding roughly with December-January). Found in Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, WAWS 10, ed. Theodore J. Lewis (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 50-53.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, *The Priestly Vision*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Namely, “divine speech proposing creation of some part of the universe; the creation (or “letting there be”) of what is proposed in the divine speech; the divine separation of elements of creation; the divine naming of these components; God seeing that it is good; the mention of evening and morning, numbered as successive days of the week; the mention of evening and morning, numbered as successive days of the week.” See *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

Judaism) in Lev 11.¹¹⁰ As such, this ordering of God’s creatures in accordance with the Levitical rulings indicates the degree to which P’s narrative functions etiologically, as a justification for Priestly ritual (purity) customs.

The rationale for P’s ritualised view of creation, in terms of priestly distinctions, appears to be linked with his conception of the created cosmos in terms of sanctuary. Specifically, Smith suggests that the separation of the cosmos into proper realms, and the maintenance of said realms, can be seen to mirror the “priestly regimen” of the holy Temple. According to Smith:

...within this sanctuary, God generates the proper division of realms and animals, as the priests correspondingly do in the Temple. This temple operates on days that are holy days, as symbolized by the Sabbath, and on days that do not specifically constitute sacred time, as represented by the first six days of creation.¹¹¹

In this way, God’s creative process of (ritually-inspired) differentiation can be seen to facilitate the sanctification and holiness of the created cosmos, much like the priestly separation of impurity and pollution from the sancta helps to ensure cultic holiness.¹¹² I

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 90-91. Smith describes how Lev 11 also uses several of the same headings for animals as Gen 1. E.g. the animals that are on the land (Lev 11:2) and those that are in the waters (11:9,10), the winged (11:13), all winged swarming (11:20, 23), and all that swarm on the earth (11:41); compare with Genesis: swarms of living creatures (1:20), all the living creatures that move that swarm in the waters (1:21), the winged (1:20), the winged bird (1:21), living creatures, animals, creepers (1:24).

¹¹¹ Ibid, 93. Others have also highlighted connections between cosmos and temple: cf. Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Older formulations can be found in Menahem Haran, “The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle,” *HUCA* 36 (1965): 191-226; Peter J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Exod 25–40,” *ZAW* 89 (1977): 375–87; Jon D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *JR* 64 (1984): 275-298.

¹¹² Here, I think it is important to clarify my terminology. While any form of ritual separation typically implies *ritual purification*, I discussed above how adherence to cultic (purificatory) law serves indirectly to ensure the continued *holiness* of the sancta, so as to facilitate God’s sanctification of the land. It is not that ritual pollution does not impede upon holiness, but that the primary aim of purificatory rites seems to be *purification*, whereas the absolution process for moral iniquity (i.e., atonement) is more

maintain that this notion of creation as having taken place within God’s “divine sanctuary”¹¹³ is crucially dependent upon water; after all, it was the (domesticated) waters of the deep (תהום) that served as the foundation for the ordered cosmos, and it was the separation of these primordial waters that allowed for the creation of living beings on the earth.

While up to this point, I have described the deluge as a kind of symbolic death and rebirth, I maintain that it can also be apprehended in terms of cleansing and a washing away of defilements. Indeed, if the initial establishment of God’s order was intended to mirror the priestly regimen of the Temple, it would seem that Noah’s sacrifice, which occurs in the aftermath of the flood (Gen 8:20-22) functions as a rededication of the Temple of God’s creation. This re-sanctification of the earth, performed in accordance with cultic sacrificial law,¹¹⁴ appears to constitute the final step in the purificatory process, as it obviates the prior state of earthly corruption (cf. Gen 6:12), and leads to a renewed state of holiness. P’s account of flood can thus be understood analogously with his account of ritual purification:

explicitly directed towards *sanctification*. In this case, we find an intersection of ritual and moral conceptions of purity, as God’s division of the earth from the sky and the seas, and of different animals, etc. can be seen to represent the cultic separation of the pure from the impure, which in turn serve as the preconditions for (“moral”) sanctification. See sec. 1.1 for a more detailed discussion of ritual-moral distinctions, and the fluidity of these purity categories.

¹¹³ Smith, *The Priestly Vision*, 93.

¹¹⁴ i.e., Gen 8:20-21 describes how “Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings (עלות) on the altar,” and that God smelled the pleasing odour (ניחוח). The text’s effort to clarify that the animals were clean (טהר), and the invocation of priestly sacrificial terminology (i.e., עלות) indicates that these offerings were in accordance with priestly sacrificial norms, even though there is no physical Temple yet. If we consider the earth to be reflective of the sancta, it would make sense that Noah would administer the sacrificial offerings to God. It is also worth noting that Noah himself is first depicted by P as תמים, or blameless: a term used in the context of ritual sacrifice to denote an animal fit for slaughter (cf. Exod 12:5, 29:1; Lev 1:3, 1:10, 3:1, etc.) This characterisation of Noah as blameless would seem to reflect a judgment not only of his moral character, but also on his (proto-)priestly qualifications.

in both cases, water serves as the ritual ingredient for ablution, and cleansing (of either the body or the earth) is followed immediately by ritual sacrifice.

Despite the similarities with general washing practices, I posit that the cleansing in question shares more in common with Lawrence's notion of "theophanic washing," being directed towards the restoration of (priestly) holiness. The subsequent establishment of God's covenant with Noah, following the sanctification of the earth, codifies God's cosmic order, as God promises, "never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen 9:11). This enforced stabilisation of water leads to a harmonisation of the created-cosmos-as-Temple, as God's limiting of water's liminal capacity for destruction helps in regenerating "the proper division of realms and animals, as the priests correspondingly do in the Temple."¹¹⁵ In this way, the flood can be seen to represent not only renewed creation, and a return to *cosmic* order, but also a return to the original *cultic* order of the earth. This conceptual link between water, the renewal of life, and the restoration of holiness indicates the degree of symbiosis between Priestly views of creation and flood on the one hand, and the maintenance of the sanctuary on the other. In all cases, water can be seen to possess liminal properties, as it helps to facilitate conditional change – from chaos to order, from creation to destruction, and from defilement to renewed holiness. This integrated priestly view of water, as a crucial ingredient in both bodily and earthly purification, can help account for the ways in which ritual cleansing imagery becomes repurposed within later Jewish literature, in view of (re-)creation and eschatological sanctification.

¹¹⁵ Smith, *The Priestly Vision*, 93.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the role of water within the two cosmogonic accounts of Genesis. In particular, I have demonstrated water's liminal capacity for chaos and stability; as well as creation, destruction, and renewal. Although the Priestly narrative of Gen 1-2:4a seems to minimise the mythological dimensions of cosmic abyssal waters, there remains a great deal of conceptual power allotted to water in both Israelite and ancient Mediterranean mythos more broadly, as an instrument of change (from disorder to order and vice versa). I observed earlier how Priestly purification rites seek to contain and harness the constructive power of water, and I contend that Priestly etiological narrative similarly strives to position water as being in service of YHWH's cosmic order. Indeed, water serves as a double-edged sword, operating between standard dichotomies of divine control and elemental turmoil. Moreover, I have highlighted how God's stabilisation of water in P's account of primeval history has cultic repercussions, as the sanctity of the created cosmos would seem to mirror the priesthood's vision for the holiness of the sancta. The conceptual link in P texts between a) ritual water(s) for ablution and b) primordial "waters of the deep/תְּהוֹם" harnessed by God for both creative and destructive purposes, thereby reflect the confluence of ritual cleansing practices with more grand-scale priestly notions of land (and Temple) sanctification.

3. WATER AS A POETIC/PROPHETIC METAPHOR OF (NATIONAL) RESTORATION

3.1. Metaphorical Repurposing of Priestly Ritual Language

The Pentateuchal material serves as the foundation for subsequent Jewish *halakhah*, and as illustrated in chapters 1 and 2, conceptions of water are influenced by both Priestly purity law and cosmology. Although it might be tempting to view Klawans’s ritual and moral categories as being entirely cordoned off from one another, I have already observed key intersections between these two purity types, whereby cultic purity serves to enable the requisite holiness for moral sanctification. In this chapter, I turn to poetic and prophetic writings, illustrating how such intersections become further pronounced (and effectively ratified) within the ensuing biblical canon. Specifically, I focus on how texts seem to appropriate ritual language within the context of moral impurity, as water-based cleansing terminology is frequently employed in the case of moral defilement¹¹⁶ – a somewhat peculiar phenomenon, given that there are no cleansing rites of purification within Pentateuchal priestly law to treat non-ritual forms of pollution. In this chapter, I therefore examine the non-literal application of ritualistic water terminology, focusing on poetic and prophetic

¹¹⁶ E.g. Ps 51:4: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (הרבה כבסני מעוני ומחטאתי טהרני). Although this psalm is identified as a prayer for cleansing and pardon within the NRSV, it is notable that it does not describe a state of ritual defilement (טמא), but rather iniquity (עון) and sin (חטא). Moreover, the previous verse (51:3) implores God to blot out the sinner’s transgressions, using the term פשע, which is generally used solely for moral infractions. (Cf. Gen 31:36; Ex 23:21; Lev 16:16, 16:21; Josh 24:29; 1 Kgs 8:50; Is 24:20, etc.) The fact that transgressions are placed within a framework of cleansing is atypical, especially if iniquity (עון) is cleansed by means of כבס (a ritual act of washing one’s *clothing*). It is evident that purificatory language is being extended beyond its original (Priestly) setting.

passages that associate ritual with spiritual forms of cleansing. Many of these instances also imply some type of idyllic restoration or cosmological reorientation, which appears to evoke the primordial waters of the deep. I posit that the association between literal waters for ritual washing and metaphorical waters for symbolic cleansing can be understood in light of the common liminal aspects of water within Priestly ritual and cosmogony. As such, while liminality is perhaps less of an immediate focus within this chapter, I maintain that this idea provides an important context for understanding water's potentiality, and capacity for effecting conditional change (whether ritual, moral, or a blend of these two purity types).

The fluidity between Klawans's purity categories is not surprising, as Klawans himself allows for this degree of fluidity in his articulation of the differences between ritual and moral purity. This categorical flexibility is evident in the rites for corpse impurity (Num 19, discussed above), which provided a legal precedent for the elasticity of ritual-moral distinctions. In that case, the consequence for failing to adhere to the prescribed purification rites (namely, excommunication) mirrored extreme punishments for actual "moral" transgressions, reflecting the heightened communal threat to ritual purity posed by corpse defilement. I have also described how the very aim of cultic purification is directed towards the attainment and maintenance of holiness (itself an attribute affiliated more with moral sanctification).¹¹⁷ Moreover, Jonathan D. Lawrence's notion of "theophanic" washing (as in Exod. 19:10-15, where God tells Moses that the people must be consecrated and their clothing cleansed prior to God's revealing of himself)¹¹⁸ provides scriptural precedent for

¹¹⁷ See note 112 for more on the association of holiness and sanctification with moral purity.

¹¹⁸ Discussed above in section 1.2.

washing, even when there is no perceptible “defilement.”¹¹⁹ While Lawrence claims that theophanic cleansing is clearly still ritually-oriented, he also acknowledges that this particular sort of washing is not a response to a clearly defined source of ritual pollution.¹²⁰ Rather, the need for purification seems to hinge on the compromised *moral* or *spiritual* status of the people, which would be atypical, given that ritual cleansing is not *generally* prescribed as an antidote to “moral” defilement, at least not from a *halakhic* perspective. It is thus relevant to recall the relative “pliability”¹²¹ of Klawans’s model, as adhering to a strict dichotomy between ritual and moral pollution fails to account for the layered dimensions of impurity, and the nuances of cleansing (water-based) rites, which can apply simultaneously to the “ritual” and “moral.”¹²²

The fluidity of Klawans’s purity categories becomes further pronounced within poetic and prophetic texts, where water’s cleansing capabilities are frequently interpreted non-

¹¹⁹ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 32.

¹²⁰ The fact that this washing is not in response to a specific source of impurity clearly differentiates theophanic washing from standard (general) washing practices, according to Lawrence’s typology, but is similar to some priestly forms of purification. See Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 30-35.

¹²¹ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 23.

¹²² Despite Klawans’s attempt to nuance his bifurcation of ritual and moral purity, it is worth noting that some scholars still regard Klawans as presenting an overly systematic view of purity. One prominent critic of Klawans’s ritual-moral distinction is Thomas Kazen, who posits, “The dichotomy between morality on the one hand and convention, whether social or ritual behaviour, on the other, is only typical of modern Western thought...When morality is understood in a broad sense...it embraces ritual concerns such as purity.” See Kazen, *Issues of Impurity*, 16. Kazen further describes how the three “systems” of purity (i.e., “for clean and unclean animals, for bodily transferrable contact-contagion, and for serious immorality”) frequently overlap. As such, “while there are moral aspects to the idea of purity in ancient Judaism, purity does not cease to be a ritual category when associated with moral matters” (17). Kazen identifies disgust as a common denominator for purity language (17-23), along with fear (23-31; this would seem to correspond more to Douglas’s view of purity and danger).

literally.¹²³ Indeed, metaphorical washing appears as a recurring motif in a number of prophetic texts, where cleansing is framed as a sort of spiritual purgation, which cannot be performed literally.¹²⁴ In these instances, ritual water terminology – adapted from Priestly legal texts – is nonetheless applied. For example, Isa 4:3-4 describes how anyone left in Zion, who remains in Jerusalem, will be called holy, “once the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion (אם רחץ אדני את צאת בנות־ציון) and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst (ואת־דמי ירושלם ידיח מקרבה) by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.” The word רחץ is a term used in Leviticus to denote bathing (a necessary precondition for ritual purification), but it refers here to a broader kind of washing that must be enacted by God, as opposed to the conventional purificatory practices that would be overseen by a priest.¹²⁵

¹²³ See Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 35-38. I also acknowledge that the distinction between literal and figurative (i.e., metaphorical) is somewhat artificial, as figurative language is not necessarily dissociated from literal dimensions of meaning. According to Macky, many figurative uses of words and phrases are “at various stages along the way towards becoming literal uses,” meaning that the distinction between literal and figurative language is perhaps more of a continuum (as in the case of day and night, where one bleeds into the other), versus “wholly discrete categories like apple and ape.” See Peter W. Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 19 (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 32.

¹²⁴ I use the term “metaphorical” primarily in accordance with Macky, who defines metaphor as “that figurative way of speaking (and meaning) in which one reality, the Subject, is depicted in terms that are more commonly associated with a different reality, the Symbol, which is related to it by Analogy” (*The Centrality of Metaphors*, 49).

¹²⁵ This seeming appropriation of ritual language can be understood as inner-scriptural exegesis, which is the process whereby allusions to other scriptural writings serve to clarify, modify, and even subvert the conventional reading of a text. Inner-scriptural exegesis is by no means limited solely to “biblical” texts, but canonical prophetic writings provide some of the clearest examples of the phenomenon. Standard phrases and terminology are frequently adapted in such texts in order to bolster the prophet’s theological message, to imbue their words with a greater level of authority, and in wake of exile, “to create a new faith from the shards of the old.” For more, see: Yair Zakovitch, “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, edited by Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 27-28; Risa Levitt-Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile, and the Torah*, JSOPSup 358 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 1.

In Ezek 36:25, we find metaphorical washing that is informed by cultic law, but deviates from its originally intended cultic context. The passage reads, “I will sprinkle clean water on you (עליכם מים טהרים וזרקתי) and you shall be clean from your uncleannesses (וטהרתם מכל) (טמאותיכם), and from your idols I will cleanse (אטהר) you.” While this verse resembles Levitical law, due to the references to clean water and cleansing,¹²⁶ here, sprinkling seems to have been extended from its specific cultic purposes (i.e., the dashing of blood on the altar).¹²⁷ In addition, the notion of washing away the pollution of idol worship runs counter to P, who regards idols as morally (but not immediately ritually) defiling.¹²⁸ In this way, Lawrence argues that while this verse brings elements from the ritual setting, it also adds new contexts and layers of metaphorical meaning (likely reflecting an instance of inner-scriptural exegesis). Indeed, the figurative dimensions of water terminology reflect not merely a

¹²⁶ The utilisation of priestly ritual language in this verse is not perchance, as indeed, Ezekiel frequently draws upon priestly terminology and concepts. Similarities in both language and content between the book of Ezekiel and P are well-attested, indicating at the very least a shared literary heritage, and Risa Levitt-Kohn identifies 97 examples of terms, expressions, and idioms common to both sources, 54 of which are not attested anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible (*A New Heart and a New Soul*, 75-85). Moreover, Levitt-Kohn highlights ten examples of “reversals”, where terms and expressions used with a particular meaning in P are used antithetically by Ezekiel, reflecting the prophet’s manipulation of earlier priestly themes and concepts. For example, the phrase ריח ניחוח in P refers to the pleasing odour that results from different types of sacrifices to YHWH. In Ezekiel, the term is subverted to describe pagan practice (Ezek 6:13, 20:28, 20:41). The motif used by P to refer to Pharaoh’s hardened heart (קשה לב) and his refusal to respond to Moses’s pleas to let his people go is similarly transformed by Ezekiel, as this term is applied to Israel, whose heart is hardened and unresponsive to the words of YHWH (Ezek 3:7, Levitt-Kohn, 76-77). Levitt-Kohn suggests that Ezekiel cynically inverts these priestly images, “so that what was once a ‘pleasing odour to Yahweh’ now symbolises impurity and irreverence, or Pharaoh’s recalcitrance now characterizes that of Israel” (78). Thus, we see a conscious reworking of sacrificial language, as Ezekiel parodies the “pleasing odour” of priestly sacrifice. Here, Levitt-Kohn posits that Ezekiel effectively transforms negative “images of Israel’s apostasy and subsequent downfall...into [priestly] images conveying the exceptional covenant and unique relationship between Israel and Yahweh” (78).

¹²⁷ E.g. Exod 24:6, 24:8, 29:16, 29:20; Lev 1:5, 1:11, 3:8, 3:13, 7:2, 7:14, 8:19, 8:24, 9:12, 9:18, 17:6; Num 18:17, 19:13, 19:20 (i.e., corpse pollution rite).

¹²⁸ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 37.

recycling of cleansing vocabulary, but also a reconstitution of how washing is to be understood – as a ritually derived solution, but one that can also counteract the effects of moral pollution.

3.2. Eschatological Cleansing Imagery

The metaphorical appropriation of purity language is significant, because metaphorical cleansing can sometimes acquire eschatological undertones. In particular, washing is sometimes framed in terms of moral renewal and a reorientation of cosmic order. For example, Ezekiel’s vision (chs. 46-47) of a holy temple and river clearly reflect the syncretisation of priestly and cosmogonic conceptions of water (as discussed in 2.4). In 47:1-12, Ezekiel describes a river flowing from a holy temple, which will soon flow into the Dead Sea and transform it into freshwater. Here, the focus on both the temple and upon water as a cleansing ingredient would seem to evoke a ritual context, as we have seen how water in legal P texts is frequently used in the context of purification (see sections 1.2-1.3 above). Indeed, the flowing river imagery (מים יוצאים)¹²⁹ appears to recall the requisite “living water” (מים חיים)¹³⁰ for the corpse impurity rite of Num 19. At the same time, however, the restorative and purifying effects of the river can also be read in connection with the waters of the deep of Gen 1, which are opened at the time of the flood (Gen 7:11),¹³¹ suggesting an

¹²⁹ Ezek 47:1, Ezek 48:8.

¹³⁰ Lev 14:8, 14:51-52; Num 19:17. Living water is typically rendered in English as “flowing” or “running” water, much like the flowing river imagery in Ezekiel.

¹³¹ Ezekiel seems to draw more directly from J’s stream (אֵד) imagery of Gen 2:6, which rises from the earth to “water the whole face of the ground.” However, as these two creation accounts would have been read side-by-side, it is likely that both of these images of water (אֵד and תְּהוֹם) would have been

additional (metaphorical) significance of cosmic rejuvenation. The creation parallel is further strengthened in v. 9, which recalls the swarms of living creatures of Gen 1:20. Indeed, Ezekiel’s discussion of the river directly mirrors the language in P, where God says, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures (ישרצו המים שרף נפש חיה). In Ezek 47:9, God foretells, “Every living creature that swarms will be able to live wherever this stream goes (והיה כל-נפש חיה אשר-ישרץ אל כל-אשר יבוא שם נחלים),” drawing upon Priestly vocabulary from the creation account.¹³² In evoking the P narrative of YHWH’s ordered creation, Ezekiel can thereby be seen to present a restorative, Edenic vision for Israel. The juxtaposition of ritual and moral elements within Ezekiel’s vision suggests that water, which fulfils a purificatory (ritual) purpose in Priestly legal texts, takes on added metaphorical significance as an agent of common (land) purification.

What is noteworthy in Ezekiel’s vision is not so much the association of water with purity, but rather the association of water *from the Temple* as a means of purifying the land of Israel for moral transgressions (as opposed to ritual pollution, which would be expected). I argue that this explicit connection between (1) waters required for ritual lustration, and (2) primordial waters indicates an important conceptual link. Specifically, water functions as an especially potent symbol of cleansing in this passage,¹³³ precisely because of its latent

viewed in connection with one another. Moreover, the flood is commonly attested in J and P narrative, and seems to inform this prophetic vision of water and renewal

¹³² The underlined vocabulary of living creatures (נפש חיה) that swarm (שרץ) seems to intentionally recall the creation account, as indeed, Ezekiel frequently utilises and manipulates Priestly terminology and concepts. For more on Ezekiel’s knowledge and use of P material, see fn 126.

¹³³ While I am referring to the entirety of Ezek 47:1-12, vv. 8-9 are especially relevant here, as they depict how flowing water from the temple will transform the “sea of stagnant waters” (הימה המוצאים) – i.e., the Dead Sea) into freshwater. This transformation of saltwater to freshwater can be seen to reflect

(liminal) power, as both ritual detergent and as an agent of both order and chaos. Whereas water serves as a key instrument in obviating the threat of ritual pollution, it is regarded as both a creative *and* destructive power within Priestly cosmogony, which must be either subdued or appropriately channelled. These dual functions of water (ritual and cosmic) are in one sense distinct, but both reflect the power of water as a potentially stabilising force, helping to facilitate conditional change – from defilement to purity, and from chaos to a state of cosmological order.

Moreover, the image of water flowing from the Temple in Ezek 47 would seem to harken back to the priestly (ritualistic) vision of the ordered cosmos as a kind of proto-Temple (in addition to stream imagery in Gen 2). Specifically, the eschatological imagery in Ezek 47 represents an extension of the priestly view of cosmos, which had positioned flood as a means for renewal and sanctification, in line with purification rituals for general (bodily) pollution. I discussed above how God’s creative process of differentiation was understood to facilitate the sanctification of the created cosmos, much like the priestly separation of impurities from the sancta, and how the flood seemed to reflect a “washing away” of defilements, facilitating a macro-level form of ablution for the earth. Within Ezekiel, the identification of the cosmos with the Temple seems fully realised, as the “proto-Temple” of P’s cosmogony is supplanted by an actual temple, indicating a more dramatic convergence of water’s ritual and cosmic capacities for cleansing and renewal. The joint association between water as a cleansing agent, and as a source of cosmic order in poetic and prophetic texts,

the transformation from death to life, as water that previously could not be crossed (v.5) now facilitates life (v.9: see above).

illustrates the fluidity of Israelite conceptions of water, and the holistic apprehension of scriptural language.

3.3. Poetic (Biblical) Renderings of Metaphorical Washing

While Ezekiel is clearly informed by priestly law, it is important to acknowledge the complex nature of the chain of transmission. For the purpose of coherency, I have focused primarily on Pentateuchal texts, assessing how P material from Genesis, Leviticus, and Numbers informs the ritual and symbolic context(s) for water in Ezekiel. However, this notion of a linear progression from priest to prophet, and from literal to metaphorical is only partially accurate, as it is unclear how early or late the Priestly texts are (though they are generally presumed to be post-exilic).¹³⁴ According to Lawrence, the purity system outlined by P almost never appears anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, and even the remainder of the Pentateuch fails to link purification with washing in the way that the Priestly author does.¹³⁵ References to purification in the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles do not contain the details concerning washing that one might expect from the P material, and even the rebuilding of the Temple under Ezra and Nehemiah does not make the connection between washing and purity, offering no details about the purificatory process.¹³⁶ Although ritual washing and purification are present in the Deuteronomistic History, Lawrence contends

¹³⁴ See Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 34-36 for a discussion of metaphor and the issues with presuming metaphors respond to earlier legal material. For more on dating of P, see my earlier discussion in section 1.1. The issue of dating is also quite difficult in the case of Ezekiel; some scholars have posited that Ezekiel may have himself been a priestly contemporary of P. Refer to Levitt-Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 2-5 for more on the possibility that Ezekiel was a priest.

¹³⁵ Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 40-41.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 40.

that these two concepts are not linked in the same way as in Leviticus. Consequently, he argues that ritual washing for purification must have been a later development, which was inserted into earlier versions of the Torah.¹³⁷ It may seem tempting to posit a sequential development from ritual to metaphorical uses of washing, or vice versa, but Lawrence cautions that the uncertainty concerning the dates for P make this position somewhat untenable. While certain texts like Ezekiel might suggest a fairly clear process of inner-biblical exegesis, with the influence of Pentateuchal P texts more clearly verifiable, this kind of trajectory cannot be presumed for all scriptural texts, and even Ezekiel is not unaffected by other prophetic and poetic tropes. As such, P cannot be regarded as the sole – or even universal – scriptural source for purity and washing concepts in the Hebrew Bible.

To further obfuscate the idea of a trajectory, it is clear that the *Chaoskampf* motif discussed in Gen 1-2:4a is not unique within the biblical corpus and likely predates P's rendering of creation, indicating the prevalence of water-as-chaos imagery, not just in the broader Near East (as discussed earlier), but even in Israelite thought. Indeed, the “mythic substratum which is suppressed or tacit” in P¹³⁸ is much more explicit within the poetic literature. For example, Ps 74:12-17 describes God as mythic conqueror, in the vein of Mesopotamian myth:

Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the earth.
 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons (תנינים) in the waters...
 You cut openings for springs and torrents; you dried up ever-flowing streams.
 Yours is the day, yours also the night; you established the luminaries and the sun.
 You have fixed all the bounds of the earth (אתה הצבת כל־גבולות ארץ) ...

¹³⁷ Ibid, 41.

¹³⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation*, 36.

The priestly demythologisation of Near Eastern cosmogony (as in Gen 1-2:4a) has not been applied here, and the potential danger of the sea is therefore more explicit. The sea *qua* primordial adversary for YHWH is well-attested in biblical poetry; the sea is frequently depicted as confined and separated by God, whose own power and might is often framed in light of his victory over the forces of the sea. Regardless of the provenance of P creation narrative, the cosmology presented therein is reflected within various other poetic texts. For instance, Ps 104:5-9 asserts:

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.
 You cover it with the deep (תהום) as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
 At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
 They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.
 You set a boundary (גבול) that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

The clear emphasis on maintaining boundaries and borders reinforces YHWH's perceived command over water, and his restraining of its potentiality for chaos. As such, we see the *Chaoskampf* motif attested not just in P texts, but more pervasively within the Israelite poetic tradition.¹³⁹ While this perhaps complicates the question of inner-biblical exegesis, making it more difficult to trace the trajectory of water motifs chronologically, it points to a certain degree of ubiquity – of both the concept of water as chaos, and the cosmic significance of stilling the liminal waters of the deep. Although the Ezekiel imagery (as discussed in sec. 3.2)

¹³⁹ Another prominent example includes Ps 89:9-11: “You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it – you have founded them.”

does seem dependent on earlier P material, given the prevalence of priestly language and concepts, this is not necessarily the case for all other biblical writings.

3.4. Particularistic Dimensions of Water Restoration Imagery

This cosmic dimension within poetic and prophetic texts tends to envisage a time before time as the model for renewal. However, the (often eschatological) visions presented by prophets are also very much connected to the here-and-now, and Jerusalem is frequently framed as a holy city of sorts, which will be purified and cleansed by God. This is evident in Ezek 47:1-12, which positioned communal land purification in connection to the temple (presumably the Jerusalem Temple, given the priestly character of the text). Zechariah 13:1 also links metaphorical cleansing for the purpose of purification with the land of Jerusalem nationalistically, as follows: “On that day a fountain shall be opened (מקור נפתח) for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin (חטאת) and impurity (ולנדא).”

This passage would similarly appear to fuse ritual and metaphorical (moral) language, as the term מקור is used in Leviticus to denote female forms of polluting blood flow: in Lev 12:7 in a discussion of post-parturition cleansing rites, and in Lev 20:18 in reference to a woman’s menstrual blood (the latter being especially interesting, given that the word נדה can mean both impurity *and* menstruant). Zechariah conversely employs fountain (מקור) imagery to depict purification from “sin and impurity,” as opposed to an actual source of impurity. Within prophetic texts, the term is sometimes combined with the מים חיים (i.e., the fountain

of living water), and associated with God.¹⁴⁰ In this way, living water would seem to evoke the cleansing agent of the Num 19 corpse impurity rite. Yet this motif seems to refer to God directly, identifying God *as* the living water (especially in Jer 17:13). Additionally, the fountain image sometimes seems to represent Israel’s covenant with YHWH, which can be revoked in the case of sin or defilement, as in Hos 13:15.¹⁴¹ Thus, while water is often framed universally and cosmologically in terms of creation, there is frequently a distinctly nationalistic dimension to these motifs. Prophetic visions of eschatological renewal are not necessarily directed towards everyone, but are Jerusalem-centric, while water imagery similarly revolves around Israel’s revitalisation and purification. This makes sense, given that Priestly purification law itself is intended for the people of Israel, comprising part of the covenantal demands, which are Israel-specific.

¹⁴⁰ E.g., Jer 2:13, 17:13. “Fountain of living water” imagery is discussed further in section 5.2.

¹⁴¹ Hos 13:15 – “and his fountain shall dry up, his spring shall be parched. It shall strip his treasury of every precious thing.” This idea of the fountain as a divine gift or covenant seems to be echoed in Prov 14:27, and to a lesser extent 16:22 and 18:4, which are more directly concerned with wisdom. (Wisdom is understood in other Israelite/Jewish texts such as Sirach to represent the contents of divine gift, and to represent Israel’s covenant. See chapter 5.2 for more on fountain imagery; for more on wisdom in Sirach, see Greg Schmidt Goering, *Wisdom’s Root Revealed: Ben Sira and the Election of Israel*, JSOTSup 139 [Leiden: Brill, 2009]).

3.5. Conclusion

Earlier in Part One, I highlighted how the ritual cleansing process can be understood as liminal, insofar as it occurs at the marginal transitional stage “betwixt” impurity and purity, with water serving as a central component of this (liminal) process. The murky תהום waters would also appear to occupy a liminal status, because of their creative potential for either chaos or order, at the time before YHWH’s establishment of clear boundaries (גבולות). Throughout these first three chapters, I have sought to emphasise the conceptual link in various biblical texts between cleansing waters and primordial waters of the deep (תהום), again highlighting the liminality inherent in their intersection. This chapter was intended to demonstrate how water imagery becomes repurposed within poetic and prophetic writings, often with a particularistic slant, which emphasises the eschatological cleansing and rejuvenation – not of humanity *en masse*, but of God’s people, Israel.

PART TWO: NON-BIBLICAL TEXTS

In Part Two, I move beyond the biblical canon, turning to non-canonical Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, as a gauge for how water was understood and reinterpreted. In so doing, I do not seek to find unanimity or consensus between texts, or purport to locate a singular “Second Temple period perspective” on water, as I recognise the diversity of textual (and even recensional) traditions. However, I am interested in the common points of intersection between ritual and moral dimensions of purity, and how the processes of ritual purification and moral sanctification seem to operate symbiotically. I acknowledge that water is not necessarily a *major* focus of these texts, but in addressing questions of ritual and moral purification, these chapters examine how later Jewish writings participate in, diverge from, and adapt motifs of water and washing from the Hebrew Bible.

Where applicable, I also draw on the concept of liminality, as a means of illuminating key tensions between life and death, as well as defilement and sanctification. To clarify, I do not wish to imply that water always *is* liminal, or that it necessarily must *act liminally* within these passages. Instead, I maintain that the notion of liminality can help illuminate water’s creative qualities in conjunction with – and not merely in opposition to – its more negative (i.e., destructive) potentiality, allowing us to apprehend water’s conceptual multivalence. At a more basic level, though, these chapters explore how the notion of purification becomes further extended beyond (and yet, in view of) its cultic associations, functioning as a symbol of creation, eschatological renewal, and the moral restitution of Israel.

4. PURITY AND WATER IN SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD NARRATIVE

4.1. Ritual Dimensions of Purity and Water within Second Temple Narrative: Jubilees

Up to this point, I have explored water and cleansing imagery within the broader framework(s) of purity, pollution, and purification language (both ritual and moral). This kind of focused examination of water within biblical texts served in one sense as a micro study, through which I have sought to apprehend the more macro level of purity, of which water and ablutions comprise one aspect. This entry point of water is not the only way by which to approach purity, however, as the macro level of purity also bears implications for the micro level of water. While it is tempting to cordon off water as its own separate entity, it is important to keep in mind that water operates holistically within more complex cultural networks of purification, cosmogonic myth, and sanctification. As such, failing to take stock of water's relational value ultimately overlooks the diverse ways in which water is conceptualised, framed, and interpreted within ancient Jewish literature.

With this in mind, I turn to Jubilees, a second century BCE pseudepigraphon that purports to contain the testimony given to Moses at Sinai.¹⁴² Jubilees does not explicitly focus on water, but I maintain that it provides a great deal of insight into ancient views of pollution, a notion that does have significant bearing on the role and functionality of water. The book of Jubilees serves as a useful representative sample of Second Temple period narrative, in part due to its popularity during this time. Although the complete text is only

¹⁴² James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 9.

extant in its Ethiopic (Ge'ez) recension, it was composed in Hebrew, translated into Greek, and then from Greek into Latin and Ge'ez,¹⁴³ reflecting its wide influence within the ancient world. Fifteen fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts have also been discovered among the scrolls preserved at Qumran, indicating its relevance for that “sectarian” Jewish community.¹⁴⁴ In apparent contrast to prior prophetic and poetic biblical writings, however, which frequently blurred the line between ritual and moral forms of pollution, Jubilees would seem upon first glance to observe a somewhat stricter division between the two. Indeed, the author of Jubilees appears to be primarily concerned with moral sanctification, rather than ritual-based purification. However, upon a closer reading, it can be argued that this division is somewhat artificial, as cultic (ritual) concerns continue to impinge upon moral purity and the holiness of the sancta, illustrating the points of intersection between ritual and moral dimensions of purity.

The lack of *explicit* attention to ritual purity (and by extension, cleansing and purification imagery) is striking when one considers Jubilees’s clear *halakhic* (legal) overtones as rewritten scripture.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, while Jubilees covers much of the same narrative (*aggadic*)

¹⁴³ Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology*, JSJSup 117 (Leiden, Brill, 2007), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. I address the question of Qumran “sectarianism” in greater detail in chapter 5, but it is worth mentioning that Michael Segal identifies linguistic and *halakhic* similarities between Jubilees and “sectarian” Dead Sea Scrolls writings (most notably, both commonly promote a 364-day calendar). For more on the importance of Jubilees for the Qumran community, see Aharon Shemesh, “4Q265 and the Authoritative Status of Jubilees at Qumran,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), esp. 259-260. On a separate topic, James C. VanderKam highlights how some expansive (rabbinic) midrashim seem to resemble Jubilees, indicating the text’s continued relevancy within the rabbinic period. See VanderKam, “The Manuscript Tradition of Jubilees,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 8-9.

¹⁴⁵ Molly Zahn defines “rewritten scripture” as any text that adapts substantial portions of biblical books, modifying the base scriptural text(s) through addition, omission, paraphrasing,

ground as Genesis and Exodus, Jubilees positions itself as a revelatory work, with Mosaic law serving as its logical lynchpin. From the start, the author(s) seeks to establish the text's legitimacy on the basis of Sinaitic revelation, whereby God reveals to Moses "both what (was) in the beginning and what will occur (in the future), the account of the division of all of the days of the Law and the testimony" (Jub 1:4).¹⁴⁶ The text is also depicted as emanating from the angel of God's presence, further underscoring its authenticity as a source of divine law. Specifically, the angel of the presence is described as taking "the tablets of the division of years from the time of the creation of the law and testimony according to their weeks (of years), according to the jubilees, year by year throughout the full number of jubilees, from [the day of creation until] the day of the new creation" (Jub 1:29).¹⁴⁷ This invocation of Mosaic authority points to the rhetorical value of law and Torah for Jubilees, as a means for legitimating its theological message.¹⁴⁸

rearrangement, etc. She describes how the term was originated by Geza Vermes in his 1961 work, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, where he defined "rewritten bible" as the insertion of *bagdadic* development into the biblical narrative. Rewritten *scripture* has been widely accepted as a more appropriate designation, on account of the bible/scripture debate. See Molly Zahn, "Rewritten Scripture," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 323-336.

¹⁴⁶ As the only complete and extant manuscripts are in Ethiopic, this thesis draws primarily upon the following English version: O.S. Wintermute, trans. "Jubilees," in *OTP* 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 35-142. This particular passage can also be found in fragmentary form in 4Q216 I, 6. (4QJub^a), which was first published in J. VanderKam and J.T. Milik in "4Q216 (4QJub^a)," in *Qumran Cave 4 VIII (Parabiblical Texts, Part 1)*, DJD XIII, ed. Harold Attridge et al. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 1-140. For the sake of convenience, any references to 4Q216 are taken from Parry and Tov's *DSSR* 1: "4Q216 (4QJub^a)," trans. J. VanderKam and J.T. Milik, 556-557.

¹⁴⁷ Again, see 4Q216 IV for the parallel Hebrew passage. VanderKam identifies 22 additional reminders (both direct and indirect) that the angel is in fact dictating this book to Moses: 2:26, 29 (Sabbath); 6:13, 19, 20, 22, 32, 35, 38; 15:28, 33; 23:32; 28:7; 30:11, 17, 21; 33:13, 18, 19; 41:26; 49:15. See James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 24-25.

¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Hindy Najman describes how texts like Jubilees participate in Mosaic discourse as a means for acquiring authority, "through their intermingling with the well-known words of traditions whose authority is already acknowledged. Thus such works may acquire scriptural status without

The emphasis on Mosaic law in Jubilees is not merely hypothetical however, as *halakhab* is frequently woven into the *aggadah*. For example, in Jubilees 6, the author draws upon the story of Noah and the flood to provide a scriptural foundation for the festival of Shebuot, indicating the prominence of water and flood for the conceptual configuration of cosmic order. Following Noah’s new covenant with God, the text asserts, “it is ordained and written in the heavenly tablets that they should observe the feast of Shebuot in this month, once per year in order to renew the covenant in all (respects), year by year” (Jub 6:17). As such, the text implores its reader to “command the children of Israel so that they might keep this feast in all of their generations as a commandment to them” (Jub 6:20).

The above injunction stems from the legal material of Exod 23:16 detailing **שבועת**, the festival of weeks, but has been spliced into the narrative, which serves to emphasise this particular law as a key means for maintaining the covenant, while also verifying the narrative, on the basis of its close adherence to Torah. Genesis similarly emphasises the flood as a key episode in covenantal history, and the rainbow serves as a sign of the covenant granted to Noah in both diluvial accounts.¹⁴⁹ Jubilees, however, goes one step further, linking the end of the flood with the start of Shebuot, and providing *aggadic* grounds for a *halakhic* ruling.

Michael Segal characterises the integration of *halakhab* and *aggadah* as a major distinctive

displacing the scriptural status of the traditions they rewrite.” See Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 46.

¹⁴⁹ i.e., Gen 9:14-17 – “When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” Cf. Jub 6:15-16 – “And he gave a sign to Noah and his children that there should not again be a flood upon the earth. He set his bow in the clouds for a sign of the covenant which is forever that the water of the Flood should therefore not be upon the earth to destroy it all of the days of the earth.”

feature of the text, in contrast with the Pentateuch. Segal articulates how the Pentateuch puts laws into legal collections, which follow the Sinaitic theophany chronologically – in other words, there is no Mosaic law before Sinai.¹⁵⁰ In contrast, Jubilees integrates most laws within primeval and patriarchal stories that chronologically precede this revelation,¹⁵¹ as laws are paired with etiological narratives, providing established *halakhab* (in this case, instructions for the festival of שבועת) with *aggadic* justification.¹⁵²

While Mosaic law is thus embedded into Jubilees’s narrative structure, ritual purity laws (and water-based purification more specifically) are not frequently invoked in the text. There is one brief reference to washing before sacrifice in Jub 21, but this instance seems to relate more to priestly consecration than general purity concerns. In particular, the text directs the reader to “be pure in your body and wash yourself with water before you go to make an offering upon the altar. And wash your hands and your feet before you approach the altar. And when you have completed making the offering, wash your hands and feet again” (Jub 21:16). However, this directive does not constitute an explicit example of general washing, but priestly washing, which concerns only the priesthood within the context of ritual sacrifice. Indeed, these injunctions to wash with water, and to wash one’s hands and feet before and after making an offering at the altar, mirror the necessary rites for priestly consecration of Exod 29-30.¹⁵³ As discussed earlier, priestly washing does not necessarily

¹⁵⁰ Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 6.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² For more on how the Hebrew Bible also demonstrates ritual innovation in the case of שבועת, see Nathan MacDonald, “Ritual Innovation and *Shavu’ot*,” in *Ritual Innovation in the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism*, BZAW 468, ed. Nathan MacDonald (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 55-78.

¹⁵³ These priestly consecration rites are discussed above, in sec. 1.2 of this thesis.

imply any particular source of general (ritual) impurity. Rather, this type of washing is an additional (Levitical) measure taken to ensure the holiness of the sancta – a special kind of precaution required for the priestly line. Therefore, while this passage perhaps indicates familiarity with water cleansing rites, it does not provide much insight on ritual purity *per se*.

This lack of explicit attention to ritual purity concerns, and the absence of ritually oriented cleansing, seems most apparent in Jub 23, which depicts the death and burial of Abraham. The narrative claims that Abraham dies with Jacob “lying on his bosom” (23:2), and that Isaac falls on his deceased father’s face, weeping and kissing him (23:5). Liora Ravid highlights the fact that these instances of contact with the dead (between Jacob and Abraham, and Isaac and Abraham) do not follow the standard cleansing directives, in seeming violation of the purity laws on corpse defilement:¹⁵⁴ itself the most threatening form of ritual pollution.¹⁵⁵ For all of Jubilees’s attentiveness to *halakhab*, the lack of concern for the most serious form of ritual defilement is striking; as Ravid asserts, “one cannot but marvel at such detailed descriptions of how the Patriarchs, portrayed as priests and exemplary figures, deliberately made themselves impure by touching dead persons.”¹⁵⁶ Yet while Ravid claims that these ritual errors suggest a critique of the dominant priesthood,¹⁵⁷ James C. VanderKam attributes the lack of direct focus on ritual defilements (and their subsequent purificatory rites) to the narrative setting in pre-tabernacle times, arguing that the

¹⁵⁴ See Num 19, as well as the discussion of corpse impurity and *מִי נֹדָה* in sec. 1.3 of this thesis.

¹⁵⁵ Liora Ravid, “Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees,” *JSP* 13 (2002): 61-86 (63).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 85.

omission of rituals is “simply consonant with the putative timeframe of the stories.”¹⁵⁸

VanderKam points out that this is also the case in Pentateuchal narrative, where ritual purity laws are only revealed after the tabernacle is built.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the crux seems to be the existence of a temple, which is the essential “presupposition” of a ritual purity system, as there cannot be ritual defilement proper without a proper sanctuary that can be defiled. In this way, ritual purity is only secondarily important for patriarchal history, given that ritual sources of defilement threaten the sanctity of the sanctuary itself: purity is thus required to maintain the holiness of the place where God causes his name to dwell.¹⁶⁰

The one exception to this omission of ritual purity law appears in the cosmogonic account of Jub 3, with defilement occurring as a by-product of human creation. However, the text’s sole concern for ritual purity in this passage seems to be more linked with Eden *qua* sanctuary than with ritual defilements more broadly. In Jubilees, the author outlines post-parturition purification practices immediately following the formation of woman after Adam, interpreting ritual purificatory law (taken from Lev 12:2-5) in light of women’s secondary created status. Specifically, since the first man (Adam) was created in the first week, and woman (Eve) was shown to him in the second week, Jubilees concludes that women are impure for twice as long following the birth of a female child, in accordance with Levitical laws on childbirth.¹⁶¹ The internal reasoning for this protracted waiting period is

¹⁵⁸ James VanderKam, “Viewed from Another Angle: Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees” *JSP* 13.2 (2002): 213.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ i.e., Num 35:34 (“You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the Israelites”).

that the garden is more holy than any other land.¹⁶² Here, the line between *halakhab* and *aggadah* is blurred, as the text reiterates the law, almost independently of narrative structure:

Therefore the ordinances of these days were ordained for anyone who bears a male or female that she might not seek anything holy and she might not enter the sanctuary until these days are completed for a male or female. This is the law and testimony which is written for Israel so that they might keep it always (Jub 3:13-14).

The above passage serves as another clear example of etiology, whereby purity law is given a scriptural, “historical” foundation in primeval narrative. However, the heightened etiological function seems to have less to do with hypothetical purity concerns, and more with the concept of Eden as a holy sanctuary – a notion also embedded in the Priestly account of creation, and echoed in poetic and prophetic writings. Specifically, the text of Jubilees states that the parturient cannot enter “the sanctuary” (i.e., Eden) until her period of impurity is complete (Jub 3:10), using the same terminology found in Leviticus to refer to the garden, a place that is itself “more holy than any land” (Jub 3:12). This link between the two “sanctuaries” is not unique to this particular passage within Jubilees; indeed, Jub 4:26 similarly characterises Eden as a sacred place upon the earth, while Jub 8:19 identifies the temple more specifically with Eden: “And he [Noah] knew that the garden of Eden was the

¹⁶¹ According to Lev 12:2-5, a woman is impure for seven days following the birth of a male child, with an additional thirty-three days of blood purification, for a total of forty days where she is not permitted in the Temple. For a female child, however, these periods of segregation are doubled: two weeks of impurity, with an additional sixty-six days in a state of blood purification, for a total of eighty days. Jubilees 3 echoes these rulings, as the text claims: “In the first week Adam was created and also the rib, his wife. And in the second week he showed her to him. And therefore the commandment was given to observe seven days for a male, but for a female twice seven days in their impurity” (3:8). Moreover, after forty days are completed for Adam “in the land where he was created,” he is brought into the garden of Eden to work and guard the land. In Jubilees, Eve is brought to Eden upon finishing the eighty-day period, thereby mirroring the post-parturition law for the birth of a girl.

¹⁶² See Jub 3:12 – “And when she finished those eighty days we brought her into the garden of Eden because it is more holy than any land. And every tree which is planted in it is holy.”

holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord.” The need for purification would thus seem to have less to do with the problem of ritual pollution in and of itself, and more with the threat that post-parturition defilement poses to the sanctuary (in this case, the garden). Ravid characterises Jubilees as having a hierarchical perception of purification and sanctification, whereby “the holier a place, the longer and more complex the sanctification required before entering it.”¹⁶³ Consequently, Ravid reasons, “the first man and woman were created outside of the Garden not because they were impure, but because in order to enter the Garden they were required to purify themselves and acquire a degree of sanctity that would permit them to enter the holiest place on earth.”¹⁶⁴ Thus, having established Eden as the holiest place on earth, the author of Jubilees recognises the need for further purification (and in fact, *sanctification*) prior to entry, much like the priestly form of washing that is required before sacrificial rites at the altar.¹⁶⁵

None of these passages focuses on water or cleansing *per se*, as cleansing rites typically operate within the more macro context of ritual purity – a context that Jubilees largely bypasses. However, this is not to say that the text ignores purity and defilement more generally, as there are several references in the text to what accounts as *moral* pollution. I have demonstrated how Jubilees focuses more on sanctification than purification, but other than in the garden of Eden, there is not much opportunity for proper sanctification, *sans* formal Temple or tabernacle. Moral pollution, which affects the entire land of Israel, therefore serves as a better mode for framing sanctification without a proper sanctuary.

¹⁶³ Ravid, “Purity and Impurity,” 80.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ See also Jacob Milgrom, “The Concept of Impurity in ‘Jubilees’ and the ‘Temple Scroll,’” *Revue de Qumrân* 116 (1993): 278.

4.2. Moral Dimensions of Purity and Water in Jubilees

In looking for ritual depictions of water in Jubilees, I have illustrated how *halakhab* is incorporated within *aggadic* depictions of primeval and patriarchal history – but almost never in strict association with purification or ritual lustration. Rather, much of the language in Jubilees concerning purification refers to moral offences, and not ritual sources of pollution. I have observed how moral sources of defilement typically cannot be expiated through standard cleansing rites, but that an accretion of moral pollution can in fact corrupt the land itself. Yet while water may not fulfil a ritual need for purification in this text, it does play a role in the moral purification of the land, as Jubilees draws on the prophetic and poetic tradition of eschatological renewal through a return to creation. Indeed, on the one hand, the waters in question are not the standard cleansing waters for ritual ablution, recalling instead the cosmic waters of the deep (תהום) of Genesis. On the other hand, these waters of the deep nonetheless do maintain some ablutionary power, reflecting once more the degree of intersection between moral and ritual dimensions of purification, as moral sanctification of the earth is modelled upon a ritual (cultic) template for cleansing. As with earlier texts such as Ezekiel 47, Jubilees frames the restitution of purity in terms of primordial deluge and moral renewal, drawing on the liminal potentiality of water for creation, destruction, and cosmic reorientation.

The eschatological reference to cosmic waters of the deep is explicit in several places, as the text of Jubilees largely retells Genesis and Exodus narratives. Yet while the Priestly account of creation in Gen 1-2:4a merely limited potentially problematic aspects of the

Chaoskampf motif, I contend that Jubilees more comprehensively diminishes the subversive dimensions of water. Specifically, in positing the abyssal waters of creation (designated תהום in Genesis) to have been *created* by God – as opposed to merely *ordered* by God – Jubilees appears to go further than Genesis in neutralising any liminal threat water may have posed to God’s absolute sovereignty.¹⁶⁶ This can be observed in Jub 2:2, in which God himself creates the abyssal waters: “For on the first day he created the heavens, which are above, and the earth, and the waters and all of the spirits which minister before him...And (he created) the abysses ([התהו[מות] in 4QJub^a)¹⁶⁷ and darkness – both evening and night – and light – both dawn and daylight – which he prepared in the knowledge of his heart.” This invocation of תהומות would seem upon first glance to mirror the cosmogonic account of Genesis, and Jubilees’s portrayal of the cosmos as waters separated by a firmament (רקיע) is also quite similar to the biblical account:

וביו[ם השני עשה את הרקיע בתו]ך ה[מי]ם [...] עלו למע[לה...] הארץ

The passage from Jubilees clearly draws on the language of Gen 1:7, which states:

ויעש אלהים את-הרקיע ויבדל בין המים אשר מתחת לרקיע ובין המים אשר מעל לרקיע ויהי-כן

In spite of the linguistic commonalities, however, Jubilees explicitly regards cosmic water as secondary to YHWH, whereas Genesis does not. Specifically, whereas Gen 1:2 depicts the world prior to God’s creative activity as being in a state of תהו ובהו (essentially a formless

¹⁶⁶ This is not to say that the waters do not reflect a liminal threat to cosmic order, but rather, that water’s liminal potentiality is framed more explicitly as being under the absolute power of YHWH. Water still presents a risk to stability, but this risk is framed as being entirely under God’s jurisdiction; water does not present a challenge to God’s authority, as in Mesopotamian expressions of *Chaoskampf*.

¹⁶⁷ Here, I again cite 4QJub^a V 12-14, in one of the few extant Hebrew passages from the Qumran scrolls that is relevant for this study. See J. VanderKam and J.T. Milik, trans. “4Q216 (4QJub^a)”, 556-557 (*DSSR* 1). I have underlined lexical parallels between these passages from Gen 1 and 4QJub^a.

void of undifferentiated waters: see sec. 2.1), Jubilees identifies the abyssal waters (תהומות) as an element of God's creation. Thus, whereas in earlier forms of the Israelite cosmology narrative, water preceded God's creative activity, and was oppositional to God, in Jubilees, water's potency emanates directly *from* God. This is a subtle distinction, as both narratives portray God as harnessing water (originally a source of primordial chaos) for the purpose of establishing cosmic order. Yet the assertion that God himself created the תהומות reflects a greater degree of divine mastery, as water is essentially relegated from the rank of opponent to mere handiwork. In this way, water retains its liminal potentiality for chaos and order, but its mythic capacity for cosmic turmoil is further tempered by the text's recognition of God's ultimate control.

On a practical level, the reinforced demythologisation does not have many explicit ramifications within Jubilees; both Genesis and Jubilees depict God creating the seas, skies, and earth by divine fiat, and in both versions of the myth, the waters readily obey God's directive without conflict.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, Genesis and Jubilees commonly frame the flood as an active undoing of creation, whereby water's chaotic elements are permitted to dominate once again – not necessarily as a challenge to God's supremacy, but under his supervision. In Part 1, I explored how P's account of the flood reinstates the liminality of the pre-creation state, as God channels the “potency of disorder” of the waters of the deep, and this is

¹⁶⁸ Both Gen 1:6-9 and Jub 2:5-6 similarly depict God's formation of the רקיע by divine fiat with no apparent complications. Interestingly enough, Jubilees also appears to be in accord with Gen 1, in minimising the mythic hazard of the sea monsters. Genesis describes simply how God created the great sea monsters (התננים הגדולים) and the living creatures with which the waters swarm, and that these things were all good (Gen 1:21). Similarly, in Jubilees, God creates the sea monsters “in the midst of the depths of the waters – for these were made by his hands as the first corporeal beings,” along with the fish and birds (2:11). Although both the waters of the deep (תהום) and the sea monsters are still represented, they are once again demythologised (as in Gen 1).

somewhat the case here as well. However, the domestication of water's creative capacity under God's supervision would appear to indicate the further fettering of abyssal water's more chaotic dimensions in Jubilees. It is not that water's liminal properties are *themselves* significantly altered; rather, these capabilities have been appropriated entirely by YHWH, thereby rendering water a mere cosmic apparatus of God, versus an active threat to his world dominance.

Despite the clear appropriation of water's liminal power by God, the waters of תהום do nonetheless maintain some degree of liminal power in Jubilees, as an eschatological harbinger of moral sanctification. Water is both subdued by God, and enabled by God as an instrument for cosmic restructuring, which itself is destructive and re-creative. I therefore reassert the value of assessing water's functionality through the notion of liminality, as indeed, water's "interstructural" character can be seen to embody "a coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation."¹⁶⁹ In particular, I maintain that this notion of the "unity of the liminal" – as neither this nor that, while also representing *both*¹⁷⁰ can help account for water's seemingly paradoxical roles, as a powerful cosmic force for death *as well as* rebirth, which is at the same time subjugated by God's ultimate power. Thus, even in spite of water's muted destructive potentiality within the text, we find that water and flood still provide an apocalyptic framework for moral sanctification, reiterating water's capacity for effecting cosmic change. This invocation of water's liminal potentiality, itself drawn from common literary associations between the sanctification of the earth and ablutions for ritual defilements (cf. ch.2), is evident in the following passage:

¹⁶⁹ Turner, "Betwixt and Between," 9.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 8.

And the LORD opened the seven floodgates of heaven, and the mouths of the springs of the great deep were seven mouths in number, and these floodgates sent down water from heaven forty days and forty nights, and the springs of the deep sent up water until the whole world was full of water (Jub 5:24-25).

In this passage, the text can be seen to depict the flood in terms of abyssal waters of the deep, which are unleashed to bring about a cosmic reorientation. In this way, “the mouths of the springs of the great deep” clearly parallel the great fountains of the deep (מעֵיֵן תְּהוֹם),¹⁷¹ and seem to reinforce the prevalent motif of floodwater as enabling a cosmic reset.¹⁷² This period of forty days and forty nights is significant as well, and likely a deliberate choice, given the text’s intense preoccupation with establishing a correct calendar for observing religious festivals. Although this interval of time is attested by Gen 7:12 (וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל-הָאָרֶץ) (ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה), it is not the only figure cited within the (composite) flood account of Genesis. (A mere twelve verses later in Gen 7:24, P conversely states that the flood lasted one hundred and fifty days.¹⁷³)

Forty days and nights is perhaps the standard (harmonised) version of the story, but I do not think it is a coincidence that this is also the number of days for the first man’s purification prior to his entry into Eden (as described in Jub 3:9-10).¹⁷⁴ I demonstrated in

¹⁷¹ This phrase is found in Gen 7:11. 8:2, etc.

¹⁷² For more on this, refer back to secs. 3.2-3.4 of this thesis.

¹⁷³ Forty days is the timeline for J, not P. See Guy Darshan, “The Calendrical Framework of the Priestly Flood Story in Light of a New Akkadian Text from Ugarit (RS 94.2953),” *JAO* 136, no. 3 (2016): 507-514; Lloyd M. Barré, “The Riddle of the Flood Chronology,” *JSOT* 41 (1988): 3-20.

¹⁷⁴ This forty day waiting period is also mandated in Lev 12:2-4 as being standard, including seven days of impurity, and thirty-three days of blood purification. For more on Lev 12 and women’s post-parturitional impurity, refer again to Whitekettle, “Leviticus 12 and the Israelite Woman,” 393-408.

Part One how eschatological cleansing imagery in prophetic and poetic biblical texts – informed by ritual language of purification – attains metaphorical significance as an agent of land purification. Here, I suggest that this allotment of forty days is not merely incidental, but intentional; the author of Jubilees would seem to imply cosmic **תהום** waters as the cleansing agent in cases of moral pollution, and that the forty days and nights of deluge indicate a cosmic renewal, through the “washing away” of moral pollution. Indeed, much like forty days were required for man to further sanctify himself, so as to be pure enough to enter the supposed holiest place on earth, forty days are similarly needed for the earth to purify itself.¹⁷⁵ Again, this invocation of cultic ritual guidelines for purification in Jubilees’s account of flood can be understood in light of the common conception of the created cosmos *qua* primeval sanctuary. As such, if moral pollution leads to defilement of the land of Israel, cosmic waters of the deep (in the form of floodwater) would seem to be the antidote.¹⁷⁶ Thus, while the sanctification described in Jubilees is primarily *moral* in character, this view of moral sanctification is nonetheless guided by a ritual framework of cleansing, reflecting the degree of fluidity between these two categories of purity.

¹⁷⁵ Along with the number seven (discussed in Part One), forty also bears connotations of completion or fullness (which can in turn be associated with holiness). See Richard Whitekettle, “Levitical Thought and the Female Reproductive Cycle: Wombs, Wellsprings, and the Primeval World,” *V/T* 46 (1996): 376-391 (381).

¹⁷⁶ This notion of the flood serving as moral purification is echoed even more directly of the Genesis Apocryphon (col. X, 13) where Noah describes his “atonement” for the earth following the deluge: **ועל כול ארעה כולהא כפרת**. Although the Aramaic text is quite fragmentary, it seems to depict a priestly sacrificial rite involving the blood of a goat and two turtledoves, and which culminates (col. X, 18) in God’s blessing: **באדין אליא בן רד**. Although Gen 8:20-21 similarly depicts Noah’s sacrificial offering, and God’s subsequent covenant, Genesis does not use specific atonement language to describe the sacrifice in the same way as the Apocryphon does. Aramaic text drawn from Daniel Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13-17*, *STDJ* 79 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 52-53.

4.3. Sanctification and Diluvial Imagery in Jubilees and 1 Enoch

There are several passages in Jubilees that describe sanctification in light of a new creation, drawing on prophetic metaphors of (national) renewal. While water is not always explicitly mentioned, I contend that the flood remains as the backdrop, functioning prominently as cosmic detergent for grand-scale moral pollution. The text frequently emphasises the restoration of holiness that will take place in Israel at the time of the eschaton, beginning in the first chapter:

And the angel of the presence, who went before the camp of Israel, took the tablets of the division of years from the time of the creation of the law and testimony according to their weeks (of years), according to the jubilees, year by year, throughout the full number of jubilees, from [the day of creation until] the day of the new creation when the heaven and earth and all of their creatures shall be renewed according to the powers of heaven and according to the whole nature of earth, until the sanctuary of the LORD is created in Jerusalem upon Mount Zion. And all of the lights will be renewed for healing and peace and blessing for all of the elect of Israel, and in order that it might be thus from that day and unto all the days of the earth (Jub 1:29).

This passage does not expressly connect the “new creation” with water, as observed in Ezek 47 and Zech 13, but the emphasis on re-creation would seem to recall both the primordial **תהום** of the original creation, as well as the prophetic renderings of moral purification in ritual, water-based imagery. Unlike in canonical prophetic and poetic texts, there is no direct appeal to priestly language of ritual purification (i.e., **כבס**, **רחץ**, etc.), but the process of moral sanctification similarly depends on water, as the text’s eschatological vision of land purification is clearly modelled on the diluvial prototype established by P.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, it

¹⁷⁷ It is important to note that fire frequently also plays a significant role in eschatological visions of the earth’s destruction, as in Josephus’s *Ant.* 1:70-71: “...Adam having predicted a destruction of the

appears that waters of the deep once again take on an intermediary (liminal) role within Jubilees, facilitating between the two extremes of moral pollution and sanctification (albeit more implicitly than observed earlier in biblical purity law).

The link between sanctification and moral renewal is also discernible later in the text, within the context of Enoch's impending judgment. Indeed, the text expands upon the scant account of Enoch in Genesis, where he is depicted only as having "walked with God," before being taken enigmatically by God (Gen 5:22). In Jubilees, Enoch – having been "taken from among the children of men" to Eden – remains in the garden to this day, "writing condemnation and judgment of the world, and all of the evils of the children of men" (Jub 4:23). The text purports that on account of Enoch, and his dual role as judge and priest of Eden,¹⁷⁸ none of the floodwaters came upon Eden (Jub 4:24). Yet within this description of God's holy places, the author of Jubilees claims that Mount Zion will in fact be "sanctified in the new creation for the sanctification of the earth," and furthermore, that "on account of this the earth will be sanctified from all sin and from pollution" (Jub 4:26). Although water is not *directly* tied to this sanctification process, the fact that Eden (already the holiest place on earth) remains unaffected by the flood, as well as the broader associations between re-creation, flood, and sin, signals that water *does* play a role in this moral sanctification. Furthermore, the connection between sanctification and Mount Zion in particular indicates the national dimension to this language, as this opportunity for moral

universe, at one time by a violent fire and at another by a mighty deluge of water..." In the Book of the Similitudes (1 En. 67:13), the angel Michael similarly links fire with destruction (alongside water), claiming: "...these waters of judgment are poison to the bodies of the angels as well as sensational to their flesh; (hence) they will neither see nor believe that these waters become transformed and become a fire that burns forever."

¹⁷⁸ Indeed, Enoch is portrayed as a priest of Eden (the holiest of all earthly sanctuaries), offering incense before God. Cf. Jub. 4:25.

renewal is available exclusively to God’s chosen people of Israel, who abide by the terms of his covenant.

This image of Enoch helping to usher in a new creation at the appointed time can be traced back to other Enochic-inspired literature,¹⁷⁹ which further expands upon the account found in Genesis. Earlier Enochic books, such as the Astronomical Book (1 En 72-82) and the Book of the Watchers (1 En 1-36) bear strong similarities to Jubilees, with the presumed direction of influence flowing from these Enochic texts to Jubilees.¹⁸⁰ However, the connections between Jubilees and 1 Enoch are not simply limited to these sections. Like Jubilees, 1 Enoch also provides a link between moral sanctification and abyssal floodwater, as one of Enoch’s dream visions in the Book of Similitudes also describes the judgment of the flood. Again, primordial water imagery is employed to illustrate a cosmic undoing of creation, and the elimination of moral pollution:

And in those days, the punishment of the Lord of Spirits shall be carried out, and they [the angels: presumably Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel] shall open all the storerooms of water above, in addition to the fountains of water which are on earth.

And all the waters shall be united with (all) other waters. That which is from the heavens

¹⁷⁹ See Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), esp. 170: “The sectarian literature of Qumran gave a distinctive emphasis to the generative idea of Enochic Judaism, that is, the superhuman origin of evil. The concepts of cosmic dualism and individual predestination ultimately made God the origin of evil on both the cosmic and the individual level.” See also John J. Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls* WUNT 332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), esp. ch. 10: “Enochic Judaism” and the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls (150-163). While I do not presume the Qumran community to have been “Enochic” *per se*, it is helpful to recognise similarities between Jubilees and 1 Enoch in this way, and the common emphasis on Enochic revelation. I therefore use the designation “Enochic” carefully, as I do not wish to overly “schematize” historical evidence, as cautioned by Collins (163); rather, I intend merely to acknowledge Enochic elements.

¹⁸⁰ John S. Bergsma, “The Relationship between Jubilees and the Early Enochic Books (Astronomical Book and Book of the Watchers),” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 36. In particular, John S. Bergsma views the influence of 1 Enoch on Jubilees to be primarily limited to the narratives from Enoch to Noah (roughly corresponding to Gen 5-9 in the Pentateuch), p50).

above is masculine water, (whereas) that which is underneath the earth is feminine. And they shall obliterate all those that dwell upon the earth as well as those that dwell underneath the ultimate ends of heaven. On account of the fact that they did not recognise their oppressive deeds which they carried out on the earth, they shall be destroyed by (the Flood) (1 En 54:7-10).¹⁸¹

Unlike in Jubilees however, this diluvial account describes not merely a flooding of the earth, and the punishment of humanity, but also a contemporaneous flooding of the cosmic realm, due to the fall of the angels. This passage is significant, as it reiterates the notion of water for moral sanctification, and the expiation (or in this case, “obliteration”) of sin. Again, it shows how the sanctification of the earth by primeval flood serves as a key template for eschatological visions of sanctification, having been established earlier in P’s account of flood. Indeed, the flooding imagery in this passage of “storerooms” being opened, and unleashing celestial waters previously bound in the skies, serves to mirror the overflowing of earthly fountains, indicating a cosmic rejuvenation in both the heavenly and earthly realms. This synchronisation of sanctification between heaven and earth is important, not only in terms of water’s function in Enochic-inspired literature, but for apprehending the very idea of “sanctification.”

¹⁸¹ Although this work was probably composed in Semitic languages (either Hebrew, Aramaic, or a mix of both), the only extant manuscripts that preserve the entire text are in Ethiopic. As such, I rely on the following English version: E. Isaac, trans. “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *OTP* 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 5-89. The Book of Similitudes/Parables, where this passage appears, is generally dated between 105-64 BCE (see Isaac’s introduction, 7). Ted M. Erho characterises this passage in 1 Enoch as an example of “a common (proto-)apocalyptic literary formula dealing with the eschatological battle whose conclusion would usher in a new age of fulfillment for the chosen elect of God.” See Erho, “The Ahistorical Nature of 1 Enoch 56:5-8 and Its Ramifications upon the *Opinio Communis* on the Dating of the *Similitudes of Enoch*,” *JSJ* 40 (2009): 24.

4.4. Moral Sanctification and the Re-Establishment of Sacred Order

Using Jubilees and 1 Enoch, I have demonstrated how water is conceptually significant for moral sanctification, as it effects chaos for the sake of moral *renaissance*. However, it is also important to describe what is meant by “sanctification;” in spite of these texts’ common usage of water, the goal of moral sanctification is considerably different than for ritual ablution or cleansing. The process of moral sanctification is a more nationalised endeavour, which seeks to reaffirm the holiness of God’s chosen land of Israel (as opposed to merely the tabernacle or temple) in concurrence with the holiness of heaven, in order to ensure that God continues his dwelling there. Indeed, I observed above that ritual purity is not prioritised in Jubilees, because ritual concerns are predicated upon the existence of a sanctuary (be it tabernacle or temple). With no formal sanctuary to be defiled, there is consequently no reason for formal ritual purification law (with the one exception being post-parturition laws in Jub 3, which must be observed prior to entry into the sanctuary of Eden). Ritual defilement is not evil or problematic in and of its own accord, but rather for its specific implications for the holiness of the sanctuary, and how it impinges on the sanctity of any holy space. Yet whereas ritual pollution besmirches the specific physical sanctuary, rendering it an unfit site for cultic worship, moral pollution corrupts the land of Israel on a wider scale.¹⁸² I have already noted how the ramifications of moral defilement (טמא) are more far-reaching and communal than the individualised punishments for ritual pollution, affecting the land itself (which must be punished for its iniquity or עון) and not just the

¹⁸² i.e., I discussed in ch.1 how Lev 18:25 describes the effects of moral pollution (re: sexual sins) as such: “Thus, the land became defiled, and I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants” (ותטמא הארץ ואפקד עונה עליה ותקא הארץ את־ישביה).

polluting party. Moral defilement is thus especially problematic, since God himself dwells in Israel, and God (as the most holy being) cannot reside anywhere that is defiled. If ritual purification was aimed at restoring the holiness of the sanctuary, moral sanctification must therefore do the same for the entire land of Israel, or else risk breaching the covenant.¹⁸³

For the author of Jubilees, the key to achieving – and more importantly, maintaining – this state of (national) sanctification lies in synchronising sacred with profane time – and by extension, cultic practice in both the earthly and celestial realms. James M. Scott describes how the original “divine ideal”¹⁸⁴ for Jubilees consists of:

...the complete restoration of sacred time and sacred space, so that what is done in the earthly cultus exactly corresponds to the way that things are done in the heavenly cultus, that is, in accordance with the will of God from creation as inscribed on the heavenly tablets [a goal that Scott similarly identifies in 1 Enoch]. There is, therefore, a strong sense in Jubilees not only that earth should perfectly mirror heaven, but that *Enzeit* should completely recapitulate *Urzeit*, that is, restore the world to its original, pristine condition before the fall of Adam.¹⁸⁵

Scott identifies sabbath and the details of its observance (the climax of creation) as a pivotal instance of attempted synchronisation in Jubilees.¹⁸⁶ The text claims that God himself keeps

¹⁸³ Again, it is worth noting that ritual requirements serve as one component of covenantal law, and are thus important for moral sanctification – while I am trying to disentangle them somewhat, these two notions of ritual and moral purification remain fairly intertwined, and I do not wish to drastically oversimplify, or ignore the points of intersection between them.

¹⁸⁴ Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 1.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 8. See also Lutz Doering, “Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 269. Doering similarly describes the defilement of holy time, and how “holy time *itself* can be defiled by improper actions.” According to Milgrom, however, pollution generally requires physical contact with impurity, meaning that time cannot typically be polluted. Instead, time is susceptible to desecration (חלל). In Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, however, there seems to be a “conceptual instability,” which can be traced back to passages such as Ezek 43:7, which substitute the root טמא for חלל. See Milgrom, “The Concept of Impurity in ‘Jubilees’ and the Temple Scroll,” 279-280 (in addition to Doering).

sabbath on the seventh day, noting, “he sanctified it for all ages. And he set it (as) a sign for all his works (Jub 2:1).” Later in the chapter, God instructs the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification directly to keep the Sabbath with him in earth and in heaven, linking sabbath observance with sanctification, as well as prevalent scriptural themes of covenant and election:

“Behold I shall separate for myself a people from among all the nations. And they will also keep the Sabbath. And I will sanctify them for myself, and I will bless them. Just as I have sanctified and shall sanctify the sabbath day for myself thus shall I bless them. And they will be my people and I will be their God. And I have chosen the seed of Jacob from among all that I have seen and I have recorded him as my firstborn son, and have sanctified him for myself forever and ever. And I will make known to them the Sabbath day so that they might observe therein a sabbath from all work” (Jub 2:19-20).

This connection between observance of sabbath and covenant is drawn from Exod 31:13, which similarly identifies God’s Sabbaths as “a sign (אֹת) between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may not that I, the LORD, sanctify you (מִקְדָּשְׁכֶם).” The nature of this אֹת is that of a “perpetual covenant” (בְּרִית עוֹלָם). In this way, it is evident how Jubilees participates in the rewriting of authoritative scripture, framing sabbath in terms of covenantal obedience, which in turns generates God’s “sanctification” of his chosen people (rendering them uniquely holy and worthy of worship at his sanctuary). Jubilees diverges from Exodus however, asserting that sabbath is honoured not only on earth, but also in the celestial realm of heaven: “On this day we kept the sabbath in heaven before it was made known to any human to keep the sabbath thereon upon the earth” (Jub 2:30). As

¹⁸⁶ Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 2-3.

such, proper adherence to the sabbath is intended to be in *imitatio dei et angelorum*,¹⁸⁷ “so that they [Israel] might keep the sabbath together with us [i.e., the angels]” (Jub 2:21). The text’s emphasis on creation, and the waters of the deep (תהום) in particular, can thus be understood within this framework of harmonised cultic worship between the earthly and celestial realms. If God’s establishment of the sabbath on the seventh day serves as the culmination of his creation, it must also serve as the foundation for sacred time, on both earth and heaven.¹⁸⁸

The occurrence of flood imagery in the context of moral (i.e., covenantal) sanctification can also be viewed in light of sacred time and divine promise. Specifically, in Gen 9:11-17, God identifies the rainbow as a sign of his eternal covenant with every living creature on earth: ולא-יהיה עוד המים למבול לשחת כל-בשר (Gen 9:15). As illustrated above (sec. 4.1), Jubilees similarly describes the setting of God’s bow in the sky for a sign of the covenant: “that the water of the Flood should therefore not be upon the earth to destroy it all the days of the earth (Jub 6:15-16).” I discussed earlier how the author of Jubilees inserts an etiological addendum to this covenantal promise, relating the feast of weeks (שבועת) explicitly with covenant renewal, as follows: “Therefore, it is ordained and written in the heavenly tablets that they should observe the feast of Shebuot in this month, once per year, in order to renew the covenant in all (respects), year by year” (Jub 6:17). This passage is significant not only for recognising how the text weaves together *halakhic* and *aggadic* elements, but also for apprehending the relationship between sanctification and the cosmic

¹⁸⁷ Scott, *On Heaven as in Earth*, 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

waters of the deep. Indeed, the etiological addition in Jub 6 ties covenant renewal for Israel with a festival intended to commemorate the end of the flood, thereby justifying the association between floodwater (i.e., the abyssal תהום) and moral sanctification. Scott highlights how Israel's adherence to this festival (as with the observance of sabbath) seems to be centred on the "correlation between cultic practice in heaven and earth,"¹⁸⁹ as indeed, Jubilees confirms that this feast was also celebrated in heaven, "from the day of creation until the days of Noah, twenty-six jubilees and one week of years until the day of the death of Noah" (Jub 6:18). Following Noah, this fundamental covenantal requirement of Shebuot was not observed until the time of Abraham, who alone kept it (Jub 6:18-19), and impelled his sons to follow suit. Although the text claims that the children of Israel have forgotten the feast, it also indicates that Moses has renewed the covenant at Sinai (Jub 6:19), consequently imploring him to remind the children of Israel to abide by God's covenantal conditions (Jub 6:20). If moral sanctification implies the enforced harmonisation of all cultic practices on heaven and earth, the significance of water for this type of sanctification is obvious: the festival of Shebuot reaffirms covenantal relations with God, as a commemoration of the first Noahic promise and cosmic renewal. The deluge, as an undoing of God's created order, and an unleashing of the waters of the deep, thus serves as a central model for moral sanctification and the harmonisation of the cosmos.

Moral pollution is therefore problematic, not merely because it is deemed *immoral* in human terms, but because it jeopardises the potential for synchronisation between the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 1.

earthly and celestial realms.¹⁹⁰ Within Enochic accounts of the Watchers, primordial floodwater (i.e., תהום) is once again harnessed by God on heaven and on earth, in order to facilitate re-harmonisation and the restitution of sacred time. Indeed, both Jubilees and 1 Enoch locate the origin of evil and sin with angelic beings originally sent by God, who come and cohabit with the daughters of men, leading to a mongrel race of giants. I contend that this breach is significant in both narratives, as it extends the notion of synchronicity beyond its natural limit, to the point of unholy union. Harmonisation by definition implies the bringing together of differentiated elements, and making them compatible, but the birth of the giants reflects a breakdown of distinct human-divine distinctions – and, by extension, cosmic order. This myth of the Watchers is rooted in the base Genesis text, which briefly mentions how the בני-אלהים (sons of God) took human women as wives, creating a hybrid breed of demigods (נפילים). Genesis identifies the נפילים with הגבורים אשר מעולם אנשי השם, rendered by the NRSV as the “heroes that were of old, warriors of renown” (Gen 6:1-4). This narrative aside immediately precedes the flood story, but is not directly linked with the reasoning for the flood; earlier in Gen 4:5, the text attributes the flood to God’s recognition of the collective wickedness of humankind, and his regret in creating people.

In contrast to Genesis, Jubilees and 1 Enoch clearly identify the birth of the נפילים (or in this case, giants/ענקים) as the original source of human sin, and the impetus for the deluge. Although God had intended the human and heavenly realms to mirror one another, the birth of the giants represents an improper muddling of human-divine categories. Indeed, Jubilees

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 5-9.

describes how, injustice increased upon the earth following the birth of these semi-angelic beings, as “all flesh had corrupted its order and all who were on the earth had done every sort of evil in his sight,” to the point that all flesh began to eat one another (Jub 5:2-3). As a direct consequence of this corruption, God decides to wipe out all the creatures of the earth (Jub 5:4), and punish the rebellious angel, by binding them in the depths of the earth (Jub 5:6). 1 Enoch paints a similarly disturbing picture, where the 300-cubit high giants begin to eat human beings, devouring their flesh and drinking their blood (1 En 7:2-5). Here, it is the angels Michael, Surafel, and Gabriel who complain to God about the misdeeds of the other angels, spurring him to action (1 En 9:1-10:22).¹⁹¹ As such, both texts reflect the actions of the tarnished angels (and the resulting race of giants) in terms of defilement and pollution.¹⁹² In other words, the breakdown of standard mortal and divine bifurcation leads to chaos, as the binary realms of heaven and earth are not merely harmonised, but in fact amalgamated.

¹⁹¹ Although 1 Enoch also portrays the flood and punishment of the angels, it provides a much more elaborate, colourful depiction of the angel’s misdeeds and retribution than Jubilees does, with specific details for each rebellious angel’s sins and sentences: e.g. “And to Michael God said, ‘Make known to Semyaza and the others who are with him, who fornicated with the women, that they will die together with them in all their defilement. And when they and all their children have battled with each other, and when they have seen the destruction of their loved ones, bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded. In those days they will lead them into the bottom of the fire – and in torment – in the prison (where) they will be locked up forever. And at the time when they will burn and die, those who collaborated with them will be bound together with them from henceforth unto the end of (all) generations.’” (10:11-15). Whereas Jubilees included the fate of the Watchers with “man and all flesh” (5:4), 1 Enoch also deals more directly with the fate of the Watchers: “And to Gabriel the Lord said, ‘Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates and against the children of adultery; and destroy the children of adultery and expel the children of the Watchers from among the people. And send them against one another (so that) they may be destroyed in the fight, for length of days have they not. They will beg you everything – for their fathers on behalf of themselves – because they hope to live an eternal life...’” (10:9-10).

¹⁹² Cf. Jub. 4:22: “...and bore witness to the Watchers, the ones who sinned with the daughters of men because they began to mingle themselves with the daughters of men so that they might be polluted.” See also 1 En. 10:8, “And the whole earth has been corrupted by Azaz’el’s teaching of his [own] actions.”

The deluge thus serves as a cosmic reset, and a harnessing of water's liminal properties to facilitate cosmic stability, wherein the boundaries between human and angelic realms can be re-established. Punishments are doled out to the rebellious angels and their offspring in both Jubilees and 1 Enoch,¹⁹³ and the waters from above and below are opened, reflecting a synchronised flooding of the terrestrial and celestial realms.¹⁹⁴ This notion of cosmological (re-)order is evident in 1 En. 11, which outlines God's plan for opening the "storerooms of blessing which are in the heavens" (i.e., rain), so that "peace and truth shall become partners together in the days of the world, and in all the generations of the world (1 En 11:1-2)." As in Genesis, water serves to sanctify and correct the chaos stemming from moral pollution, effecting primordial turmoil to bring about consonance and order. Within Jubilees and 1 Enoch, however, the corresponding punishments of angels alongside humans reflect a heightened concern for sanctification, through the alignment of earthly and celestial time. Recognising how primeval sins are sanctified by flood, in an apparent development of the priestly vision of created cosmos *qua* holy temple, can therefore help account for why eschatological expectations of divine restoration continue to be framed in cosmic terms of deluge and abyssal (flood-)water.

¹⁹³ Again, see Jub 5:6-11; 1 En 10:1-22.

¹⁹⁴ See Jub 5:24-26; 1 En 11.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explored ritual and moral dimensions of purity in Jubilees, demonstrating the prevalence of moral defilement over ritual pollution at the macro level. I have illustrated how moral pollution is a threat not just for the sanctity of the temple, but for the well-being of the land of Israel more broadly, and have also highlighted how ritual dimensions of purity can still impede upon moral holiness. Although water is not necessarily the major focus of Jubilees, I nonetheless contend that it plays an integral role in visions of sanctification through flood, as a harbinger of eschatological renewal and cleansing. Water's liminal capacity for chaos is administered entirely by God, who draws upon the cosmic waters of the deep at will, for both engulfment and absolution. Thus, at a more micro level, I maintain that the relationship between diluvial and eschatological imagery within Jubilees (as well as other Enochic-inspired literature) is almost symbiotic. Indeed, while flood depictions effectively dictate the palette for apocalyptic sanctification imagery, this association goes both ways, as diluvial descriptions are presumably also structured to lend themselves to these eschatological portents of cleansing and sanctification.

5. WATER IMAGERY IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Whereas chapter four looked solely at *aggadic* writings (for which only fragmentary copies were attested at Qumran), in this chapter, I shift to non-narrative Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) texts, looking at key representative passages from the Rule of the Community (1QS), the Damascus Document (CD), and the Thanksgiving Psalms (Hodayot: 1QH^a). Here, I explore how standard ritual cleansing imagery (namely, **מי נדה** and **מים חיים**) becomes reinterpreted, as a symbolic means for denoting moral sanctification, through the observance of God’s covenantal law. As such, this chapter is by no means intended as an exhaustive survey of water and cleansing imagery, but rather, a focused study of the phrases **מי נדה** and **מים חיים**. It is also worth noting that, while I do emphasise similarities between how different textual passages employ water imagery, I do not presume that all such texts are necessarily reflective of a single, stable community.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Gwynned de Looijer defines the standard consensus view, which greatly defined the first stage of Qumran scholarship (1947-1967), as the prevailing notion that Khirbet Qumran was the residence of an all-male, celibate minority group or sect, which was perhaps related to the Essenes, who had segregated themselves from the Jewish majority, and were waiting for the *eschaton*, viewing themselves as God’s chosen ones. See Gwynned de Looijer, *The Qumran Paradigm: A Critical Evaluation of Some Foundational Hypotheses in the Construction of the Qumran Sect*, EJL 43 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 2. While various hypotheses have been set forward (i.e., the Essene [consensus] hypothesis, the Groningen hypothesis, the multi-community [Essene] hypothesis, and the Sadducean hypothesis (de Looijer, 5-15), Scrolls scholarship has remained fairly entrenched within the early consensus view, leading many scholars to take for granted the sectarian (Essene) character of these writings. According to Ian C. Werrett, this presumption of Essene authorship reinforces a “reverse methodology,” as the presumption that DSS represent the library of a cohesive sectarian community shapes how we interpret the texts themselves, leading to overly systemic, harmonised readings that fail to account for the diversity and dissonance of texts. See Ian C. Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 10-14. Following the model of de Looijer, Werrett, etc., I wish to avoid assuming uniformity between various Dead Sea Scrolls compositions, assessing the primary literature on a text-by-text basis, while also allowing for patterns and similarities. For more on the consensus view (and some of its inherent methodological issues), see also Charlotte Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Tradition, and Redaction*, STDJ 29 (Leiden: Boston, 1998). 3-8; Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yabad: A New Paradigm of Textual Development for The Community Rule*, STDJ 73 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 7-16.

Whereas previous chapters drew on liminality as a conceptual tool through which to analyse water, the notion of liminality is less directly relevant here. This is not to say that liminality is entirely inapplicable, as indeed, these water-related metaphors are informed by the preceding literary tradition of ancient Israel, where water frequently *does* exhibit liminal qualities. Therefore, where it is pertinent, I *do* highlight liminal characteristics of water. However, I am also wary of overemphasising liminality in texts where this concept is not particularly germane. My central focus in this chapter is therefore on the reworking of Jewish literary motifs pertaining to purification and water, and how such metaphorical renderings of priestly language serve to underscore the overlap between ritual and moral dimensions of purity.

5.1. מִי נֹדָה in The Treatise of Two Spirits: Ritual Metaphor, Moral Significance

A helpful entry point for exploring the relative fluidity of purity and water terminology is through the construct phrase מִי נֹדָה, and its application within the Treatise of the Two Spirits (TTS) within the Rule of the Community (1QS III 13 – IV 26).¹⁹⁶ I described earlier (ch.1) how this phrase is understood within Num 19 to refer to the waters of lustration (i.e., purification), ceremonially sprinkled over an impure person who has come into contact with any human corpse, grave, or bones (cf. Num 19:2-22). These lustration waters consist of a mixture of living water (מֵיִם חַיִּים) and the ashes of a slaughtered red

¹⁹⁶ The phrase מִי נֹדָה is attested in several texts from Qumran aside from 1QS: 4Q276 1 9; 4Q277 1 ii 6; 4Q284 1 I 6; 11Q19 XLIX 18; 4Q414 2 ii 3 4 5 8 (contains a parallel with 4Q512 42-44 ii 5), etc. Due to the limited scope of this chapter, I am focusing solely on its appearance(s) in TTS where it traverses ritual and moral boundaries in a particularly noteworthy fashion. For more on TTS (1QS III 13 – IV 26), see Albert L.A. Hogeterp, “The Eschatology of the Two Spirits Treatise Revisited,” *RevQ* 23 (2007): 247-259.

heifer (Num 19:17). Milgrom posits that the key ingredient of these waters is the cow's blood, which functions as the "ritual detergent *par excellenece*,"¹⁹⁷ effectively removing the impurity from the contaminated subject(s). For Milgrom, this process represents the victory of life forces (i.e., blood) over death (pollution),¹⁹⁸ as he views water's ritual function in terms of a symbolic association with blood.¹⁹⁹ In chapter one, I made two key observations about **מִי נֹדָה** and the ritual procedure for corpse contamination; first, that the most extreme consequences for this defilement (i.e., excommunication) resembled the punishments for *moral*, as opposed to *ritual*, impurity, indicating some degree of intersection between moral and ritual conceptions of purification; and second, that the **מִי נֹדָה** helped facilitate the moment of ritual transformation. I suggested that the concept of liminality could help illuminate water's role within this conditional shift, from physiological defilement to restored purity. I maintain that these two phenomena – the intersection of moral and ritual notions of purification, and water's liminal capacity for ablution and transformation – are similarly attested in the Rule of the Community (**סֵרֶךְ הַיְחָד**, or 1QS).²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 160.

¹⁹⁸ See Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 46.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ 1QS was initially published in 1951 as the *Manual of Discipline*, with the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) and scroll of *Blessings* (1QSB) shortly thereafter. 1QS originally published in: M. Burrows, J.C. Trever, W.H. Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of Saint Mark's Monastery*, vol. 2, fasc. 2 (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951). 1QSa and 1QSB published in: D. Barthélemy, O.P and J.T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (DJD) I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955). All quotations from 1QS are derived from the edition edited by Martin Abegg, and translated by M. Wise, M. Abegg, E. Cook, with N. Gordon ("Serekh ha-Yahad"), which appears in Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds. *DSSR* 1, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 2-35. All passages in this thesis from the Dead Sea Scrolls are derived from the editions and translations presented in *DSSR*.

Within Num 19, the primary aim of **מי נדה** was primarily ritual, being directed toward the maintenance of cultic purity, through the eradication of corpse defilement. In 1QS, however, the lustration waters reflect a greater confluence of ritual and moral purity, as the text applies this initially ritual “detergent” of **מי נדה** to defilement more broadly. This integrative view of purification, comprising both ritual and moral elements, is especially evident in TTS, which posits that the sprinkling of **מי נדה** must also be accompanied by the correct “spirit” of God’s true society: **רוח עצת אמת אל** (1QS III 6). For anyone who does not possess this spirit of truth, “Ceremonies of atonement cannot restore his innocence, neither cultic waters his purity: **לוא יתחשב לא יזכה בכפורים ולוא יטהר במי נדה**” (1QS III 4). The invocation of **מי נדה** in this passage is somewhat atypical; since the root (**כפר**) is commonly used in MT to describe sacrificial offerings of atonement, the adjacent reference to **כפורים** would seem to reinforce the cultic, ritual context for the **מי נדה**.²⁰¹ Yet the insufficiency of ritual methods alone for the elimination of impurity also seems incompatible with established priestly law, which portrays ritual cleansing in a more causal formulaic manner.²⁰² Within TTS, the standard correlation between cause (purification rite) and effect (restored purity) cannot be presumed, as the text presents a caveat to purity: the presence of

²⁰¹ E.g. Exod 29:33, 36, 37, 30:10, etc; Lev 1:4, 4:20, 26, 31, 35, 5:6, 10, 13, 16, etc. (49x within Leviticus); Num 5:8, 6:11, 8:12, 19,21, etc. (16x within Numbers). However, it is worth noting that the lexeme **כפר** is not found anywhere in the Numbers account of corpse impurity rites; it thus appears that that this passage extends the function of **מי נדה** beyond the immediate context of corpse defilement.

²⁰² E.g. Num 19:12 “They shall purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean; but if they do not purify themselves on the third and seventh day, they will not become clean.” Here, there is a direct correspondence between ritual process and ritual effect. In 1QS, however, purificatory ritual can be rendered ineffective without the corresponding spirit of the *Yabad*.

God's spirit of truth.²⁰³ Specifically, any member of the group who rejects the spirit and laws of God, and refuses to be disciplined in the “*Yabad* of his society” (1QS III 6),²⁰⁴ is deemed incapable of sanctification, by either oceans or rivers: **ולוא יתקדש בימים ונהרות**; or even purified by ritual bathing: **ולוא יטהר בכול מי רחצ** (1QS III 4-6).

Instead, the text purports,

Through an upright and humble attitude his sin may be covered, and by humbling himself before all God's laws his flesh can be made clean (**יטהר בשרו**). Only thus can he really receive the purifying water (**להזות במי נדה**) and be purged by the cleansing flow (**ולהתקדש במי דוכי**). Let him order his steps to walk faultless in all of the ways of God (**ויהכין פעמיו להלכת תמים בכול דרכי אל**), just as He commanded for all the times appointed to him. Let him turn aside neither to the right nor the left, nor yet deviate in the smallest detail from all of His words. Then indeed will he be accepted by God, offering the sweet savour of atoning sacrifice, and then only shall he be a party to the Covenant of the eternal *Yabad*. (1QS III 8-12).²⁰⁵

²⁰³ According to TTS, the spirit of truth (**רוח האמת**) is one of *two* spirits, with the other being the spirit of falsehood (**רוח העול**). The text describes how humanity's actions are dictated by the two spirits, which have been appointed by God (1QS IV 25-26), and how these spirits guide people in one of two paths – either the path of light or the path of darkness (1QS III 19-23). It seems that the text is intended solely for those who have received the spirit of truth, and who are inclined to walk in the “paths of light,” as members of God's **יחד**, or as Sons of Light (**בני אור**) (III 24-25). These two spirits effectively distinguish between members of God's elect community, who have received his spirit of light (i.e., his covenant), and those outside the community.

²⁰⁴ The term **יחד** (*Yabad*), is present in the work's content and Hebrew title (**סרך היחד**), and is commonly used as a catch-all designation to denote the “Qumran community,” often with sectarian connotations. In the late 1950s, Frank Moore Cross argued that “the term *yabad*, ‘community’ seems to apply to the community *par excellence* – i.e., the principal settlement in the desert. The Qumran settlement is probably unique, not only in being the original exile in the desert, the home of the founder of the sect, but also in following a celibate rule” (see F.M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995, originally published in 1958], 97). John J. Collins describes how the community behind 1QS were both presumed to be the Essenes, which would demonstrate how this construction of *Yabad* identity hinges upon de Looijer's “Qumran triangle” (see de Looijer, *The Qumran Paradigm*, 1-4; as well as John J. Collins, “Beyond the Qumran Community: Social Organization in the Dead Sea Scrolls” *DSD* 16 [2009], 352-353). Schofield's *Beyond the Yabad* offers a more contemporary analysis of the term **יחד** and group identifications in S material more generally. It is important to recognise the significance of the **יחד** for the scholarly construction of a sectarian identity at Qumran.

²⁰⁵ This passage also has close parallels in 4Q255, frg 2, 1-9; 4Q257 III (frgs. 1a iii, 2a-g), 1-14.

The failure of ritual purity methods (and specifically, lustration waters) without the correct spirit thus indicates that we are dealing with moral impurity, as opposed to standard ritual defilement, which can always be expiated through ritual means.²⁰⁶ This passage therefore suggests a metaphorical deployment of ritual imagery, as the “defiling stains” (III 2) that must be cleansed seem to be spiritual in nature. As such, lustration waters (מי נדה) can be understood symbolically, having been largely divorced from their standard role within corpse impurity ritual, and extended as an “almost poetic” image for spiritual cleansing.²⁰⁷ The construction of non-biblical variations of standard washing vocabulary within this passage (i.e., מי רחץ and מי דוכי)²⁰⁸ further dilutes the specific cultic meaning of מי נדה; given the apparent lexical leniency here, it seems that the particular ritual ingredients of the מי נדה are ultimately less important than the *idea* of cleansing waters, which implies restored holiness and purity. In this way, Martha Himelfarb characterises the association of sin and impurity in 1QS as “primarily evocative rather than halakhic,” asserting that the text draws on established ritual purification imagery as a tangible means by which to depict moral sanctification. This is not to say that the washing depicted in TTS with מי נדה is *entirely* metaphorical, as this passage seems to refer specifically to an annual covenant rededication ceremony, where ablutions would certainly have taken place. However, the significance of

²⁰⁶ This does not mean there is *no* ritual component at play: rather, “for rituals to be efficacious, participants must accept the messages that inhere in them” (Ari Mermelstein, “Emotional Regimes, Ritual Practice, and the Shaping of Sectarian Identity: The Experience of Ablutions in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *BibInt* 24 (2016): 492-513 (509). In this way, the ritual is itself meaningless without the corresponding spirit of truth, which I will demonstrate is linked with covenantal obedience.

²⁰⁷ Himelfarb, “Impurity and Sin,” 31.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Cf. 1QS III. There are no biblical parallels for these phrases. See Martha Himelfarb, “Impurity and Sin in 4QD, 1QS, and 4Q512,” *DSD* 8, no. 1 (2001): 9-37 (30).

washing in this passage seems to be *primarily* symbolic, as the rite communicates not merely a shift in status, but also “a canonical message about divine election, human impurity, and the singular status of the sect.”²⁰⁹

The symbolic rendering of *מי נדה* is merely one example of how the passage deploys ritual language metaphorically, often as a kind of cultic double entendre. Another instance in TTS where we find cultic language being repurposed metaphorically occurs in col. III 9, with the term *תמים* (i.e., blameless/faultless) – a common term in priestly literature to describe animals fit for sacrifice.²¹⁰ This word is ripe with double meanings, as it appears in some biblical texts to denote faith and religious obedience,²¹¹ as well as the perfection of God’s path –²¹² all key components to covenantal obedience, which in turn facilitate moral sanctification. The text’s explicit appropriation of cultic language is further attested through references to the sacrificial *בשר* (i.e., the flesh of the slaughtered animal, perceived as holy, and offered sacrificially to God),²¹³ and to the sweet savour of atoning sacrifice (i.e., *ריח ניחוח*); both of which are applied symbolically in 1QS to indicate one’s acceptance into the

²⁰⁹ Mermelstein, “Emotional Regimes, Ritual Practice,” 507-508.

²¹⁰ i.e., Exod 12:5, 28:30, 29:1; Lev 1:10, 3:1, 6, 9, 4:3, 23, 28, 32, 5:15, 18, 6:6, 8:8, 9:2, 14:10, 22:19, 21, 23:12, 15, 18, 25:30; Num 6:14, 19:2, 28:3, 9, 19, 31 29:8, 13, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 36.

²¹¹ i.e., Josh 24:14, Jgs 9:16, 19, etc.

²¹² i.e., 2 Sam 22:31, 33; Ps 15:2, 18:23, 30, 32, 19:7, 119:1, 80; Prov 11:5, etc.

²¹³ i.e., Exod 29:14,3 4; Lev 7:15, 17, 18, 19, 20, etc. The word can also be used to describe the human body, as in this passage (see also Gen 2:21–24); or more broadly to all creatures, as in Gen 6:17, 19, 7:15, etc. The usage of this word in 1QS III, amidst other sacrificial language, seems to deliberately evoke its cultic meaning.

covenant of the eternal יחד.²¹⁴ This link with covenant, and adherence to God's law, is further strengthened through the text's reference to דרכי אל (1QS III 10), as indeed, the notion of following in God's דרך is a common (Deuteronomistic) formulation of adherence to God's law.²¹⁵ Thus, much like sacrificial rites provided a ritual means for the expiation of defilement within Levitical (P) law, TTS associates God's spirit of truth (and the adherence to his laws) with the atonement of sin.²¹⁶ Specifically, those who are governed by the spirit of falsehood (and who fail to observe covenantal law) are deemed impure.²¹⁷ The pure members of God's יחד are instructed to separate from them,²¹⁸ much like the children of Israel are instructed to separate themselves from their uncleannesses (cf. Lev 15:31). In this way, the metaphorical appropriation of ritual imagery represents the moral sanctification of

²¹⁴ This expression generally refers to God's acceptance of the sacrificial offering. Cf. Exod 29:18,25,41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; etc. This passage implies that God's יחד is likewise a pleasing odour for God, and that acceptance into the group has similar expiatory qualities.

²¹⁵ Covenant and covenantal theodicy are frequently framed in terms of following in God's דרך. Cf. Deut 5:33 – "You must follow exactly the path that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess." See also Deut 11:28; as well as the Deuteronomistic history, which presents covenantal theodicy in a similar fashion (i.e., 1 Kgs 2:4, 3:4, 8:25, 8:48, etc.).

²¹⁶ Cf. 1QS IV 2-5: [the spirit of truth] enlightens a man's mind, making straight before him the paths of true righteousness (להאיר בלבב אחד ולישר לפניו כול דרכי צדק אמת) and causing his heart to fear the laws of God (ולפחד לבבו במשפטי אל). This spirit engenders humility, patience, abundant compassion, perpetual goodness, insight, understanding, and powerful wisdom resonating to each of God's deeds, sustained by His constant faithfulness. It engenders a spirit knowledgeable in every plan of action, zealous for the laws of righteousness, holy in its thoughts and steadfast in purpose. This spirit encourages plenteous compassion upon all who hold fast to truth, and glorious purity (וטהרת כבוד) combined with visceral hatred of impurity in its every guise (מתעב כול גלולי נדה ובצנע לכת).

²¹⁷ Cf. 1QS III 5: "Unclean, unclean shall he be all the days that he rejects the laws of God, refusing to be disciplined in the *Yabad* of His society."

²¹⁸ 1QS V 1-2: "This is the rule for the men of the *Yabad*, who volunteer to repent from all evil and to hold fast to all that He, by His good will, has commanded. They are to separate from the congregation of perverse men."

the **יחד**, who faithfully observe the terms of God’s covenant, in stark contrast to those outside of God’s holy community.

The figurative application of ritual imagery, and **מי נדה** in particular, is further evident towards the end of TTS, as the text equates the sanctifying effects of God’s truth with the ritual potency of lustration waters. Specifically, 1QS IV 20-22 foretells the appointed time of God’s eschatological judgment,²¹⁹ drawing on cultic terminology to depict the moral sanctification of the righteous (and the righteous alone):

By His truth God shall then purify all human deeds, and refine some of humanity so as to extinguish every perverse spirit from the inward parts of the flesh, cleansing from every wicked deed by a holy spirit. Like purifying waters (**כמי נדה**), He shall sprinkle each with a spirit of truth, effectual against all the abominations (**תועבות**) of lying and sullyng by unclean spirit.

The comparative **כ** preposition in this passage indicates that this is a simile, and not a direct identification of **תועבות** (a term denoting moral offences) with corpse impurity, requiring ceremonial sprinkling. As such, **מי נדה** are probably not *literally* sprinkled, but are evoked as a *representation* of the transition from defilement to restored holiness.²²⁰ It thus seems that **מי נדה** imagery serves to illustrate the moment of transformation, as the text draws on water’s established role in purificatory ritual to express metaphorical sanctification. In this instance,

²¹⁹ Indeed, the text posits a future purification of all human deeds (IV 20), within an ensuing (קץ) of judgment (cf. 1QS 23; IV 18-20; 25). TTS claims that this eschatological judgment was predetermined by God, according to his glorious plan (**כמשחשבת כבודו**, III 16). While the text presents the two spirits of truth and falsehood (**רוחות האמת והעול**) dualistically, it stipulates that these two spirits will no longer be equal after “the time of decree and renewal” (IV 25).

²²⁰ Himelfarb clarifies, “the technical term ‘sprinkle,’ **ניזה**, used in the Torah of sacrificial blood (e.g., Lev 4:6, 17) as well as of the waters of purification (Num 19:4, 18, 19) is completed by the ‘spirit of truth,’ which is compared to ‘waters of purification,’ but is not a physical entity.” See Himelfarb, “Impurity and Sin,” 31.

however, the transformation occurs not merely through ritual means, but more abstractly, through God's truth.²²¹ It is notable that water and cleansing are once more affiliated with visions of renewal, through a conceptual link between water, the renewal of life, and the restoration of holiness, all of which can be traced back to P's primeval narratives of flood and creation (cf. ch.2). Moreover, even though water's actual capacity for purification is muted in this text, and presented in metaphorical terms, the association between renewal and the sprinkling of **מי נדה** (IV 21) mirrors prophetic imagery (cf. ch.3), whereby ritually-oriented cleansing was framed as a means for spiritual purgation (cf. Isa 4:3-4; Ezek 36:25).

I contend that the concept of liminality is relevant in apprehending the metaphorical significance of the **מי נדה** in TTS. Specifically, I posit that much of the effectiveness of **מי נדה**-as-metaphor lies in the text's association between water and purification. I observed in earlier chapters how water frequently operated at the liminal, transitional phase of the cleansing rite, serving to bring the contaminated party from pollution to renewed purity.²²² Although water's liminal power for *facilitating* conditional change is muted in 1QS, given the focus on moral **תועבות** (IV 22), the conceptual link between water and purification remains intact, such that ablutions appear to be themselves *illustrative* of this liminal phase. The statement that only *thus* (i.e., only through an upright and humble attitude, and humbling himself before God's laws, III 8) can a sinner *receive* the purifying waters (**להזות במי נדה**) and

²²¹ Cf. 1QS III 5-8: "Unclean, unclean shall he be all the days that he rejects the laws of God, refusing to be disciplined in the *Yabad* of his society. For only through the spirit pervading God's true society can there be atonement for a man's ways, all of his iniquities; thus only can he gaze upon the light of life and so be joined to his truth by His holy spirit, purified from all iniquity."

²²² A clear example of this is Lev 14:9, pertaining to skin eruptions, where washing one's clothes and bathing one's body fulfils the ritual formula of cleansing (**טהר** → **רחץ** + **כבס**), as described in ch.1.

be purged by the cleansing flow (ולהתקדש במי דוכי, III 9) would indicate the degree to which cultic cleansing serves as a hallmark metaphor for sanctification more broadly.²²³ Here, as in in Num 19, the moment of (liminal) transformation is still marked symbolically by these cleansing waters, even if the ritual act of lustration, without God's corresponding spirit of truth, is not sufficient for attaining the holiness of God's יחד.²²⁴

5.2. The Fountain(s) of Living Water in CD and 1QH^a: Ritual and Moral Intersections of Purity at Qumran

I have demonstrated above how the notion of מי נדה functions as a metaphor for sanctification in TTS, and how this sanctification is facilitated through the רוח האמת, which engenders covenantal obedience among the members of the יחד. However, it would seem that the image of living water (מים חיים) – one of the key ingredients for מי נדה, cf. Num 19:17 – also serves as a key symbol for divine covenant, knowledge, and moral sanctification in certain Dead Sea Scrolls texts, including the Damascus Document (CD) and the Hodayot (1QH^a). Although not directly related to liminality *per se*, I contend that the motif of living

²²³ Himelfarb points out the occurrence of the *hithpael* infinitive construct להתקדש (1QS III 9), which would seem to imply moral (and not explicitly ritual) implications for the מי נדה, given that the verbal root (קדש) is not used in connection with ablutions or sprinkling anywhere in the Pentateuch. (30). It is worth noting that 4Q284 1 7 similarly contains the term מי נדה, being followed by another (almost complete) *hithpael* form of the root קדש, again with no explicit (or at least, extant) references to the red heifer rite from Num 19. In this way, we find a broader association of מי נדה with holiness, and not merely the expelling of corpse impurity.

²²⁴ Again, see Himelfarb, “Impurity and Sin,” 30.

water (an originally *ritual* ingredient) is nonetheless significant, as it helps further illuminate the intertwining of ritual and moral dimensions of purity.

Before examining **מים חיים** in Qumran texts, it is first important to outline its metaphorical function within biblical literature. As discussed in ch.3, there is often a textual association between **מקור** and **מים חיים** (i.e., fountain of living water), within ritual as well as prophetic writings.²²⁵ However, the concept of **מקור מים חיים** can also function as a symbol for God himself, as in the book of Jeremiah. Specifically, God himself laments in Jer 2:13 that his people, Israel, have committed two evils: “they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water (**מקור מים חיים**), and dug out cisterns (**באורות**) for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water (**באורות נשברים אשר לא־יכלו המים**).” Similarly, in Jer 17:13, the prophet claims, “O hope of Israel (**מקוה ישראל**)! O LORD! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water (**כי עזבו מקור מים־חיים**), the LORD (**את־יהוה**).” Here, the fountain imagery is further extended through wordplay, as the term **מקוה** can designate “fountain” as well as “hope”²²⁶ – a fitting double meaning, given the nourishing, life-giving capacities of both water and God, which represent hope for Israel.²²⁷

²²⁵ The term **מקור** appears in Levitical law to denote a woman’s menstrual blood flow, which is ritually defiling (i.e., Lev 12:7, 20:18), but also in eschatological visions, like the one described in Zech 13:1. Although the Zechariah passage does not explicitly mention living waters, the notion of purification by means of fountains would seem to evoke fresh, flowing water (i.e., **מים חיים**). These passages are also discussed above in section 3.4.

²²⁶ Clines, *CDCH* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2009), 240. The term generally refers to a collection of waters, reservoir, or pool, but can also refer to a fountain or source (i.e., of water).

²²⁷ The double meaning is effective, because God can be seen as the “hope” of Israel. Martti Nissinen identifies water as a near-global metaphor for life, claiming that “the life-giving quality of water

Variations of this “fountain of living water” motif can be seen in the Damascus Document (CD) to denote God’s covenantal obligations – themselves the key to moral sanctification. For example, following a lengthy exposition on those who abandon God’s commandments, CD proclaims:

So it is with all the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus (אשר באו בברית החדשה בארץ דמשק) but then turned back and traitorously turned away from the fountain of living water (ויסורו מבאר מים החיים). They shall not be reckoned among the council of the people (לא יחשבו בסור עם) ... (CD XIX 33-35).

In this passage, the fountain of living water signifies God, and by extension, his commandments, which have been reaffirmed at Damascus. It is worth noting that the term rendered in this translation as fountain is actually באר (generally indicating a well or cistern),²²⁸ as opposed to the anticipated מקור. If מים חיים is intended to reflect the teachings of God (which provide the blueprint for conducting one’s life in accordance with his covenant), both fountains and wells (being sources of water) serve as fertile metaphors for God as provider of knowledge (and, indirectly, an agent of sanctification). This characterisation of God as a well of knowledge thus serves as a pun in Hebrew, as the *pi’el* form of the root באר can mean “to explain or clarify,”²²⁹ (cf. Deut 1:5, which provides an introduction to Moses’s expounding of the law in the land of Moab).²³⁰ Unlike in the book of

is attributed to supernatural agency, if not presented as having a divine substance itself.” He views these passages (Jer 2:16, 17:13) as a kind of “apotheosis of the ‘fountain of life’ that is found in Proverbs and Psalms.” For more, see Nissinen, “Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers,” 30.

²²⁸ Clines, *CDCH*, 39.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ The Hebrew in Deut 1:5 reads as follows: משה באר את־התורה הזאת לאמר

Jeremiah, where the digging of בארות held negative connotations however,²³¹ this activity acquires more positive associations in CD. In particular, the text claims that God's covenant revealed hidden things to Israel (namely, the wisdom of his instruction or תורה),²³² opening up the desires of God's will (חפצי רצונו) cf. CD III 15). Consequently:

...they [the members of God's new covenant]²³³ 'dug a well,' yielding much water (ויפחצו באר למים רבים). Those who reject the water He will not allow to live. And although they had wallowed in the sin of humanity and in impure ways and said, Surely this is our business, God in His mysterious ways atoned for their iniquity and forgave their transgression. So he built for them a faithful house in Israel, like none that had ever appeared before; and even at this day, those who hold firm to it shall

²³¹ In Jer 2:13, for example, the בארות being dug are cracked, and unable to hold water (ושברים אשר לא יוכלו המים).

²³² CD III 12-15: "But when those of them we were left held firm to the commandments of God he instituted His covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them things hidden, in which all Israel had gone wrong: *vacat* His holy Sabbaths, His glorious festivals, His righteous laws, His reliable ways." This emphasis on purity indicates the degree to which living water helps facilitate sanctification and moral purification.

²³³ This "new covenant" (ברית החדשה) is referenced on a number of occasions within CD (i.e. VI 19; XX, 12), leading some scholars to emphasise CD's sectarian character. For more on Qumran sectarianism, see Eyal Regev, *Sectarianism in Qumran: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Religion and Society 45 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007); Jutta Jokiranta, *Social Identity and Sectarianism in the Qumran Movement*, STDJ 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2013). It is also worth mentioning that the idea of a new covenant also connotes a heightened emphasis on *halakbic* exegesis – as well as on purity (cf. CD XX 6-7, 10-12; see also Hannah Harrington, *The Purity Texts*; Companion to the Scrolls 5). Indeed, the community portrays itself as a kind of holy sanctuary; with CD XV 17 declaring that there are holy angels living in their midst. Susan Haber has highlighted CD III-18-IV 12, as an instance where the text associates the community with the Temple, describing how God built a new safe home in Israel for them, "such as there has not been since ancient times." Cf. Susan Haber, "Metaphor and Meaning in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *They Shall Purify Themselves: Essays on Purity in Ancient Judaism*, EJL 24 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 107. Jacob Neusner identifies this association of the community with the Temple as an attempted "spiritualization of the old Temple" (Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism: The Haskell Lectures, 1972-1973*, SJLA 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 50; this idea is also discussed by Eyal Regev: "Abominated Temple and a Holy Community: The Formations of the Notions of Purity and Impurity in Qumran," *DSD* 10, no. 2 (2003): 271. Celia Wassen clarifies that the Qumran community does not consider itself *literally* as a temple; but that "certain aspects of the nature and function of the Temple are transferred to the community and appropriated." See Celia Wassen, "Do You Have to be Pure in a Metaphorical Temple?" in *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism, and Christianity: Essays in Memory of Susan Haber*, ed. Carl S. Ehrlich, Anders Runesson, and Eileen Schuller, WUNT 305 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 69. The notion of a spiritualised temple is particularly relevant in examining metaphorical applications of specific cultic language.

receive everlasting life, and all human honour is rightly theirs, as God promised them by Ezekiel the prophet... (CD III 16-21).

In this way, digging a well can be seen to represent “the deep cultivation of correct knowledge and praxis – knowing and doing the commandments of God (מצות אל).”²³⁴

Whereas in Jeremiah, the act of digging wells was regarded as futile, here it is recast as a vital means of seeking God’s truth. As such, Samuel I. Thomas describes how, “in this *new* covenant, a *new* well must be dug – not one of water, but of sectarian knowledge and practice that conforms to a projected idealization of the past.”²³⁵ Again, if living water represents knowledge of God’s law, and God is himself the source of life – and by extension, of living water – then digging a well would be synonymous with living piously, in accordance with תורה. Moreover, because living piously is also equated with perfect holiness,²³⁶ this ritually-derived image of מים חיים appears to facilitate not merely the acquisition of God’s truth, but also the attainment of moral sanctification.

Living water is framed similarly in the Hodayot (1QH^a),²³⁷ where it seems to represent hidden sectarian knowledge, which facilitates sanctification, and is accessible only

²³⁴ Samuel I. Thomas, “Living Water by the Dead Sea,” in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, BZAW 461, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 376. Note that the commandments of God include ritual as well as moral law.

²³⁵ Ibid, 378.

²³⁶ CD VII 4-5: “In short, for all who conduct their lives by these laws (כל המתהלכים באלה), in perfect holiness (בתמים קדש), according to all the instructions (על פי כל יסורו), God’s covenant (ברית אל) stands firm to give them life for thousands of generations.” Here, conducting one’s life by God’s laws is equated with perfect holiness, indicating the degree to which covenantal obedience is integrally linked with notions of sanctification and moral purity (though it is also worth re-emphasising that ritual *halakhah* is encompassed within תורה more broadly).

²³⁷ For the sake of simplicity, I draw primarily from 1QH^a, and the translation by Carol Newsom in Parry and Toy, eds., DSSR 2, 268-351 (though this edition incorporates material from the other

for God's elect. This can be seen in column XVI, which begins with an expression of thanks to God in the first-person:²³⁸ for “plac[ing] me by the source of streams in a dry land (כי נתתי) (במקור נזולים ביבשה), (by) a spring of water in a thirsty land (ומבוע מים בארץ ציה), and (by) a watered garden (ומשקי גן), and a pool (ואגם)...²³⁹ Here, God is depicted as having provided the foundation for Israel, through his having produced the water necessary for fostering the growth of a holy shoot (נצר קודש) – namely, Israel:²⁴⁰

And they were there so that a shoot might be made to sprout into an eternal planting (והיו להפריח נצר למטאת עולם). Taking root before they caused (it) to spout, they sent out their roots to the water cou[rse]. But it exposed its rootstock to the living waters (ויהי למקור עולם), which served as an eternal spring (ויפתח למים חיים יגזעו). All the an[ima]ls of the forest pastured upon its leafy shoot. Its rootstock was a grazing place for all who passed by on the way, and its foliage was for every winged bird. And all the tr[ees] by the water towered over it, for in their plantation they grow tall... (1QH^a XVI 7-11)

manuscripts). For more on the discovery and publication history of the Hodayot material, see Julie A. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*, STDJ 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 2-4; Eileen M. Schuller and Carol A. Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms: A Study Edition of 1QH^a; Early Judaism and its Literature* 36 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 1-10.

²³⁸ Carol A. Newsom describes how the Hodayot differ from “both biblical psalmody and most of Second Temple prayer and psalmody in the degree to which the ‘I’ who speaks describes and reflects on what might call his ‘sense of self’” (338). For more on the conceptualisations of the self present in the Hodayot, and how they diverge from (as well as draw from) earlier texts, refer to Newsom, “Flesh, Spirit, and the Indigenous Psychology of the *Hodayot*,” in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*; STDJ 98, ed. Jeremy Penner, Ken M. Penner, and Cecilia Wassen (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

²³⁹ 1QH^a XVI 5-6. Note that certain words are less clear, and are deduced from traces of letters in the manuscript (i.e., **כי נתתי**, **ביבשה**, **ציה**)

²⁴⁰ This holy shoot imagery alludes to Isa 11:1 and, by extension, the perpetual covenant with David. Isa 11:1 is a key prophetic passage, which foretells the rise of King David (the offspring, or “shoot”/נצר of Jesse); the founding of the Israelite monarchy after Saul; and most importantly the eternal Davidic covenant, which establishes the throne of David's kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:7-16). In this way, the shoot can be recognised as denoting Israel (God's chosen “shoot”), which he has made holy through his covenant.

While living water can be seen to nourish the trees of God’s (Eden-like) garden²⁴¹ – and most importantly, the holy shoot of Israel – its life-giving capacity is deemed inefficacious for those outside of his holy “shoot,” much like ritual ablutions were rendered futile in TTS for those who did not also possess God’s **רוח האמת**. Indeed, the narrator describes how:

...That which made the h[o]ly shoot sprout up into a planting of truth conceals itself, without being much regarded and without being recognized sealing up its mystery. And you, [O G]od, have hedged in its fruit by means of the mystery of strong warriors and spirits of holiness, and the whirling fame of fire, so that no [stran]ger might [come] to the fountain of life, nor with the eternal trees drink the waters of holiness, nor bear its fruit with the plantation of heaven (XVI 11-14)

For the narrator, who is a member of the holy shoot, God’s fountain thus serves as “a spring of living water which does not fail” (**ומבוע מים חיים ולא יכזב**), cf. XVI 17), which cleanses him from mud (cf. XVI 16). However, for every other tree (i.e., those *not* in the covenant, who do not observe God’s commandments), the fountain’s contents are transformed into “waters of contention” (XVI 19), effectively limiting access to these life-giving waters (i.e., the knowledge of **תורה**) to God’s elect.

Although living water does not always *explicitly* connote purification, this connection is nevertheless made implicitly on at least two levels. First, I have shown throughout this thesis that proper adherence to God’s commandments constitutes moral sanctification, leading to holiness. If **מים חיים** represent God and his covenantal obligations, then they must consequently also imply sanctification. Second, the very image of **מים חיים** is rooted in

²⁴¹ Indeed, there is a direct parallel to Eden in line 21 of col. XVI, and the garden imagery throughout this column appear to evoke the plants and trees of the primeval Garden of Eden. E.g. the fruit trees (XVI 14, 21) and the fountain of life loosely recall the tree of life, while the idea of hidden, mysterious knowledge (XVI 12) similarly recalls the tree of knowledge of good and evil (cf. Gen 2:9). Even the notion of placing the narrator by the source of streams evokes Gen 2:10, which describes how “a river flows out of Eden to water the garden.”

purificatory ritual, being one of the key ingredients for corpse impurity rites (cf. Num 19). The metaphorical application of (initially cultic) water to depict God’s knowledge (described in 1QH^a as a source of life) can also be seen indirectly to evoke the water’s original capacity for ritual ablution. It is also important to recognise the subtle parallels within this passage between living water (מים חיים) and the cosmic waters of creation,²⁴² which further indicate water’s capacity for cleansing. Indeed, I described in ch. 2 how P depicts the cosmos at creation as a kind of proto-sanctuary, and how flood is thus framed as a universal re-sanctification, through grand-scale (cosmic) ablution. The evocation of Eden in the garden imagery of col. XVI (noted above) similarly implies a kind of return to the original holy state of creation, but one that is singularly available for God’s “holy shoot,” the only people who can receive – and be nourished by – the living water.²⁴³ For anyone outside of God’s community, these waters are inefficacious,²⁴⁴ and even contentious (XVI 19).

While the notion of sanctification and cosmic renewal by means of (living) water thus hearkens back to the Priestly account of flood,²⁴⁵ the exclusivity of this vision for God’s

²⁴² Here, I refer both to the waters of the deep (תהום), cf. Gen 1:2, 7:11) as well as the stream נחל from Gen 2:6. I have emphasised תהום, due to my focus in this thesis on priestly biblical texts (and reinterpretations of priestly language), but I recognise the influence of stream imagery here (as in ch.3).

²⁴³ Indeed, Julie A. Hughes posits that the references to the fruits of Eden “may be an allusion to the tradition that just as Adam and Eve had been excluded from Eden lest they eat of the tree of life, that access to the tree will be restored in the new age,” citing 1 En 24:4-25:5 and 4 Ezr 8:52 as precedent. See Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*, 169.

²⁴⁴ As discussed above, God limits access to the מים חיים, so that “no [stran]ger might [come to the fountain of life]” (XVI 13). The text also describes how anyone outside of the holy shoot essentially “sees without recognizing,” and “considers without believing in the well of life (מקור חיים), and so he gives away the yi[el]d of the eternal bloom” (XVI 14-15).

²⁴⁵ Cf. XVI 17-18: When the heavens open they do not cease but become a flowing river o[ver the trees of] the waters, and to the limitless seas [].

holy shoot (or chosen people) more directly recalls prophetic eschatology. Indeed, Samuel Thomas draws a link between the spring that satiates the thirst of the dry land on behalf of the narrator in 1QH^s (ומבוע מים בארץ ציה) (XVI 5) and the (soteriological) springs of water described in the book of Isaiah (ועֵ-מבועי מים), which will guide God’s people towards salvation, that they “shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them” (Isa 49:10).²⁴⁶ Isaiah 35:5-10 provides an even closer parallel, outlining how:

...waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;
 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water
 (למועבי מים);
 the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way (ודרך הקדש יקרא לה);
 the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people;
 No traveler, not even fools, shall go astray...but the redeemed shall walk there.
 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.²⁴⁷

These two passages from Isaiah, as well as 1QH^a, commonly contrast the scorching wind and burning sand of the desert with the springs of water, which accompany eschatological renewal and the “divine ingathering to Zion.”²⁴⁸ Thomas recognises the use of מבוע by 1QH^a as a deliberate invocation of Isaiah, given that two of the only three occurrences of the term within the entire biblical corpus appear in these eschatological

²⁴⁶ Thomas, “Living Water by the Dead Sea, 382.

²⁴⁷ Note: this passage is somewhat excerpted. I have omitted part of v.9 for the sake of brevity.

²⁴⁸ Thomas, “Living Water by the Dead Sea,” 382. Refer to 1QH^a XVI 5 for parallel.

Isaianic passages.²⁴⁹ The particularistic slant of 1QH^a in favour of Zion²⁵⁰ is thus further enhanced by means of its analogies with Isaianic revelation, which present a more decidedly exclusive vision of Israel's sanctification, through a rededication to the "Holy Way." Thus, while the parallels within 1QH^a to creation and flood evoke cosmic water's capacity for cleansing and sanctification, the recycling of prophetic eschatological themes would seem to indicate the Israel-specific nature of this ensuing sanctification.

Thus, for Israel, living water (מים חיים) functions as the means for sanctification, and as a cleansing agent, which rinses off the mud (i.e., pollution) that was previously cast upon them (כי גרשו עלי רפשמ, XVI 16), thereby facilitating a spiritual resurgence on God's prescribed path. At the same time, however, I have demonstrated that the living water represents a threat to those outside of God's holy shoot, becoming waters of contention for all other "trees" (מי מר[י]בה לכול עת) (and even leading mysteriously to "flames of fire" [בשביבי אש]).²⁵¹ Up to this point, I have largely avoided trying to position מים חיים under the rubric of liminality, so as to avoid an overly eisegetical reading of these texts. However, I do think it appropriate to consider this dual capacity of water for salvation *and* desolation in

²⁴⁹ Ibid. The other passage is Eccl 12:6.

²⁵⁰ i.e., the text's emphasis on hedging the hidden spring by means of mystery, "so that no [stran]ger might [come] to the fountain of life, nor with the eternal trees drink the waters of holiness, nor bear its fruit with the plantation of heaven. For he sees without recognizing, and he considers without believing in the well of life, and so he gives away the yi[el]d of the eternal bloom" (XVI 12-15).

²⁵¹ 1QH^a XVI 19. Note that similar fire and water (מים רבים) imagery of occurs in col. X, within a description of "warriors" that have encamped against the narrator: "...and the blade of the spear devours trees like fire. Like the roar of mighty waters is the tumult of their shout, a cloudburst and tempest to destroy a multitude. When their waves mount up, deception and vanity burst forth toward the constellations. But as for me, even when my heart melted like water, my soul held fast to your covenant" (X 27-30). Fire imagery was discussed above in a note in section 4.3, pertaining to 1 Enoch as well as Philo. It would seem that water and fire imagery can sometimes go hand-in-hand in ancient Jewish eschatology.

1QH^a in terms of liminal tensions between life and death: namely, for renewed life in God’s covenant, but also destruction for those who fail to heed the divine wisdom of his law – much like the cosmic **תהום**, which had the capability for both creation and un-creation. Indeed, while Thomas identifies the fountain imagery – whether it be in the form of a well (**באר**), a spring (**מעין, מבוע**), or fountain (**מקור**) – as a means of “referring to the ongoing interpretive task of making plain Torah for the purpose of ‘walking in the way,’”²⁵² this task is available exclusively to God’s chosen people.

5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored some key instances of **מי נדה** and **מים חיים** imagery in various Dead Sea Scrolls texts. While my analysis of these two cleansing motifs was not exhaustive, I nonetheless demonstrated how both lustration water and living water can be understood to symbolically denote knowledge of – and faithfulness to – God’s covenant, which in turn facilitates sanctification and holiness. In this way, the appropriation of cultic imagery (and indeed, specific ritual ingredients for cleansing) further reiterates the way in which purity is viewed holistically in terms of covenantal obedience, as indeed, the metaphorical associations between ritual cleansing methods and moral sanctification indicate

²⁵² Thomas, “Living Water by the Dead Sea,” 382. The task of interpretation is not a foregone conclusion, as the subject of the text claims, “I am a creature of clay and a thing kneaded with water, a foundation of shame and a well of impurity, a furnace of iniquity, and a structure of sin, a spirit of error, and a perverted being, without understanding, and terrified by righteous judgments” (col. IX 23-25). However, God, in his mercy and great kindness, is said to have “strengthened the human spirit in the face of affliction and the [poor] soul you have cleansed from great iniquity so that it might recount your wonders before all your creatures (lines 33-35).

the degree in which Klawans's two purity "types" are in fact intertwined. In this way, while water can thus be seen to represent wisdom and knowledge of God's laws, it also retains a ritualistic character, being framed as a "purifying medium."²⁵³ Thus, water does not solely represent wisdom *or* purity, but instead:

...the 'correct' reading and internalization of Torah is tantamount to the condition of ritual purity, and both are requisite for full participation in the life of the community. Insight and understanding are available only to those who have submitted to the sect's instruction, and ritual purity is available only to those who have insight and understanding.²⁵⁴

In this way, living water functions as a purifying agent, in the context of literal (ritual) and eschatological (moral) cleansing; and also as a mode of instruction and wisdom, helping to facilitate moral sanctification by means of covenantal obedience. Although this chapter did not *emphasise* liminality, I have suggested that this concept can nonetheless help account for the continued association of *מי נדה* and *מים חיים* with conditional change, as well as purification more broadly.

²⁵³ Thomas, "Living Water by the Dead Sea," 385.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 385-386.

6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored the concept of purity in early Jewish literature, through a detailed analysis of water and cleansing language. In Part One, I focused on representations of water in “biblical” scripture, whereas Part Two was centred on non-canonical texts from the Second Temple period. I began Part One by examining the ritual dimensions of water within Levitical law, with chapter one assessing how water frequently serves as a vehicle for the purification process. Drawing on Victor Turner’s anthropology of ritual and rites of passage in particular, I illustrated how water can be seen to occupy a liminal position in ritual processes, operating “betwixt and between”²⁵⁵ standard binaries of pollution and sterility. The second chapter turned to the function of water within the priestly account of primeval history, highlighting the role of water as a means of both creation and destruction. Again, I highlighted the liminal power of water in Genesis, as the primordial “waters of the deep (תהום)” seem to reflect a threshold where cosmic abyssal waters have not yet been differentiated by God. I argued that, while the divine ordering of water serves as the basis for God’s ordered creation, the reunification of the waters of the deep (in the case of deluge) can also be seen to reflect water’s capacity (latent or realised) for chaos. Chapter three examined the metaphorical repurposing of ritual cleansing language (i.e., רחץ, זרק, כבס, etc.) within poetic and prophetic biblical texts. In particular, this chapter highlighted how water constitutes a symbol of national rejuvenation and restoration, in effect harnessing the

²⁵⁵ Again, see Turner, “Liminality and Communitas,” 95.

transitional, liminal capacity of both ritual ablutionary water, as well as the primordial waters of the deep.

Part Two moved beyond the biblical canon, exploring various ways in which water and purity are depicted within the Second Temple period. Chapter four analysed the intersection of ritual and moral dimensions of purity in Jubilees and 1 Enoch, where the notion of moral “sanctification” would seem to entail the synchronised observance of cultic (i.e., ritual) as well as moral components of תורה, “on earth as on heaven.” Although water is not necessarily at the fore of these texts, I argued that it nonetheless plays a crucial role in visions of moral sanctification, providing the very means for eschatological renewal. Specifically, I demonstrated how both Jubilees and 1 Enoch associate the re-establishment of sacred time with the deluge, seeming to frame grand scale soteriological expectations of cleansing in terms of cosmic flood imagery. Finally, chapter five focused non-narrative Qumran texts, examining the motifs of מי נדה and מי חיים within the Rule of the Community, the Damascus Document, and the Hodayot. In this chapter, I articulated how ritual and moral categories of purity are further coalesced at Qumran, with water-based purification being understood holistically as an expression of Torah.

Although I have striven to avoid conflating disparate texts and the perspectives of different authors, I have also observed some significant trends within the literature. In particular, this thesis has emphasised conceptual links between water for a) ritual washing and b) for moral cleansing or sanctification. I have suggested that an anthropological lens, which acknowledges the liminal power of water, can aid in our apprehension of how water terminology is used, recycled, and reinterpreted. In this way, I propose that the notion of

liminality can elucidate how water is consistently used as a conduit for conditional change. Indeed, water frequently reflects the transitional stage of transformation – whether “ritual” or “moral” – on account of its crucial role within both ablutionary rites and the priestly etiological account of creation. As such, water can be seen to embody liminal tensions, flowing “betwixt and between” standard dichotomies, as it represents the potentiality for both purity *and* pollution, and for cosmic order *and* primordial chaos.

While this thesis adopted Jonathan Klawans’s distinction between moral and ritual pollution as a methodological starting point, I consistently sought to emphasise points of intersection between these two categories. I certainly recognise the value in differentiating between ritual and moral *dimensions* of purity, but I have found that purity is often framed more “holistically,” with ritual aspects of purification understood alongside notions of moral synchronisation. I have shown how the relationship between ritual and moral forms of purity is often more symbiotic than segmented, as adherence to ritual *halakhab* (a central component of Mosaic covenantal obedience) functions as part of moral sanctification. As such, cleansing imagery is consequently applied somewhat indiscriminately, within instances of both ritual *and* moral purification.

Given the focus on washing and purification, this thesis could perhaps have incorporated archaeological details pertaining to **מקוואות** (*miquva’ot*/baths), connecting literary depictions of cleansing with the archaeological evidence for bathing. However, my primary emphasis was on water imagery, and how ritual terminology is figuratively repurposed and reapplied, to both moral and cultic conceptions of pollution. I do discuss fountains and cistern imagery of living water, but ultimately my thesis is directed towards water itself, and how it functions within the context(s) of purity, as opposed to receptacles for water. The

questions I asked were textual in nature, and not archaeological, though I do not mean to discount the utility of archaeological methods for our understanding of ancient Israel, and the diversity of its washing practices.²⁵⁶

I could have also compared how early Jewish and Christian texts portray water and washing, but I felt that it was important to focus exclusively on Jewish texts. Ancient Judaism provides an important context for the emergence of the early Jesus movement, as well as for understanding the works of Paul.²⁵⁷ Consequently, washing and bathing practices in Judaism have often been evaluated for the purpose of better apprehending the roots of Christian baptism. This approach certainly has its merits, but I contend that it also bears its own host of ideological issues; namely, I take umbrage with the presumption (whether conscious or unconscious) that Jewish texts are important only in service of Christianity. As this thesis has consistently cautioned against subscribing to overly rigid dichotomies, I certainly do not mean to reinforce an overly essentialist (and anachronistic) distinction between Judaism and Christianity at the turn of the common era. However, I maintain that analysing Jewish texts for the primary aim of apprehending *Judaism*, is also critical. This is not to say that Judaism exists in a historical vacuum, independent of a burgeoning Christianity, but rather, to emphasise that Judaism *qua* Judaism is a worthwhile area of study.

While Jewish water and washing norms may have been foundational for then-nascent Christian rites, I believe that they also bear a great deal of significance for the development

²⁵⁶ Jonathan D. Lawrence focuses on the development of ritual bathing, drawing from archaeological remains from a variety of sites in the Mediterranean: see *Washing in Water*, 155-182. For a discussion of *מקוואות* at Qumran specifically, see Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 134-162.

²⁵⁷ For a recent discussion of Paul within Judaism, see Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds. *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

of *halakhab* in the rabbinic period. Indeed, writings such as the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud derive *halakhic* principles from scriptural texts; Seder Tohorot/סדר טהרות, for example (attested in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud), expands upon the legal rulings on purity found in the Torah, and even includes a section on *מקוואות* (ritual baths). Moreover, it would seem that some rabbinic sources reinterpret eschatological visions of water from prophetic biblical texts (as discussed in ch.3) in terms of ritual law, repositioning metaphorical language within a more literal, *halakhic* realm.²⁵⁸ This apparent tendency towards re-ritualisation of figurative water imagery (which was previously adapted from a ritual purification context), presents an avenue for further research into the interrelated themes of water and purification.

²⁵⁸ e.g. b.Yoma 77b: the eschatological vision of Israel's restoration as presented in Ezekiel 47:1-12 (and discussed above in ch.3) is cited within a discussion (*suḡya*) of washing on the Day of Atonement. Whereas the Ezekiel passage employed ritual language of pollution to highlight the moral iniquities of Israel, the Bavli presents a more straightforward reading of Ezekiel, combing it for legal principles. Specifically, the depiction of a river that cannot be crossed through in Ezek 47:3-5 is used as a textual basis for an *aggadic* description of Rabbis Judah and Samuel bar. R. Judah. In the Bavli passage, these two men are standing at the bank of Papa Canal, when they are interrupted by R. Ammi bar Papa, who enquires about whether he is permitted to come across the river. Judah and Samuel claim that this crossing over *would* be in accordance with tradition (i.e., Ezek 47:3-5), but R. Joseph objects that such an act would not be permitted even on a normal weekday (77b-c). Ezek 47:3-5 is used as a textual basis for establishing this tradition, as the biblical text describes God leading the prophet through waters up to his ankles (1), as well as knee-deep waters (2), and waters "up to the loins" (3), but the fourth river, being deep enough to swim in (4), is characterised as a river "that could not be passed through. According to R. Joseph, a river that goes up to one's neck would be deep enough to swim in and, in accordance with Ezekiel's vision, one that could not (or should not) be passed through. The Talmud Yerushalmi (y.Sheq 6:2) also quotes Ezek 4 in a halakhically-oriented discussion of the Temple, which itself references m.Mid. 2:6. Here, prophetic purification metaphor is again understood more literally than figuratively, in relation to actual temple ritual and the Water Gate. Specifically, Rabbi Eliezer explicitly links the practice of a ritual water offering a Sukkot to Ezekiel, picking up on the imagery of trickling water that will issue out from "under the threshold of the house" (y.Sheq. 6:2). See also Tosefta Sukah 3:3-3:9, for a similar exegesis of this biblical passage. Interestingly enough, these rabbinic passages all seem to cite Zech 13:1 (also discussed in ch.3) with Ezek 47, seeming to co-opt the cosmic, restorative image of the flowing stream from Zechariah back into a *halakhic* framework.

Despite the (perhaps limited) scope of my research, I believe that my work can contribute to the academic discourse of purity in ancient Judaism. Although Klawans does acknowledge the degree of flexibility inherent in his purity categories, our modern Western tendency towards bifurcation and clear dichotomies can sometimes obfuscate our discernment of nuance. It would be all too easy to mistake ritual and moral dimensions of purity as opposing binaries, and overlook the degree of overlap and points of intersection between these two categories. I hope that my work can help refine how we describe and apprehend notions of pollution and purification, as I have sought to emphasise how purity frequently operates between these two extremes, as both ritual *and* moral. Indeed, much like water often seemed to embody liminal tensions, undulating between thresholds of purity-pollution and chaos-order, I contend that purity is also frequently expressed multivocally.

Echoing Ehud Ben Zvi, I also sought to outline in this thesis how water became “a central semantic playground in which the [ancient Jewish] communit[ies] could express, formulate, reformulate and communicate in intelligible ways concepts that would have been difficult for them to express in other manners.”²⁵⁹ I have therefore emphasised the conceptual power of water, as it can be seen to impinge upon separate – but frequently interrelated – facets of ritual worship, cosmology, and eschatological theology. Whether understood tangibly, in the context of ritual ablution; metaphorically, as a symbol of spiritual cleansing and moral sanctification; or (more often than not) as a blend of the two; water serves as a central component of the ancient Jewish *weltanschauung*.

²⁵⁹ Ben Zvi, “Thinking of Water,” 27. I have amended Ben Zvi’s use of the singular “community” to “communities,” so as to acknowledge the pluriformity of Jewish practices and beliefs in antiquity.

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